

IIEA Person of the Year Recipients

2010	1999
Robert Gheen	Gordon Hurst
2009	1998
James L. Davidson	Don Billings
2008	1997
Jonas Stutzman	Gordon Jensen
2007	1996
E. Kay Stanger	LaVaughn Craythorn
2006	Karl Bronson
John Lake	1995
2005	Webb Malone
Rex Winn	1994
2004	Tom Slayton
Nick Purdy	1993
2003	Ernest Gheen
Keith Vickers	1992
2002	Jerry Lake
Bart Nelson	1990
2001	Harold Funk
Dale Adams	1989
2000	Bernie Fischer
Jim Roters	1988
	Bob Sears
	1984
	Bert Hansen
	1982
	Dallas Bennett



Left to right:
Troy Gheen, Production
Manager (son), Dawn
Gheen (daughter-in-law),
Helayne Gheen (wife),
Robert Gheen, Tamera
Wobbe, Director of
Finance & Administration
(daughter), Chuck
Wobbe, Chief Operating
Officer (son-in-law).

Robert Gheen named 2010 IIEA Person of the Year

Robert Gheen, owner of Gheen Irrigation Works, Inc. in Eugene, Oregon, has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2010 Person of the Year.

The IIEA Person of the Year is an award given annually to a distinguished member of the organization that has provided many years of service and accomplishments to the irrigation industry and to the association. The award, which is voted on by the officers and board of directors, was given on January 13, at the IIEA membership banquet at the Rupert Elks Lodge, in Rupert, Idaho. Kevin Piper, an employee of Gheen's, made the surprise announcement.

"I was totally surprised by the honor," said Robert Gheen. "I am humbled and appreciative of this recognition by the IIEA. All of us at Gheen Irrigation Works are honored to be recognized by the industry and appreciate the support of IIEA over the years."

Gheen grew up in the business becoming a permanent employee in the shipping department in 1963. He had worked in the various departments, including welding and galvanizing during breaks from his college studies in engineering at Oregon State University. He became a manager and coordinated between sales and the warehouse. Later he became the manager over the supervisors and production operations. He became president in the late 1970's. As president and CEO, he sees his role as "the Planner"—setting goals for the future of the company.

Gheen Irrigation Works, Inc. is moving forward. Gheen manufactures irrigation fittings and components for use in the agricultural industry. After a devastating fire in 2007, they acquired Lake-Eugene and Lake-Lubbock in Texas. They've also expanded by purchasing MWH Fabrication and a new site in Harrisburg, Oregon. They will be moving their Eugene operations to Harrisburg over the next few years.

His wife, Helayne, accompanied Gheen to the IIEA event. They have been married 44 years.

His children Tamera Wobbe and Troy Gheen and their spouses Chuck Wobbe and Dawn Gheen surprised their father by being at the event in Rupert, Idaho, when he was given the award. They had to stay out of sight at the hotel and banquet and texted their mom frequently to see where Dad was so they wouldn't run into each other in the small town of Burley. They stayed hidden at the banquet until Kevin Piper announced that Robert's family was there.

"Our father was surprised and shocked at the end of his speech and didn't know we were present until Kevin made the announcement," said daughter Tamera Wobbe. "We wouldn't have missed seeing our father receive this special honor. We remember when our grandfather, E.L. Gheen, received the same award as the 1993 Person of the Year. We decided as a family to do the same for our father."

The Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association is celebrating its 40th year as an association. Members include dealers, manufacturers, and distributors of irrigation equipment products and services.

James L. Davidson named 2009 IIEA Person of the Year

James L. Davidson, owner of Sprinkler Head Rebuilders in Buhl, Idaho, has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2009 Person of the Year.

The IIEA Person of the Year is an award given annually to a distinguished member of the organization that has provided many years of service and accomplishments to the irrigation industry and to the association. The award, which is voted on by the officers and board of directors, was given on January 6, at the IIEA membership banquet at the Nampa Civic Center, Nampa, Idaho. John Morgan, with Snake River Sales, made the presentation. Because of illness, Davidson was unable to attend, but was presented with the award at his business on January 14.

"When Dad and I started this business in 1981 we couldn't have imagined it growing as it has or, with this award, receiving such recognition," said Davidson. "Dad is no longer around, but for both of us Thank-you, we are so honored!"

