CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY: Gaylord Palms Resort, Florida

"SiteControl gives us the flexibility to fine-tune the system and easily make minor adjustments to account for the complex and changing factors affecting our irrigation requirements. Our partnership with Rain Bird has provided us with the support and response required to maintain a system that truly meets our needs."

Tim McColgan, Horticulture Manager, Gaylord Palms Resort

The Landscaping

The 1,406-room Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center is situated on 63 acres in Central Florida. The building itself is reminiscent of a grand Florida mansion and houses a 4.5-acre glass-enclosed atrium with a variety of themed environments. Total landscaping encompasses over one-half million individual specimens. The atrium landscape supports three individual scenes: Key West, St. Augustine, and the Everglades. The plant specimens within the atrium range from Cuban royal palms and cabbage and sago palms to 25-foot-tall and 20-foot-wide weeping figs; from ferns and grasses – typical of the Florida Everglades – to a leafy canopy including bougainvilleas and philodendron. Outdoor landscaping encompasses and endless variety of specimens from Southern magnolias to date palms, and carpets of Bermuda and St. Augustine grasses.

The Challenges

Investment in landscape – The resort, literally "built around a garden" represents a multi-million dollar investment in landscape assets.

Variety of plant specimens – With exotic specimens from around the globe, irrigation requirements go from drought-tolerant species to specimens requiring a rainforest environment.

Complexity of watering requirements – Irrigation capabilities must accommodate the needs of a multitude of plant types, three distinct environments in the atrium where temperature is maintained at a constant 68-72 degrees as well as external landscaping subject to the Central Florida weather including daily thundershowers.

Soil conditions – Because of the development process for the resort, topsoil conditions are not uniform around the site. Some areas stay saturated following rain while others dry out quickly.

Visual grandeur – Color beds are designed to be rotated seasonally or replanted – while guests are sleeping – for overnight holiday and special event surprises, creating the need for, sometime, daily changes to irrigation requirements.

Customer satisfaction – The landscape is an integral part of the resort. Gardens and landscaping must always be lush and vibrant, inviting customers to enjoy the outstanding display of flora. Wilted, unhealthy, or dead plants would mean an unsatisfactory experience resulting in few return customers.

The Answer: SiteControl Central Control with ESP-Satellite Controllers

To control the complex irrigation requirements of their external landscaping and the themed environments of the atrium, Gaylord Palms turned to Rain Bird's SiteControl Central Control System combined with ESP-Satellite Controllers. The dynamic, map-based system allows the fine-tuned control of irrigation for the multitude of species while accounting for the environmental differences between the glass-enclosed atrium and the external Central Florida weather. Four pump stations provide irrigation water to the resort, three for non-potable water and one supplying potable water for irrigation needs in the public access areas, atrium, and eating facilities.

The Results: A Landscape Second to None

SiteControl provides the Gaylord Palms horticulture team a central control system with the flexibility to meet the irrigation needs of a diverse and complex landscape. Dynamic, map-based interface and random access to any station allows the team to always know what is running where on the 63-acre site and, if needed, immediately make adjustments by clicking on the map. ET-based control with the ability to make minute adjustments in varying sub-areas allows Gaylord Palms to minimize water usage while maximizing the splendor of the resort.