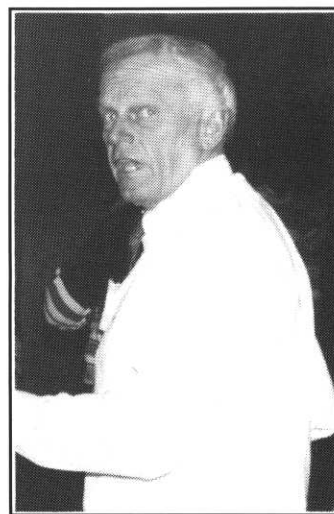


New Water System At Mankato—Finally



Boots Fuller
Mankato Superintendent

When the Board of Directors at Mankato Golf Club decided to invest in a new automatic water system, most of us here breathed a huge sigh of relief, especially the golf course superintendent. We have been waiting for a new water system for a long time.

The first request for a new system was made several years ago. We originally talked about it in 1975 and 1976, but little beyond lip service was even considered. Only when our present manual system was placed under a great deal of stress these past three summers, was the seriousness of a new system given top consideration.

Watering with our old manual system really brings back some hard memories, two in particular.

When I came here in 1975 as superintendent, we were still stringing hoses and sprinklers on 13 greens, 15 tees, the nurseries, the club house lawn area, practice area and the practice putting green. We hired extra help to do the watering at night, and when these people wanted a night or a weekend off, guess who was elected to cover the watering those times?

It got to be kind of rough working 8-10 hours during the day, then coming back at night for anywhere from three to six more hours to get the watering finished.

The other horror story I recall most vividly was the continual installation of quick couplers and “pop-ups” on the greens and tees. Finally, by 1984, we had pretty well completed the “updating” to a total manual system on greens and tees. What an improvement. Wow!!! Now the only places we had to water with hoses and sprinklers were the nurseries and the club house lawn.

After the 1984 summer, we began training several people in the operation of our “new” manual system. In spite of that, Fred Taylor, assistant superintendent at Mankato, and I still got caught doing a lot of the watering, especially in the spring and fall when the college students we hired couldn’t always be here.

Needless to say, the desire to change to an automatic system picked up momentum. When we experienced the dry summers over the past three years, plus an unusually high cost of keeping an outdated and obsolete system in decent repair, the move for a new system really picked up steam in the early summer of 1989. The time was right.

A committee was formed and included interested members, the general manager, Fred and myself. As the wheels were put into motion, I don’t think anyone really had a total grasp on all the little things that were to become involved. Several key decisions were made concerning how to get water from our two existing wells, whose total pumping capacity was about 550 gallons per minute onto a golf course watering system that was proposed to pump about 800 gallons per minute. To stiffen the problem, most of the water from one of those two wells was needed to satisfy demands at the club house.

We decided to build a 2.5 million gallon pond, covering about 1.5 surface acres. Water would come from one of the existing wells and the old pipeline would be used to fill the pond. The other well, which served the club house, also would have a line going into the pond, but would only be used in an emergency. We also used the old pipeline for the project.

Once a contractor was hired to install the system, and another contractor was hired to build the pond, we were ready to go.

First, a new service road had to be built because the old road was where the pond was going to be. Next, we had to move 58 trees from the proposed pond area to different places on the course. We then started construction on three new elevated tees for the 12th hole. These were designed and built by Fred and myself.

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Mankato's Watering System—

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A new cart path was constructed around the 11th green to get traffic from the 11th hole over to the 12th tee. Northern States Power Company was hired to bring in a whole new underground electrical service to the new water system. The old pump house was remodeled to accommodate the changes necessary to fill the pond.

Another contractor was hired to construct the new pump house station. All these projects were started the second week of September, 1989. Six super weeks of weather enabled all the projects to proceed with great speed, resulting in much work being done.

The pond was completed and we filled it during the second week of November. About 80% of the work on the new elevated tees at No. 12 is complete. Approximately 85% of the pipe installation was completed. The new pump house stands, and NSP has completed the installation of power to the site. In addition, most of the work on the new cart path around the 11th green is completed.

Much work needs to be done this spring, and every time I go out on the course, I get the "willies" just thinking about it. Pipe installation needs to be completed on the first and 18th holes, as well as the club house lawn area. All the controllers and the central have to be installed. Some fine grading, sodding and seeding need to be finished on the new tees at the 12th hole. A ton of fine grading, seeding and sodding must be done around the 11th green, 12th tee and pond areas.

Additional grading and seeding must be finished at three new berms, which were constructed along the eighth and 10th holes. Lots of restoration will be required to repair turf damage caused by various construction projects on the course.

All in all, the progress has been phenomenal. We are hoping for a good spring, because our old water system no longer exists, and we'll be running a race with the weatherman to get water to the course.

It would be nice if that would mean that we'd get some rain in the evening hours to water the seed and sod we put in during the day. I don't think I'm going to count on that happening, however.

We must exercise some practicality and restraint. But if the dry conditions continue to exist, we could have lots of problems this spring. We'll keep our fingers crossed and hope for the best. Maybe it'll help if you do that for us, too. I guess, in the final analysis, that's what we probably have to do in most cases anyway.

—Boots Fuller
Mankato Golf Club
Mankato, Minnesota

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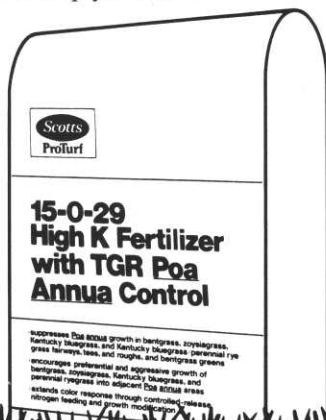
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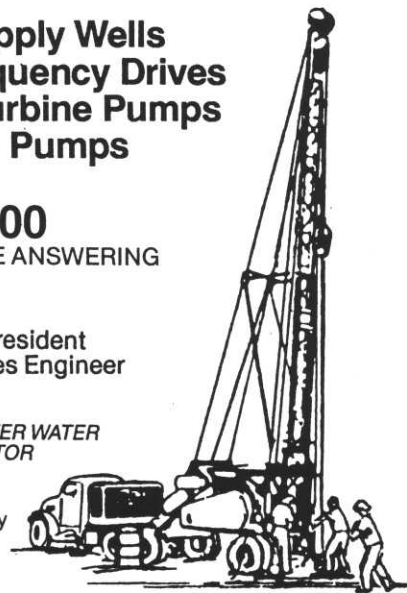
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