

WATERWELL Newsletter

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March 2003

Working harder for you !

As we do every year, we have made numerous improvements to our software in a constant effort to increase efficiency and effectiveness in our customer service department.

We are in the process of revamping our website. Starting April 1st, 2003, our customers will be able to log-in to a new section of our site (which is completely secure and confidential). You will require a password, which you may obtain from our office staff when your next service call is booked. You will be able to view and modify your customer information, see past and future service calls, see invoices, and even pay them on-line. As well, our customers will be able to make a request for a service call on our website which we will then confirm by telephone. By next year, we hope to be able to offer you the ability to actually book your own service call right into our schedule, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, via the web site!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Fred D'Amico of E-Merge Infosystems (www.e-merge.qc.ca) who has been instrumental taking our ideas and instructions and developing them. They have done a great job on our software and have now begun work on our website.

This Spring, our system will be able to automatically send an email reminder 3 days before any appointment to our customers who have email addresses!

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Neither snow nor sleet nor dark of night stops the Waterwell crew...

From Joel's desk

El Nino. Mother Nature. The weather. *continued on page 2*

Unfortunately, our industry is at the mercy of the weather. Rain and snow affect our ability to perform installations and repairs during the actual time it is raining or snowing and for a certain amount of time afterwards to allow for proper drainage of the wet soil. Extremely dry, hot weather, despite increasing sales of new systems, has numerous disadvantages for us. Our service department is flooded with calls for service since even the smallest problems are immediately apparent due to the rapid drying out of the affected turf or planting areas. As water levels drop in our area and in the Great Lakes, which is where our water comes from, municipalities are forced to impose restrictions and even bans to conserve this valuable resource. Finally, the physical labour and long hours put in by our outdoor staff becomes even more difficult when temperature and humidity levels rise.

Last season threw us quite a few curve balls – from the snow in late April and even early May to a rainy spring followed by another extremely hot and dry summer.

Our Team

We take pride in the fact that our outdoor staff and our office staff are among the most highly trained in the industry. We have developed our eight-level training program ourselves and all our irrigation and lighting training is performed in-house. As well, we send our employees out to other learning centers to take various types of safety courses. As we grow, hiring and training new employees becomes more and more important. This year, we have several new members of our team who have already begun the long training process. We encourage you to give them feedback on their progress whenever you communicate with them, as this will help them immensely in their development.

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Mark's chatter

Frequently asked questions "What differentiates Waterwell from the others? Why is it that there is such a large variance in the prices from company to company? The answers are simple. Remember the old proverb, "You get what you pay for". This is a very low entrance level industry, face it all you need is a shovel and a means of transporting the shovel from one location to another. Realistically what we do is not rocket science (maybe one notch down). Like anything else as long as you have a reliable product and follow the recommended procedures you can have a relatively good system. People say, "I have a "Blank" system", (fill in the blank with a manufactures name i.e. Toro, Rainbird, Hunter, or Nelson). People do not realize they are not buying the manufactures credentials, remember the other proverb "...always the tools not the tool-maker". The product is only as good as how it is used or installed. The largest asset comes from the installer, what you are buying is the installers' credentials, experience, responsibility, professionalism and services that they have to offer. It is the installer that promotes the product not vice versa. When a system is installed we can actually minimize or maximize the costs of future changes, as well as the likelihood of repairs

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We appreciate the patience demonstrated by our customers given the abnormal circumstances imposed on us by the weather.

This year, we are looking forward to the new season with high expectations. Hopefully, Mother Nature will be nicer to us so that we can offer a better service to our clients.

Mark's Chatter: cont'd. from

just on the layout of the components. Like everything else there are many ways of cutting corners and fortunately or unfortunately 95% of the things we do are underground so they are for all intents and purposes invisible. There are many other aspects/components to a system not just the name brand parts. These components are the some of the links in a system and "...you are only as strong as the weakest link.". A good system is not just water spraying out, it is the representation behind it.

