



CREATING LUSH, GREEN LANDSCAPES

RR Irrigation Co., Inc. tackles tough, challenging projects

by Susan Diemont-Conwell

More than 70 feet above sea level, the team of *RR Irrigation Co., Inc.* positions itself on a steep incline at New York's Governors Island. With stiff winds whipping up from the cold, rough waters of New York Harbor, technicians securely tie themselves off, supporting each other much like mountain climbers. Over the course of 12 months, the team works in these challenging conditions to install the sophisticated irrigation system that will keep the island's new 10-acre public park lush and green for thousands of New York residents and visitors.

The challenging project is par for the course for *RR Irrigation*, according to President Steve Dobossy. "We take on the difficult jobs—whether we're working within congested areas, along steep elevations or in extreme temperatures and other weather conditions."

Headquartered in Middlesex, New Jersey, the company installs and maintains irrigation, outdoor lighting and drainage systems for commercial customers across Northern Philadelphia, Eastern Pennsylvania, Central and Northern New Jersey, New York City and Southern New York state.

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RR Irrigation Co., Inc. navigated steep hills and stiff winds to install the irrigation system for the Hills park project at Governors Island. At Outlook Hill, the steep slope required workers to tie off with climbing gear to keep safe.



Additionally, the company provides residential services to customers within a 25-mile radius and larger residential customers and estates as far away as Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

The Hills park project at Governors Island, completed in 2016, was challenging on several fronts, according to Steve. The park features several man-made hills that were built atop 297,000 cubic yards of fill and 50,000 cubic yards of recycled debris from the demolition of buildings and parking lots. The team of RR Irrigation worked long hours to install



President Steve Dobossy (right) and Vice President Paul Maiwaldt manage RR Irrigation Co., Inc. The two are seen here atop Discovery Hill on Governors Island.

the irrigation system on these steep rolling hills. Each day, team members commuted from Central New Jersey to the tip of Manhattan, where they'd board a ferry for the island. "The weather could be very different on the island," Steve says. "It might be warm and pleasant in downtown Manhattan but frigid and windy on Governors Island."

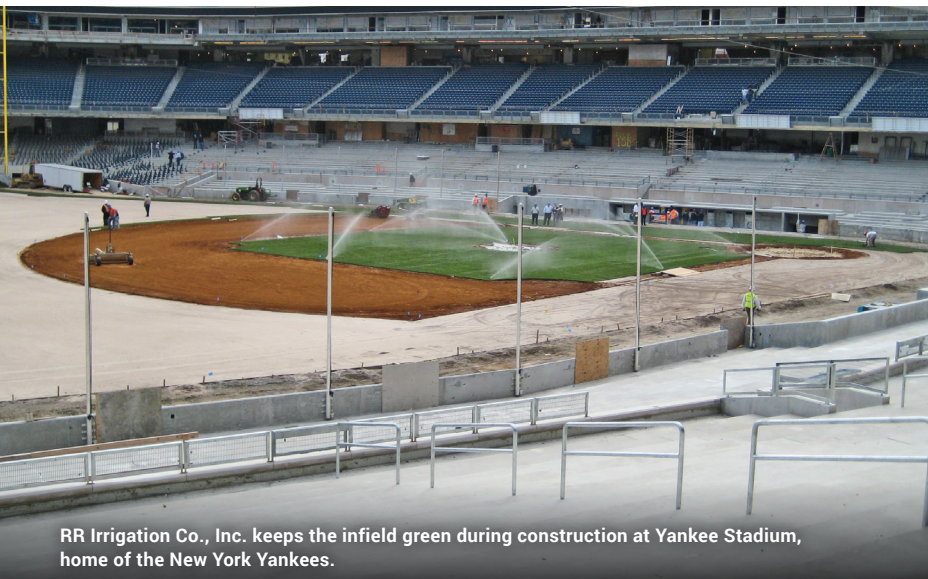
To play a part in creating New York City's newest landmark is gratifying work, according to Steve. "The Hills offers 360-degree views of the Statue of Liberty, New York Harbor and the New York City skyline. We helped to create this amazing space where people spend their summer evenings out on the lawns listening to their favorite bands, where they hike, picnic, slide and even go glamping. It's definitely a signature project for our company."

