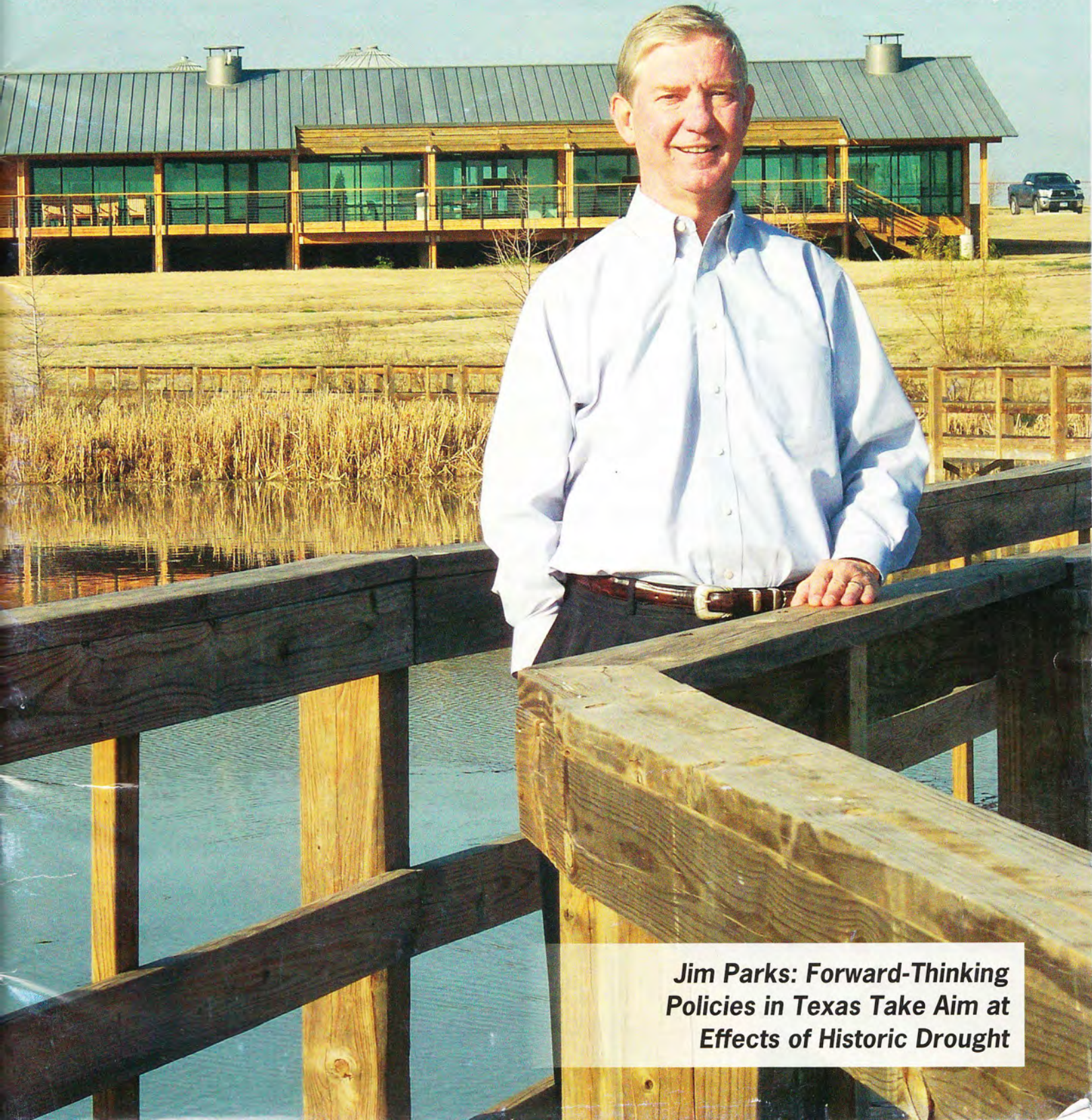


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Jim Parks: Forward-Thinking Policies in Texas Take Aim at Effects of Historic Drought

A photograph showing a man in a dark jacket and light blue jeans standing next to a large, newly installed metal screen. The screen is made of a grid of metal bars and is part of an irrigation system. In the background, there is a chain-link fence and some industrial equipment. A blue banner with white text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image.

As seen in Irrigation Leader, January 2012

Rich Gargan, IWS founder, standing by newly installed screen.

Water Screens Built in California Farming Community Thrive in International Marketplace

More than eight years ago, Rich Gargan launched International Water Screens (IWS) in Shafter, California, using a proven design originally constructed by area farmers and refined over three decades. In that time, the business has grown to sell screens across the globe for a variety of purposes.

Previously part of a family agricultural supply business in which he was responsible for a multi-million dollar screen line, Gargan set out on his own in 2003. His company now sells a wide range of custom-built products, including debris-removal screens, fish screens, and, more recently, industrial screens used by sugar cane and pulp mills.

“Nothing is standard,” said Gargan, noting that the largest screen his company has built to date was 12 feet wide and 80 feet long. “Every screen is made for that particular location.”

Today, IWS screens are sold in overseas countries ranging from Canada and Mexico to Australia and Vietnam. Each screen is built at IWS’s 20,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, which is operated by nine employees. However, the custom design process begins long before fabrication efforts. IWS first completes engineering of the proposed screen and incorporates changes requested by the customer. Only then does IWS provide a quote and move forward with construction.

“I believe in giving a customer what he wants on a handshake,” said Gargan. “There’s no charge for the back and forth engineering.”

IWS is also heavily involved with the installation of its screens, and Gargan noted that his company performs the installation itself about 90 percent of the time. “If it’s a big project, they might have the whole job go out to bid . . . but if we are not installing, we are supervising the installation,” he said.

The company also ensures that operating staff feel comfortable with the screen and performs on-site training for each customer. “When we go to visit a location, we discuss with the operator what the problems are,” Gargan said. “The last thing an operator wants is someone to say ‘here is a new machine, go operate it.’”

IWS stays involved with its screens subsequent to installation and regularly takes the lead on long-term maintenance activities. However, Gargan highlighted the durability of IWS products, which include steel chain manufactured in Illinois. “The first screen I ever sold is still in operation,” he said.

Gargan has worked with many of his shop employees for years. “We’re almost like a family,” he said. Additionally, his son and son-in-law are the sales representatives for the company.

For more information on International Water Screens, visit its website at www.internationalwaterscreens.com.