

water sense



WATER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
SUMMER 2010

GREEN RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE TURNING "GREEN"

Two grounds personnel were maintaining an 85 acre campus plus 3 satellite locations. Irrigation consisted of hundreds of feet of hose connected to quick couplers and hose bibs. Athletic fields were watered with agricultural-type hand lines. Communication regarding leaks and broken pipes depended on phone calls from observant people at the satellite locations, and on reports coming into the maintenance office if a problem wasn't spotted. An untold number of gallons of water gushed, leaked or blew away in the wind. In the summer months there weren't enough manpower or work hours to meet the water demand to keep landscape healthy. That's how operations were when first employed by the College. The need for an efficient, environmentally-conscious water management system for irrigation that would save water, time and money became apparent.

Green River Community College is located in Auburn, Washington about 35 miles south of Seattle and enrolls over 11,000 students. Over the years, the college's green initiatives have evolved and programs have been adopted to reduce operating expenses and improve productivity within the areas of gas, electrical, water, recycling and composting.

What was once only imagined is now being realized, through the installation of a state-of-the-art, irrigation control system called Calsense. Currently there are



Tom Trindl, Maintenance Specialist 4 & Ray Bell, Landscape Specialist 2

12, model ET2000e controllers installed with future expansion. At the Grounds Shop the office computer is loaded with the Command CENTER software and communicates to the field units using the campus Ethernet network.

Weather sensing equipment consists of an on-site ET gage, a Tipping Rain Bucket, and a Wind Gage. The ET gage adjusts the station run times based on weather conditions. The system shuts down when the rain bucket registers a set amount of rain. When winds get above 12 mph, the irrigation system automatically shuts down to keep water from blowing off target. An added bonus to using the wind gage is the wind speed reports which can be used for pesticide records.

Flow sensors installed measure station flow rates and detect high and low flows, providing an 'Alerts' report every morning of possible broken heads, clog heads or valves partially or completely shut off. If the gallons per minute exceed preset flow on a mainline, the controller will shut down a master valve and report it. Detailed water usage reports

compared to a calculated water budget, aids in the adjusting of campus irrigation. Using the Calsense radio remote to turn on zones and edit station run-times without having to physically go to the controller provides a powerful labor management tool as well. A future innovation planned will be the monitoring of domestic water usage through Calsense controllers with flow sensors so that actual building water usage can be presented to the city.

Work hours reduced, water saved, healthy environment—everything imagined, and more thanks to Calsense and the factory support of Kevin Schasel and Steve Budinich. Whatever our needs, they are only a phone call away to help.

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