

water sense



WATER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS
SPRING 2012

Maintaining Savannah's Historic Beauty with Modern Technology

People, who have had the pleasure of visiting Savannah, GA, see why some call it "one of the most beautiful cities in the South". If the opportunity to visit hasn't happened, then maybe seeing it in one of the many films shot there, like "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil", "The Legend of Bagger Vance" or "Forest Gump", has provided such a glimpse.

In order to maintain the natural beauty of the landscape, including hundreds of live Oaks and almost 100 acres of turf, Savannah decided to upgrade their irrigation central control system over 6 years ago. The existing system had become unreliable and cumbersome to use. Communication to the field units was inconsistent and because the satellites were "dumb", meaning that advanced programming could only be done from the computer, monitoring the controllers became problematic. After doing the necessary research and comparing brands, Calsense was chosen as the new central control system due to its ease of use and potential for reduced water and labor costs.

Dave Rippe, the Calsense field technician, helped oversee the installation of 6 Calsense ET2000e controllers and spent time training field personnel on product basics. Over the next few months Dave returned to provide advanced instruction and to help fine tune program settings for maximum savings. The factory-direct,



Van Johnson, Landscape Supervisor, Historic Grayson Stadium

field service Calsense provides has been invaluable. The 10 year limited warranty was one of the many reasons Calsense was chosen, but to have lifetime no-charge, factory support is unmatched in the industry.

Tight city budgets are real, so the 30% water savings achieved by watering based on plant need was a major factor in the City achieving a return on investment in less than 3 years. In addition, the system is another "person". No longer does a field tech have to go to each controller to check for electrical or hydraulic problems. Rather than running a manual test to check for breaks, broken heads and bad solenoids, each controller automatically checks for issues and are logged to be reviewed either at the controller or at the computer software. Each morning the Alerts Report is viewed and work orders are generated so that the field techs go directly to the problem, making repairs in a fraction of the time. Vehicle costs have been reduced, as well as labor hours. Since wireless access has been added in many areas, the City is saving additional money by adding WiFi modems and reducing recurring phone charges.

A "real world" example of cost and time savings occurred recently. One of the city's parks was being prepared for a weekend event. A crew member accidentally drove a tent stake through the irrigation mainline. The Calsense flow monitoring recognized the break and shut down the master valve, preventing loss of water. Without this kind of automation, someone would have been called in on a weekend to shut water off. Overtime and travel expenses would have resulted, and the potential damage that could have occurred was prevented.

The city is currently operating 13 Calsense controllers, including Grayson Stadium, home of the Savannah Sand Gnats Minor League baseball team. Using radio remote functions and special manual programs for re-seeding and fertilization applications are crucial for such a sports complex. Five additional controllers are scheduled for installation this year and with all the benefits achieved thus far, the city looks forward to a long term partnership with Calsense in the future.

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