HIGH-PROFILE PROJECTS

With a team of 35 employees, RR Irrigation provides installation and maintenance services for 4,000 residential customers and about 400 commercial customers. "We take on small and large projects, some reaching upward of \$2 million in size," Steve says.

The company's diverse customer base includes private schools and universities, townships and property developers. "We do quite a lot of roof decks—particularly in New York City—where high-end apartment amenities often include green roofs, pool decks and even lawns."

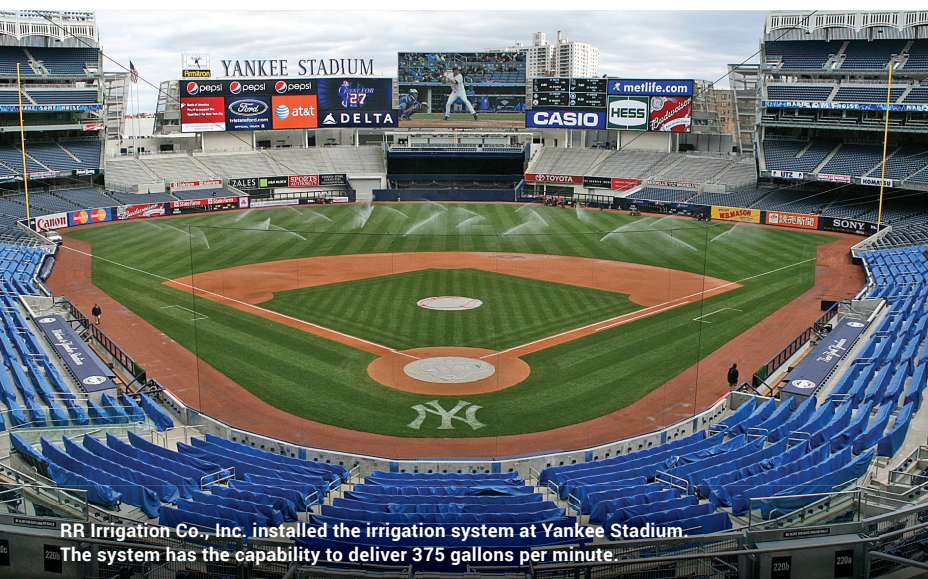
Noteworthy jobs include a project for Yankee Stadium, home of the New York Yankees. "We had done some minor work at the old stadium. When



RR Irrigation Co., Inc. keeps the infield green during construction at Yankee Stadium, home of the New York Yankees.



RR Irrigation Co., Inc. waters the new sod in the outfield at Yankee Stadium.



RR Irrigation Co., Inc. installed the irrigation system at Yankee Stadium. The system has the capability to deliver 375 gallons per minute.