Davidson was born in Eugene, Oregon. He moved with his family to San Diego, Calif. where his father was a high school math teacher. Davidson grew up in San Diego but as a young man moved to the Magic Valley in 1972.



Jim Davidson

Davidson's father, Jerry, soon followed him to Idaho. In the intervening years Davidson tried his hand at farming and carpentry while his father continued life as a teacher. In 1981, Jim and Jerry opened Sprinkler Head Rebuilders. They recognized the need of dealers and farmers to have their old, worn out sprinkler heads refurbished. Over the years, Jim and Jerry developed and built many of the innovative tools and jigs still used today.

Davidson's love of flying and aviation served him well in this business. Almost every dealer in southern Idaho knows of Davidson's red and yellow "Maule", tail-dragger airplane. Davidson would make regular pick-ups and deliveries of used sprinklers for repair using his airplane.

"He not only delivered quality rebuilt sprinklers but was as dependable as the sun. One thing for sure about Jim Davidson...you could always count on him," said Morgan in his presentation.

During their busiest years, Sprinkler Head Rebuilders rebuilt as many as 100,000 sprinklers a year. During these years they also began the refurbishing of big gun volume type sprinklers. Naturally their highest volume sprinkler was and still is today the Nelson Big Gun. Davidson secured his business as an "Authorized" Nelson, RainBird, WeatherTec and Komet repair station. Jim developed test tanks for water testing the refurbished sprinklers. Today they provide service to agricultural irrigation dealers all over the United States with rebuilt big gun sprinklers.

Jonas Stutzman, a 32-year employee of Travis Pattern & Foundry, Spokane, Wash. has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2008 Person of the Year.

The IIEA Person of the Year is an award given annually to a distinguished member of the organization that has provided many years of service and accomplishments to the irrigation industry and to the association. The award, which is voted on by the officers and board of directors, was given on January 7, 2009 at the IIEA membership banquet at the Shilo Inn, Idaho Falls, Idaho. Scott Chaffin, Irrigation Manager at Travis Pattern & Foundry, presented the award to Stutzman who was Vice President and Manager of Travis at the time he retired.

"This award is especially meaningful to me, because it came from customers whom I consider friends and family," said Stutzman. "I've been attending meetings of the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association for more than 30 years and have life-long memories and friendships."

Stutzman graduated from Gonzaga University in 1974 with a marketing degree. He started with Travis in November 1976. Travis is the largest privately owned provider of aluminum castings west of the Mississippi. Annually the company has an output of seven million pounds of aluminum which is shipped world-wide as both finished products and raw ingot. They manufacture a full line of both aluminum and steel irrigation equipment under such names as A&M, Wade Rain, Rainway, Felco, Western, Sonntag, Travis, Shure Rane, and Moore Rane.



