

Irrigation of the future in 1973

Jerry Dinelli used to tell people water would one day be more expensive than oil. In Chicago during the 1970s, it was difficult for people to grasp this concept.

"Because we're next to Lake Michigan, people thought we'd never run out of water," Dinelli says.

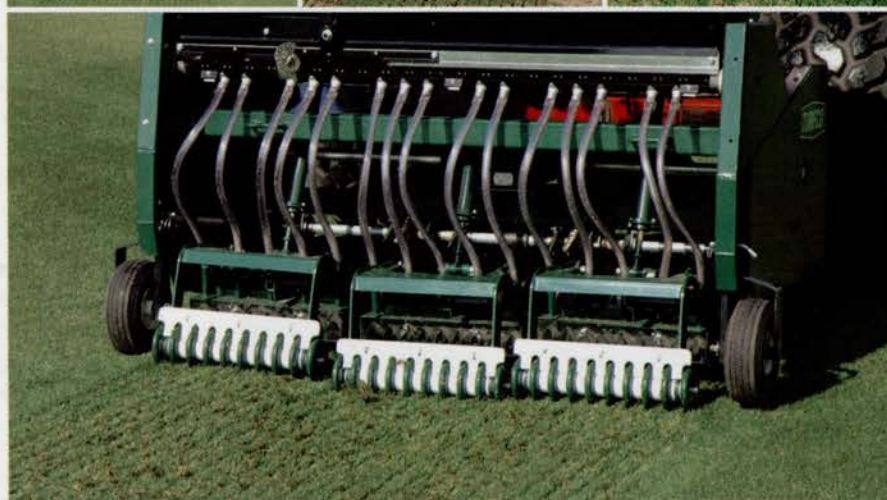
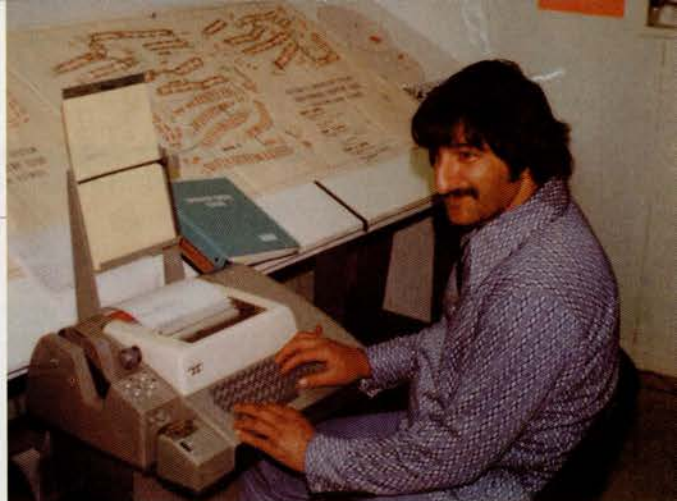
But Dinelli, now 67, saw the water level of the 3-acre lake at Northmoor Country Club in Highland Park, Ill., where he was keeper of the greens, drop. One reason for this was because the course used water from the lake for its irrigation system.

Wanting to make the most of the resource and fearing it wouldn't be around forever, Dinelli proposed a system that would help him and his crew keep better tabs on the water that was used on the course so there would be less waste. He went before the green committee and proposed a computerized system – something that hadn't been done up to that point, according to Dinelli. The country club's board of directors wasn't sold.

"I attended a big dinner meeting where I gave a speech of what was going to happen," he says. "All the members voted against it. The president of club, who is a big, worldwide attorney, said, 'I believe in what Jerry's doing, and I'm going ahead with that.'"

About three years passed while Dinelli got everyone on board and had the computer

Jerry Dinelli, former keeper of the greens at Northmoor Country Club in Highland Park, Ill., works on plans for a computerized irrigation system in the 1970s.



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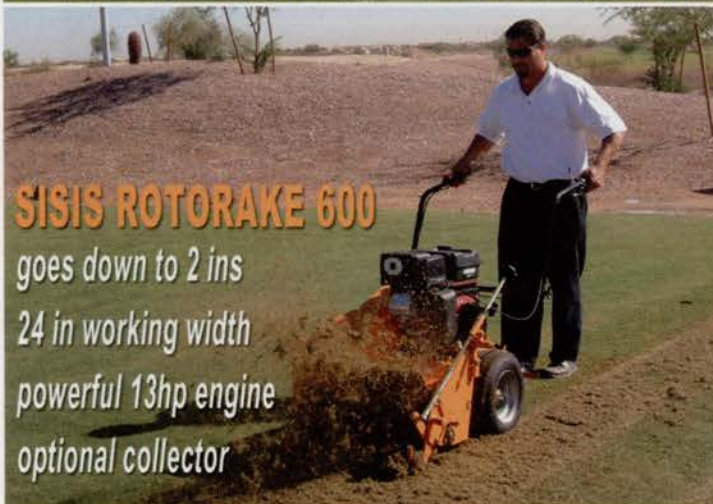
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made - a project that cost about \$278,000.

"It wasn't that simple," he says. "It took time to do research because nobody had anything like this. I had to convince the architect that we could do it."

It paid off. It worked the first time he fired it up. The system, which took up most of the space in a 10-foot-by-12-foot room, computerized all the irrigation heads on the 27-hole course, which was almost a mile long. The computer would spot diseases through an infrared camera, and activate the sprinkler close to the diseased turf. Dinelli also ran fertilizer through the sprinkler heads this way.

The computer controlled an existing pump house that was remodeled when the computer was installed. There was a bank of three different-sized pumps to control the three zones of the irrigation system, which consisted of 725 new sprinkler heads, some in pairs down the fairway. The sprinkler heads were controlled one-by-one if needed - a new idea at the time. It saved the course from using more water than necessary to maintain the plants' health.

"Why pump an extra 100,000 gallons when you don't need it?" Dinelli asks.

Dinelli had other ideas dubbed "crazy" by colleagues as well. They included putting radios inside his crew's helmets, spraying fungicides from a helicopter and placing video cameras inside birdhouses to monitor the conditions of the ground and check for golfers before turning on spray heads.

But with the price of water outpacing gasoline at \$4 per gallon and computerized irrigation systems the norm, nobody's calling Dinelli crazy anymore - at least when it comes to irrigation. - HW

Sweet emotion

When the amateur golfer can envision his or her name on the leader board at the Masters, the golfer will be more likely to pick up the clubs and head to the local course. This is the premise the recently formed Drive Marketing company is using to help golf courses sell more rounds.

The Atlanta-based company sells a marketing service to courses based on the idea that emotion sells.

"What golfer wouldn't want to see his name on a leader board or on a trophy hoisted above his head?" says Tom Meyers, co-founder and chief strategy officer of Drive Marketing. "We want to tap into those aspirational drivers that motivate golfers to purchase."

Meyers, along with co-founder David Neis, have promoted several large, well-known brands including Life Savers, Mizuno, Maxfli and Russell Athletic. Playing to the golfer's emotional side is something that works for all sports and is a strategy Meyers used at Russell. He uses a similar tactic with almost 50 golf course clients at his new company.

Targeted golfers receive an oversized postcard in the mail. The image on the card includes the golfer's name in a spot where Tiger Woods' name would usually appear - on a leader board, a Masters trophy, a caddie's bib or another object that would be found at a