

Rupert Country Club Members -

I'd like to first introduce myself. My name is Spencer Mendenhall—I am a Cassia County native, an avid golfer, and was previously a superintendent at Eagle Mountain Golf Course in Brigham City before moving back home last year to manage Raft River Sod.

I'd like to tell you about my experience at Eagle Mountain—everyday for three and half golf seasons at Eagle Mountain I battled a failing irrigation system. It was a 30 year old system that was extremely inefficient—dry spots everywhere and wet, swampy spots everywhere. I spent a large majority of each season digging holes, isolating breaks, spot watering and rewiring and maintaining old clocks. Because irrigation took all of my time, I was unable to focus on other areas of the golf course or make improvements or do special projects to improve the course. I was working 80+ hours a week and occasionally sleeping in the pump house to keep the system running through the night in the heat of summer so we wouldn't lose our greens. In those 3.5 years we fixed over 350 irrigation breaks, ran countless feet of communication wire, replaced 10 pumps and spent over \$90,000 annually on irrigation maintenance and repair. I tell you all of this to paint a picture that it will never get better, in fact, it got progressively worse each year. You can keep repairing and putting a band-aid on the old system but that will be a waste of money because eventually the system will be in complete disrepair or you won't be able to keep a superintendent because he will be so tired of fixing breaks and not actually being able to do his job—which is where I almost was until we petitioned the City Council and showed them the facts and it was a no brainer and we installed a new irrigation system in 2019.

There are countless reasons replace a failing irrigation system but the main 3 are longevity, cost and playability.

Longevity

These old PVC pipe irrigation systems typically have a life span of 15-20 years. They aren't meant to last forever and won't, however the new High Density Polyethylene pipe have yet to be stamped with a life span. Making this investing more than likely a one-time investment.

Cost

Like I mentioned before, we spent \$90,000 annually on irrigation repairs and maintenance. That was literally money down the drain because eventually we couldn't sustain the old system and had to replace it. I am very aware of the substantial cost associated with a new system, but when you're not applying a large portion of your operating budget each year to repairs, you'll be able to apply it to the new system - making it pay for itself. Also, once the new system was installed we were able to cut water expenses by half by being more efficient because we had the control to do so.

Playability

Playability suffers tremendously and is extremely inconsistent when you have a failing irrigation system. On the same hole you can have a dry, hard surface and 100 yards down you can have a wet, swamp area. Or one hole can have a green that balls land softly and stick on and others the ball can hit and roll or bounce off. In order for Rupert or any course to be held in high regard it needs to be consistent, clean and playable on all surfaces that are meant to be played on - not wet or dead. The playability will also improve when a superintendent isn't spending all their time digging up breaks, but when he's able to focus on the course and making noticeable improvements rather than fixing a pipe that is buried.

I know how expensive and overwhelming a new system can seem. My fears for Rupert Country Club in not replacing their system is 1) losing members and players due to quality, 2) not being able to keep a superintendent because of the monotony of prolonged irrigation maintenance and 3) losing playing surfaces, specifically the already stressed putting greens. I really hope you will make a conscious decision regarding your vote, but it is likely that if you vote against the new system now you will be voting on this again in the near future because it won't last forever.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Spencer Mendenhall