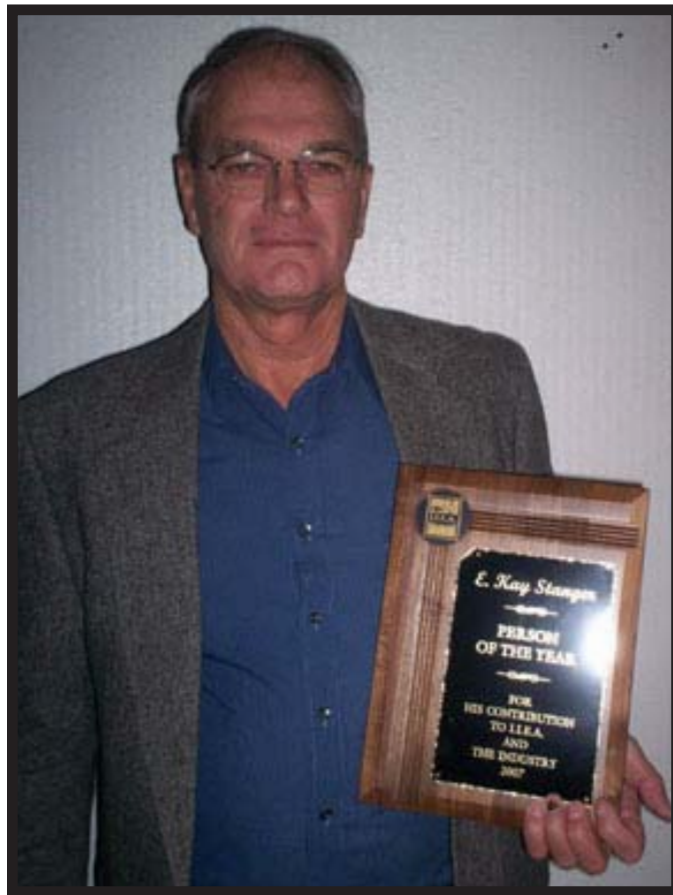
Jonas Stutzman

When Stutzman started with the company there was one product line, now there are 12. He has seen the transformation of the irrigation equipment industry. Travis originally manufactured primarily handline and mainline couplers. That progressed into also manufacturing and selling wheelines.

"In the early years, some individual irrigation equipment dealers would sell more than 200 wheelines a season", said Stutzman. Today, Travis also makes parts for center pivot irrigation systems for most of the leading manufacturers as well as providing couplers, wheelines, and fittings domestically and internationally.

Stutzman, age 56, retired in December 2008. Jonas and his wife, Cheryl, are the parents of two married children.

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E. Kay Stanger named 2007 IIEA Person of the Year

E. Kay Stanger, northwest service representative for Lindsay Corporation, a major global supplier of automated irrigation systems, has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2007 Person of the Year.

The IIEA Person of the Year is an award given annually to a distinguished member of the organization that has provided many years of service and accomplishments to the irrigation industry and to the association. The award, which is voted on by the officers and board of directors, was given on January 9 at the IIEA membership banquet at the Rupert Elks Lodge. Lindsay Corporation's regional sales manager, Bret Anderson, presented the award to Stanger.

"This is a total surprise!" stated Stanger, as he expressed his appreciation to officers, directors and members of the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association for awarding him this honor. "I've enjoyed the many years of working in the irrigation industry of southern Idaho and other parts of the Northwest." Stanger added that, "The area and farmers represented by the IIEA encompasses some of the most progressive farmers and farming practices in the world."

A lifetime resident of American Falls, Idaho, Stanger grew up on a local farm and attended schools in American Falls. He enlisted in the Army in the fall of 1962 and served three years; two years in the 101st Airborne Division and a (short) tour in Vietnam. For several years, Stanger worked as a truck driver for Kent Brothers Transportation, a local trucking company, then worked seven years as a heavy equipment operator for Bengal Construction, of Pocatello, Idaho. His work as a heavy equipment operator included road building projects, the construction of an earthen dam at Murphy, Idaho, and cleanup and re-construction of canals and waterworks in the Rexburg area following the Teton Dam failure.

In 1981, Stanger began his work in the irrigation industry, contracting with Funk Irrigation of American Falls to install underground mainline and electrical service for irrigation systems. At that time, he successfully introduced PVC installation to Funk Irrigation. After six years, he had "shoved" so much

pipe into the ground, that he injured his shoulder, so he had to leave pipe installation behind. But, he did so knowing that every job was done with quality work and dedication.

In the fall of 1986, Stanger changed his status from a contractor to an employee for Funk Irrigation. For the next 11 years, he was in charge of field surveys, underground installation of water and electrical services for center pivots and lateral-move irrigation systems, as well as working in design and sales of irrigation systems supplied by Funk Irrigation and Lindsay. Stanger became highly skilled and knowledgeable, training others along the way. His first concern was always to offer dedication to his employer and provide quality service and products to the farmer. A manager's position was offered to Stanger in the fall of 1997, by Valley Equipment & Irrigation, Blackfoot. He worked here for three years.

In November 2000, Stanger was hired as a service representative and technician by Lindsay Manufacturing Corporation (now Lindsay Corporation) working primarily in the western United States and western Canada. These service and technical responsibilities have also taken Stanger to France, Germany, Portugal, Jamaica, Guatemala, and the southeastern United States.

