

A Note from Settlers Hill G.C.

by Dan Murray, CGCS

Well, all of the dozers and scrapers have finally finished, and all of the important people that have been involved have gotten together for their final walkthrough. When the owners were happy and the contractors were sure they didn't do too many extras for free, the job was signed off.

It was quite a different feeling to have all of that equipment moving dirt one day, and the next day the woods were quiet. I then realized that in a couple of months time, the people I had hired must have this 95-acre tract ready to seed.

The few people already hired were preparing for the installation of the irrigation system: mounting control clocks in the cabinets, putting sprinklers and quick couplers on the swing joints, and locating the pipe and wire where we would make our initial connections.

The pipe was located, and we chose to dig by hand instead of using the backhoe. Wrong decision. Since the ground was hard, the crew decided to use a pickaxe and stuck it right in the middle of a 6" pipe. I hoped this was not how the whole summer would continue.

All in all, it wasn't that bad of a mistake. According to the as-built there was supposed to be a 4" pipe there; instead it was a 6" pipe. So this was where we made the connection to our existing irrigation system.

Once we established a routine, things moved along at a good clip. Since this was a new course with questionable material underneath, we decided to trench the entire project. That way

the pipe and wire would not be damaged, and we could remove all rocks or unwanted matter.

The materials for the job had arrived regularly and made quite a pile in the barn. The list of materials was astounding for 9 holes and included 42 miles of wire, 2 miles of pipe (2" to 8"), 1,000 wire splice kits, 195 sprinklers, 50 quick coupling valves, 28 isolation valves, 14 control clocks, 2,000 pipe fittings, 100 spools of teflon tape, 6 gallons of PVC cement and 7¼ tons of cement.

As we progressed farther and farther everyday, we used up our stockpile of materials. It was a full-time job for me to keep the crew supplied with the right fittings and to stake out the next hole while maintaining the existing 9 holes.

My young son became my most valuable assistant when it came to laying out the sprinklers — he could speak English! At times, I wondered if it would ever work, seeing up to 20 rolls of wires going in one trench and hoping the right wire went to the right sprinkler head.

While all this was going on, we also had other projects demanding my time and attention. Five thousand feet of cart paths were being installed. This required excavating to a 6" depth, adding 4" of stone, and then applying 2" of asphalt. In addition, there were about 85 jillion dump trucks driving everywhere they were not supposed to be while we were trying to finish off areas to seed.

Well, it did make life interesting this past year. More updates later.

JOHN DEERE

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