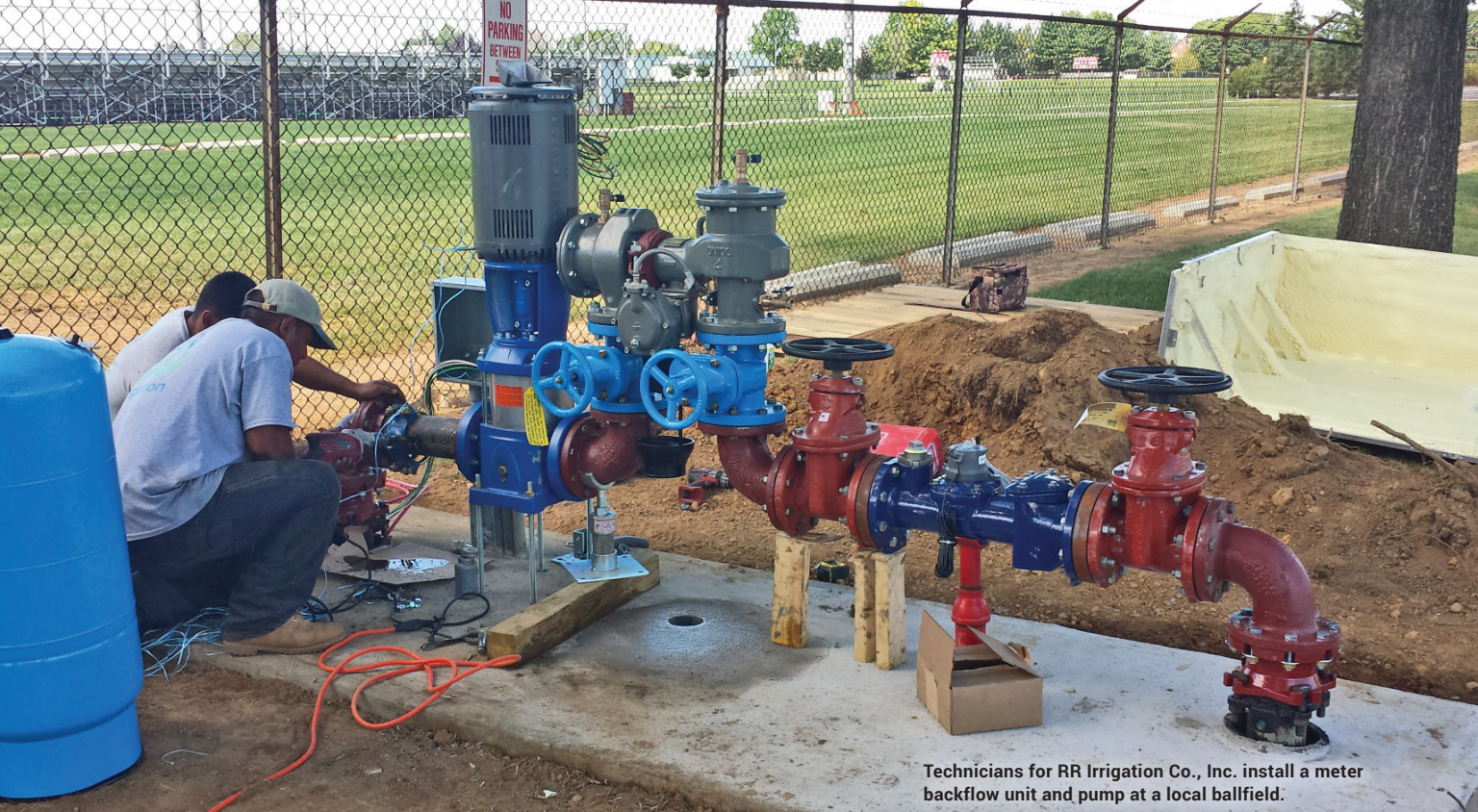
the new stadium was built, we were the contractor of choice to install the irrigation system—for the ballfield, as well as for the landscaping around the stadium itself. Eleven years later, we still provide maintenance services, as well as modifications when needed,” Steve says.

Another high-profile project had RR Irrigation installing the master irrigation system for the New York Botanical Garden. Approximately half of the garden’s 250 acres is irrigated, according to Steve. “This is a very large system—two to three times larger than a golf course.” The project, completed in 2004, features more than 600 individual watering zones. RR Irrigation continues to work closely with the garden’s horticultural staff to maintain the system and modify and expand the system when new gardens are added.

Closer to its New Jersey headquarters, RR Irrigation recently completed a project for LG’s headquarters in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. “We provided an extensive irrigation system across multiple roof decks above the company’s parking garages. The system is highly efficient and features the latest in smart irrigation technology,” Steve says.