Annually, Stanger attends service seminars at Lindsay, Nebraska to keep his skills current. His responsibilities, also, include providing technical service training for Lindsay Dealer Network service personnel, as well as providing customer service seminars for farmers throughout the region. He served two years as a board member of the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association and has been a presenter of "Center Pivot Management" classes at the annual IIEA Winter Show, five of the past seven years. Stanger expresses his appreciation to his employer, Lindsay Corporation for their support of the IIEA and for allowing him to represent them and participate in activities of the IIEA.

Stanger's job requires some travel, which he does with a good attitude. Kay is great with public relations too. He is well known for his integrity, dedication, a good sense of humor, loyalty, generosity, creativity and always striving to do is best.

Kay and his wife, Bonnie are the parents of eight children and 16 grandchildren. Their children are Jill and Bradley (deceased), Kristie, Jason, Mark and Susan – all of Utah. Julie of California and Rachel of Idaho.

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John Lake is 2006 Person of the Year

John Lake, president and chief executive officer, of Western Oilfields Supply Company, dba Rain For Rent, one of the largest multiple location agricultural irrigation businesses in the USA, has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2006 Person of the Year.

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“The Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association is one of the finest small associations I have ever been affiliated with,” said Lake in his acceptance speech. He thanked the members for this honor and went on to tell how he started working in the irrigation industry when he was 11 years old for one dollar a day. So, looking back, he said, he’s come a long way.

A native Californian, Lake, 58, attended Bakersfield High School, graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1970 with a BS in Mechanical Engineering, and did one year of graduate work in Mechanical Engineering at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Lake started his career with Rain for Rent in 1974 working his way through the Engineering and Manufacturing Departments and management of Lake and Lake International, irrigation subsidiaries of Western Oilfields Supply Company. He founded Lake Leasing Company in 1983, Rain for Rent’s agricultural irrigation equipment financing division. John has served as President and Chief Executive Officer since April of 1990. There are currently 54 branches and 1,000 professionals nationwide who work for the company.

During Lake’s tenure as president, the company has expanded into the tank, pump and specialty rental markets. He has overseen the expansion of the company into the Rocky Mountains, East Coast, Midwest, Gulf Coast and Southeast markets, the creation of Power Prime Pumps which manufactures pumps for the agricultural and industrial markets, and the Filtration and Separation division which specializes in the rental of filtration and large emergency pumping units to niche markets with specific application requirements.

John is active in the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo Advisory Council, the California Agricultural Leadership Program, the Fellowship of Companies for Christ International, Quest Club, Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association and Safari Club International. Lake encouraged IIEA members to be willing to serve and be a good steward of the community.

John and his wife, Sheila, have two sons, John Paul and Ryan. Lake has been an advocate of Rain for Rent employees being involved in the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association. Several of his employees have held various leadership positions, including but not limited to 2005-2006 President Lance Eldridge, newly elected board member Kasey Garrett and Scholarship Chair Leslie Garner. Lake and his family have attended many summer meetings and most of the trade shows in Idaho. In addition to supporting personnel involvement in the IIEA he has sponsored an IIEA scholarship for many years and given thousands of dollars to Idaho’s college students.

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Former IIEA Persons of the Year join John Lake, center.: Rex Winn, Bernie Fischer, Gordon Jensen, and Don Billings.



Rex Winn is named 2005 IIEA Person of the Year

Rex Winn, a 33-year employee of Idaho Power Company, has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2005 Person of the Year.

The IIEA Person of the Year is an award given annually to a distinguished member of the organization that has provided many years of service and accomplishments to the irrigation industry. The award, which is voted on by the officers and board of directors, was given on January 10, 2006 at the IIEA membership banquet in Idaho Falls. Co-worker, Quentin Nesbitt, presented the award to a surprised Winn.

"This is an absolutely incredible honor," said Winn, 60, as he accepted the award. He was thankful for being recognized, yet overwhelmed knowing the outstanding people who have received the recognition in the past.

Growing up in the small Idaho town of Grandview, Winn experienced first hand the challenges faced by family farmers. His father had a farm along the Snake River below Grandview. After the farm was sold, Winn served in the Marine Corps in Vietnam and did multiple tours of duty. After Vietnam, he was a Sergeant in charge of training.

After Winn got out of the Marines, he married Barbara and started to work for Rex Lanham who was a private contractor that built power lines for utilities. Soon after, he was hired by Idaho Power and worked on a mobile line crew and did all kinds of line work across Idaho Power's service territory.

