

Safe, sane and economical. Propane makes its debut at the U



Superintendent Brent Belanger and Mechanic Chris Carpenter are thrilled with their conversion projects. Greener, cheaper to operate and easier on their engines are three no-brain reasons to make the switch.

“Sure, converting some of our equipment to propane last summer was the greener and more environmentally correct thing to do, but in all honesty, we are saving about \$1.50 per gallon of equally productive propane and we no longer have issues with the new boutique gasoline in the equipment we have changed over,” Brent Belanger, Superintendent at Les Bolstad Golf Club said during a brief visit to review his equipment a few weeks ago.

Belanger, in the industry for 15 years and Superintendent at the 84 year old University of Minnesota golf club, and his Mechanic Chris Carpenter have been wondering why the conversion hasn't taken off at other courses. Grant money provided by the state, combined with help from Rich Nordstrom of ACME Alternative Fuel Systems, allowed a simple alternative to gasoline in three pieces of their mowing arsenal; one rotary mower and two triplex mowers. All work was completed by Chris in his shop.

In the works are one truckster and several more pieces of mowing equipment next winter. The only cost to the club is based upon, "my time and effort", according to Carpenter. "Once you get the first one down it is full speed ahead on the next unit. The only drawback is that I am responsible for filling the vehicle tanks rather than allowing the summer staff access to the 'big tank'".

Getting the tanks of propane proved to be quite simple with the help of Russ Head from Quality Propane. His company simply dropped off a 1,000 gallon tank adjacent to the existing fuel tanks in the shop yard. Self contained, the big tank needs no 'containment system' and is quite safe and much more controllable than small 20 gallon units.

Is safety an issue? With a smile Brent exclaimed, "It is a whole lot safer than sitting upon a tank of gasoline operating a hot engine! We really like the green philosophy; exceptional money savings and the lack for need to winterize the equipment at the end of the season. Shut the valve, run the engine until it stops and forget about it until next spring."

Considering a change at your club? Chris and Brent plan to host at least one meeting at their course for a live demonstration. Contact Jack at jack@mgcsa.org if you have any interest in this opportunity.