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when he has to cool down the course with water during a hot day.

It's also a point of interest for golfers who, like most everyone else, are fire engine buffs.

Golden tells of a company outing Springbrook hosted. He heard a noise out on the course, drove to it and found "a group of guys all over the firetruck. They had turned on the lights. The siren. And they were throwing dollar bills and quarters up onto the hose bed. They thought it was wonderful. They were just like kids. It was hard to be upset with them because a firetruck seems to bring that out, even in the oldest people..."

"People come up that 18th path, or 4th green, and can't resist going down and looking at it."

Golden said the firetruck's "negatives" are few.

Cutting off water to individual greens must be done mechanically. Isolating individual greens for watering is also difficult.

Once the pond flooded. When water reached the running boards, then-superintendent Kyle Evans had to make an emergency exit, driving the truck up a steep embankment.

Another time, dry grass under the LaFrance caught fire when the truck was started. Evans made "the fastest ride across this golf course in a Toro tractor that has ever been made," Golden laughed. "Our mechanic, Steve Beland, threw some dry chemicals up under the truck and managed to slow the fire down enough so that when Kyle got back they were able to put it out."

And the timing must be right moving the heavy LaFrance over fairways to the pond in the spring and back to its garage roost at the end of the season.

"We have to wait for the ground to firm up," he said. "Usually we get it set up the first or second week of May and pray we haven't had too much rain."

Are firetrucks a viable alternative for other courses?

Surprisingly, Golden thinks probably not. "Things have changed in the fire equipment business," he said. "Buying even a used firetruck in decent shape would probably cost too much..." Certainly more than the zero Springbrook paid for Brooks' present.

Yet, firetrucks will most likely be a permanent fixture at the pond in the center of Springbrook Golf Club — because of nostalgia if for no other reason.

"At night it's kind of nice," he said. "Steve (Beland) and I go down to the pond. He starts the truck up and stays with it and watches the pressure."

"I take a four-wheeler and check the sprinkler heads to make sure they're all working... After I make my tour, I come back (to wait out the 30- to 40-minute watering cycle).

"We get in the cab with a heater in the cold nights, a fan in the summer, windshield wipers when it's foggy. It gives us a place to get warm, out of the elements, the bad weather."

"It wouldn't seem quite as luxurious if we just had a pump house. We spend a lot of time down there."

Even Evans, who has installed a state-of-the-art irrigation system at his new course, Waterville (Maine) Country Club, reminisced about the firetruck.

"Do I miss it? Yes — and no. It was simpler. It's easier than trouble-shooting the computer. It's a pump rather than wires, three-phase power, gate valves..."

"But I remember the black flies being brutal at night out on the course."

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