PROMPT CUSTOMER SERVICE

RR Irrigation works with some of the nation’s leading manufacturers, according to Steve, including Rain Bird, Hunter Industries and Toro. “We utilize modern technology and only use products that we know are reliable,” Steve says. Today’s smart irrigation controllers feature pressure regulation devices, moisture sensors and flow sensing. In the event of



Technicians for RR Irrigation Co., Inc. install a meter backflow unit and pump at a local ballfield.

a broken pipe or sprinkler, the smart system can shut itself down and notify the customer of the interruption in service. Technicians can remotely monitor the condition of these systems with an internet connection. “They are very sophisticated systems,” he adds.

The company performs as much or as little maintenance services as the customer requires. “In the fall, we’ll winterize the system, draining out all the water to minimize cracks and damage throughout the harsh winter season.” In the springtime, RR Irrigation opens up the system, turning the water back on and testing and repairing pipes and sprinklers as needed. “Throughout the season, we’re on call in case the customer runs into any issues,” he says.

When customers do run into a problem, RR Irrigation’s customer service team is there to offer quick service. “Our internet-connected tablets give our dispatch team members the location of every single field technician. They can dispatch the closest technician so we can provide prompt emergency service to customers,” he says.

Employees of RR Irrigation are given the tools they need to be successful, according to Steve. “Our technicians are all uniformed and drive well-maintained vehicles. We make sure they are working with modern equipment and are well trained so they can get the job done right.”

The company not only offers installation and maintenance services but also has two certified irrigation designers on staff. “We have the experience and know how to design the entire irrigation system,” Steve notes.

With a low turnover rate, RR Irrigation promotes a culture of caring. “Employees are empowered to make decisions in the field, and we treat everyone with dignity and respect,” he says. And when working conditions are extreme, employees know that safety is at the heart of the company. “Everyone receives safety training. When we’re working out in the heat, it’s important to take additional breaks, and we practice safe driving on the roadways. We do our best every day to make sure employees return home safely,” Steve says.

GIVING BACK

Steve is a past President of the Irrigation Association of New Jersey and is currently the Chairman of the Board of the Association Master Trust, which offers health insurance coverage for 17 independent trade associations. He is also a past Chairman of the Irrigation Political Action Committee in Trenton.

Additionally, Steve teaches a two-day class for horticulture students at the New York Botanical Garden, as well as a course on maintaining athletic fields at his alma mater,



Rutgers. The company has donated and installed artificial turf for local athletic fields and is proud to have donated irrigation services for several 9/11 memorials. “9/11 happened right here in our own backyard. We wanted to give back to a community that has suffered so much,” he says.

GROWING THE BUSINESS

RR Irrigation began in 1971 when the irrigation industry was in its infancy. Founder Ralph Maiwaldt was working for a plumbing supply house in Springfield, New Jersey, when he noticed an uptick in demand for irrigation products. Ralph began installing irrigation systems for residential customers, adding partner Russ Genova to the company as business grew.

Steve joined his uncle’s company in 1987 after graduating from Rutgers. When Ralph and Russ retired, Steve and cousin Paul Maiwaldt became partners, with Paul serving as Vice President. Today, Paul manages the service side of the business, while Steve tends to business administration and managing large projects.

RR Irrigation is growing by leaps and bounds, says Steve. In 2012, the company acquired a competitor, establishing a new dispatch location in Lebanon, New Jersey, and in 2018, the firm purchased a landscaper’s book of more than 800 residential customers after the company changed its business model.

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Steve Dobossy, President,
RR Irrigation Co., Inc.

“We service some of the New York tri-state area’s largest commercial properties, as well as premier homes, apartments and high-rise complexes,” adds Steve. “We do this by concentrating on what we do best—providing quality irrigation installation and maintenance services. That’s what sets us apart.” 🦉

With more than 20 years in the communications industry, Susan Diemont-Conwell works with companies, nonprofits and individuals to produce stories and publications that move and inspire.