



# An up and down situation

**Elevation changes and water-specific plantings made for one tough irrigation project**

BY JASON STAHL /  
MANAGING EDITOR

Blaschka and Heidvogel, along with the engineers at Watertronics pumping systems, based in nearby Hartland, WI, designed a 7.5-hp pump station using what's known as programmable logic control. The station can sense and adjust flow and pressure to meet the requirements of different turf and landscape areas on the estate. Some plants need more water than others, and at different times of the day.

"The potted plants around the pool needed water multiple times per day because the pots are clay and black and get very hot from the sun. We needed to water them not only to keep them

*continued on page 72*

**R**ick Heidvogel and Brian Blaschka regularly install irrigation systems at estates with homes valued from \$800,000 to \$3 million. The two are partners in The Lakeland Group of Nashotah, WI, specializing in irrigation, lighting and landscape management.

Nevertheless, a \$1.8 million estate in nearby Oconomowoc, in the "Lake Country" area in southeastern Wisconsin, challenged their ingenuity. The 6-acre estate had elevation changes of up to 65 ft. It also contained large turf areas, annual beds, perennial beds and hanging potted plants.

Rather than irrigating the grounds from a well, the property uses the adjacent lake for its source of water, something that Heidvogel began perfecting in 1990 when he started the company.

## To a higher level

"This required obtaining a pump station to distinguish between high-flow pressure demands and low-flow pressure demands," explains Heidvogel. "But pump stations don't like to see such a wide range of performance, so we had to figure out how to take technology to a higher level."



**This 7.5-hp pump station distinguishes between high-flow and low-flow pressure demands.**

continued from page 71

alive but keep them cool," Blaschka explains.

"The small grass areas around the steppers also needed to be put on a daily watering schedule. We ended up putting all the small demand beds and little turf areas on separate zones based on plant life, shade and other factors. It was costly, but it worked perfectly," he says.

The owner of the estate didn't want any water to get on the steppers, so Blaschka and Heidvogel turned to Netafim drip irrigation for precise watering. "We chose this product because it has worked well for us, and we knew we could bury it under the turf around the steppers," Blaschka says. "Also, we had the ability to

"Pump stations don't like to see such a wide range of performance."  
— Rick Heidvogel

punch into the drip with emitters that allowed us to run tiny tubes up into each individual potted plant around the pool area."

Blaschka and Heidvogel ended up installing a sophisticated, \$30,000 irrigation system with a pump station that could handle both high pressure/flow needs and low pressure/flow needs. Also, drip irriga-

tion and line emitter tubing helped the pair get water to where it was needed with no waste. **LM**

## Company profile

### Total revenue:

\$1.1 million

### Staff:

6 full-time, 15 seasonal

### Business breakdown:

62% — irrigation construction and business

20% — landscape lighting

18% — landscape management

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