

GOLF

PAGE 26 ▶

Harborside's great, green grow-in

PAGE 66 ▶

Compost trials on greens, fairways

PAGE 206 ▶

Alpine restoration at Telluride

PAGE 246 ▶

Two-man teams work at Arcola

We at Lincolnshire Fields Country Club began an irrigation system replacement project in 1992. It was completed in three phases over the course of three years.

In the first year, we installed a deep well, which feeds Lake Lincolnshire, our fourteen acre irrigation lake. During the fall of 1993 and into the spring of 1994, we replaced the wet well, pump station, pumphouse, and installed all new main line piping on the golf course. In the fall of 1994 and spring of 1995, we completed the installation of secondary piping, sprinklers and controllers.

The first step in such a project is to evaluate what you currently have. Consider the age and condition of the system; determine if water supplies are adequate; and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of your present system.

What will you need in the future? What type of coverage will you be using, on what kind of turf? If you remodel the

course later, will the system be compatible with the redesign?

In the planning phase, involve your employer, greens committee, or whomever pays the bills. You will need their support for what you are proposing.

Consider the strength of your local distributor, consultant availability in your area, project complexity and bid requirements when choosing which way to go.

Consider the budget early in the planning process to avoid wasted time considering things that you can't possibly afford.

As you develop equipment and installation specifications, use any and all sources of information. Talk to colleagues in other areas of the country, such as the desert southwest, where

most irrigation equipment is initially tested. Consider timing, the window of opportunity for completing the project, and the exact responsibilities of the installer. You can save a lot of added expense, and a lot of confusion during the project if things are very well spelled out.

As you award contracts, check references thoroughly. Interview finalists to establish a comfort level, and consider installer/distributor relationships. Most importantly, consider cost as one of many factors. The low bid is often not the best bid!

As a golf course superintendent or professional turf manager, your most important responsibility during the installation process is communication. You will have to inform adjacent land owners of possible inconvenience to them; protect your existing facilities and features; and prepare the golfing community for course downtime or other conflicts.

After installation, involve your key staff members with hands-on training.

To sum up, when it comes to a new irrigation system, I advise you to: evaluate and plan carefully; choose your contractor and distributor cautiously; supervise thoroughly and use the system fully. **LM**

Guest columnist Scott Werner, CGCS, leads the crew at Lincolnshire Fields Country Club, a private facility in Champaign, Ill.

Be complete when planning new irrigation system



Scott Werner

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Guest columnist