Watering tips

Many people believe it is better to water a little every day. Less frequent, longer duration that is the way to go. To understand this we must understand the way grass grows. Grass like most plants have a root system to be able to absorb some of the things required to sustain itself. Logically these roots grow in the direction of these components, in our case the water. If we water lightly every day the water basically stays on the surface, there is not enough to soak down into the soil. Therefore the roots grow up to where the water is. What then happens in a drought period is that the surface dries up first, then the roots which are on the surface end result, the grass turns yellow. When you water longer the water soaks down deeper the roots go down and you make your lawn more drought resistant, it will actually require less water to maintain the lush green color.

RIDDLE: A man sells something for \$30.00 to 3 brothers who pay \$10 each. He then realizes that the price should have been \$25.00. To make it simpler he returns \$1 to each of the brothers and keeps \$2 for himself.
Summarize: The brothers actually paid \$10 each minus \$1 = \$9... $9 \times 3 = \$27$. The salesman kept \$2, so the total is \$29. Where is the remaining \$1. The first correct response will get 1 free closing valid only for the 2003 season, please reply by fax 514-333-5225 or e-mail, info@waterwellirrigation.com.



From Betty Bond

The 2003 Season is my 9th year as an employee of Waterwell. I started with Waterwell on a part time basis – a few hours two or three times a week as needed. I answered the phone, processed and mailed invoices, did the payroll and entered the payables into the computer. If I was scheduled to work and it was raining I didn't go in because we had only one computer between us and on rain-days Joel or Mark would be in the office preparing quotes, etc. and they would need the computer.

Gradually as the customer base increased we got another computer and I began to come in on a more regular basis – answering the phone – taking messages and working up a very rough schedule, which would be finalized when everyone returned in the evening.

We then moved from the small garage in Roxboro to larger premises in Pierrefonds and in the same year moved again into our present location in the industrial park in Ville St. Laurent. With each move the company continued to grow – additional office staff was hired and my rough scheduling was replaced by a computer program, which helped our customers as well as ourselves to schedule and keep appointments.

Nowadays, I don't get to answer the phone or make appointments. I miss talking with many of the customers who, over the years, had become friendly voices at the other end of the phone. However, should you ever have any questions regarding your account, I will be happy to speak with you.

What We Are Doing For The Community

We completed the system at the Kehal Israel Cemetery in Dollard des Ormeaux last year. This year again we will be donating a system to a non-profit or charitable organization. To date we do not have anything specific in mind, we will leave this up to you. Please submit your request in writing, by fax, e-mail or letter. Include the organization name, contact and phone number. The deadline for submissions will be July 31, 2003, we will determine the winner by number of requests then by secret ballot if there is a tie.

For this project we will again be requesting the support of our suppliers. Central Irrigation Supply at 4184 Thimmins, St. Laurent, Quebec H4B 2R7 will be supplying all of the brand name irrigation components and we will provide the equipment and labour. To view the list of past organizations we have supported visit our website at Waterwellirrigation.com.

Price increases for 2003

Unfortunately, due to increasing costs, we must raise some of our prices for the upcoming season. Rising petroleum, insurance, and labour costs are just a few of the factors influencing our overhead costs. Slight increases have been made to the closing, opening, and labour rates (see your Early Booking form for new rates for your system). We have modified our labour rates (in an effort to be more fair to our customers) as follows: Work done by our service technicians will be now be charged at \$60.00 per hour while work done by their apprentices will be charged at only \$40.00 per hour.

Working harder for you: cont'd. from p.1

Correction: In our March 2002 there was an error in the "Our Community" section it should have read as follows.

Last year we installed a complimentary system for the Kehal Israel Cemetery on 4189 Sources Road D.D.O. Due to the size of the system it will be done in two phases. Last year we did the large open section in front of the house, and this year we will complete the smaller sections along the road and the north driveway. All of the product was donated by the Nelson manufacturer of Pioria Illinois and the Canaglobe distributor of 2750 Paulis St. Laurent. Waterwell provided the labour and machinery.