In 1980, he had an accident climbing a pole and broke and shattered his feet and ankles. After recovering, he then worked as a layout technician for new line extensions. This involves a lot of knowledge of construction materials, electricity, mapping as well as basic surveying.

He got his associates degree in electricity in 1984. In 1985, Winn became the Agricultural Program Coordinator for Idaho Power. From western Oregon to eastern Idaho, hundreds of irrigation pumps have been tested by Winn throughout the years to help customers make decisions for changes on their irrigation systems.

In 1990, he was instrumental in Idaho Power's Mini Cassia Irrigation Pilot program. In 1992, he was involved in developing the company's Irrigation Conservation Program for irrigated agriculture. Winn earned his Certified Irrigation Designer status from the Irrigation Association in 1997. Winn has always been very involved with doing irrigation workshops across the state.

Winn served on the IIEA board from 2000-2002 and pushed hard for the dealer workshops that the IIEA now does as part of its Idaho Irrigation Equipment Show. He and his wife, Barbara, have three children and live in Meridian.

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Nick Purdy named IIEA 2004 Person of the Year



Randy Purdy presents his father, Nick Purdy, with the IIEA 2004 Person of the Year Award.

Nick Purdy, of Picabo Idaho, has been selected as the Idaho Irrigation Equipment Association's 2004 Person of the Year.

The IIEA Person of the Year is an award given annually to a distinguished member of the organization that has provided many years of service and accomplishments to the irrigation industry. The award, which is voted on by the officers and board of directors, was given on January 5, 2005 at the IIEA membership banquet in Rupert. Son, Randy Purdy, presented the award to his father.

Growing up in the small town of Picabo, Idaho, L.N. (Nick) Purdy, experienced first hand the challenges faced by family farmers and ranchers. His father, Bud Purdy, ran a large cattle ranching and farming operation in Blaine County along the banks of world famous Silver Creek.

Although water was reasonably plentiful, there was always the challenge to maximize crop yields and reduce soil erosion with the flood irrigation techniques popular in the 1950's. With the challenge in mind to improve the efficiency of the operation, Nick enrolled in the University of Idaho majoring in Agricultural Engineering, and ultimately graduated in 1962.

As is usually the case with father/son operations, Nick's father didn't want to hear about all the new irrigation technology available, but Nick persisted and was able to start installing handline irrigation systems on property the family owned near the Craters of the Moon called Lava Lake Ranch. Nick's efforts in installing pressurized irrigation at Lava Lake earned him the "Grassman of the Year" award in 1972 from Idaho Power Company.

Recognizing the vast potential for pressurized irrigation, Nick, along with his stepbrother Gordon Eccles, started Silver Creek Irrigation in 1972. The operation was run out of a small office located at the ranch yard in Picabo. Silver Creek Irrigation quickly grew into a multiple branch operation with offices in Jerome and Mackey.

Over the next 25 years Nick lead the company through rapid expansion into center pivots, turf irrigation and golf irrigation. By the mid 1990's Silver Creek Irrigation had 6 offices across the state involved in all aspects of irrigation technology. In 1999 Nick and his sons sold Silver Creek Irrigation.

Despite having sold Silver Creek, Nick has remained very active in the irrigation industry. Nick and his son, Randy, were the first in the country to take high pressure big gun systems and merge them with ad-

vanced computer central control systems in order to provide an effective dust control solution for large cattle feedlots. This specialized system is sold across the country on dozens of the largest feedlots in the United States under the name Feedlot Environmental Systems.

Nick is also part owner of Boise based Precision Pumping Systems (PPS), a leading manufacturer of advanced variable frequency drive pumping systems used primarily in irrigation applications. PPS sells these pumping systems and VFD panel upgrades across Idaho and throughout the mid-western and north-western United States.

Upon receiving the award, Purdy, expressed appreciation and surprise for the honor. He said the industry is tough but satisfying. "In all the things I have done, irrigation work was the most satisfying and rewarding and the people I worked with were the greatest."

Purdy lives in Picabo with his wife Sharon. They have three children, Randy, Pat and Mike who live in Boise.

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