



USG WATER
— SOLUTIONS —



Asset Management Program Allows for Necessary Maintenance within Budget Limits



Project Summary

Customer:

North Liberty Water Works
Town of North Liberty, IN

Type of Project:

Implementing a strategic tank asset management program that provides peace of mind to a small single-tank community

Benefits:

- Tank rehab & long-term budget needs met
- Challenges resolved at quoted cost
- Peace of mind restored

As in so many older communities, North Liberty's water infrastructure was slowly deteriorating. The water department historically set aside funds each year for maintenance, but the funds were saved annually until they were sufficient to do the minimum maintenance thought necessary at the time. In 2013, the town contracted an engineering firm to inspect and prepare a request for qualification for the maintenance of their storage tank. The qualification process generated multiple offers but all beyond the budget set aside by the water department. Town officials didn't want to take on more debt, so the tank rehabilitation was postponed. For three consecutive years, North Liberty went through the same process with no better luck.

In 2016, after conducting a visual inspection of the North Liberty water tank, the regional Water System Consultant with USG Water Solutions presented the town with an alternative approach: an innovative tank asset management program. The concept is simple. A municipality enters into a long-term agreement with USG Water to rehabilitate and maintain their water tank. After the initial rehabilitation, the municipality transfers the responsibility of the annual inspection and maintenance of the asset to the professionals who, in other words, assumes all maintenance risk for a set annual cost.

North Liberty town officials were immediately interested. "The USG Water asset management program had recently been presented at the town council of a neighboring community, and we had heard good reviews," explains Skip Davidson, Utility Superintendent.

"Despite saving funds annually for maintenance, this small community couldn't afford to get its water storage tank renovated for many years."



North Liberty is a town of fewer than 2,000 people located in Northern Indiana. Dubbed “A Great Place for Family and Business!”, the small but vibrant community is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and has been named a participant in the state’s three-year Stellar Communities program. Subsequent grant funded ‘stellar projects’ in North Liberty included the expansion of housing for seniors, the restoration of a downtown historic building facade and new equipment for local parks but no improvements to the town’s aging water infrastructure. The town’s water system consists of two wells, a filter plant, a single elevated steel storage tank and a distribution system with approximately 700 connections

An Asset Management Alternative

“We are a small community with a water department of only four employees,” adds Davidson so the fact that “we could transfer the maintenance risk of a major component of our water system infrastructure to USG Water was a big incentive.

Being able to use private monies at no interest cost to fund the initial tank rehabilitation definitely sealed the deal,” concludes Davidson. The funds of the town were used instead to purchase and install an in-tank water mixer to maintain the quality of water during storage and prevent any ice damage during the winter months.

The ‘No Change Order’ Clause

The initial rehabilitation of North Liberty’s water storage tank started in 2016. Right away, an additional benefit of the USG Water tank management program – a “no change order” clause included in the contract – came to light.

Upon starting the project, USG Water field crews discovered that the logos on the tank were not painted but were actual decals that had been glued to the steel structure. After trying unsuccessfully to remove the decals with heat guns, USG Water crews had to revert to using a water and garnet blaster. Although efficient, the technique can cause significant spillage especially when used on an elevated tank.

The location of the tank adjacent to a busy parking lot complicated the situation. The site configuration did not allow for installation of a containment system, so crews had to take extreme precautions with water blasting the tank. Though the process took much longer than a regular power wash, the Utility wasn’t charged for the additional work or costs.

“USG stood by their word and didn’t charge us for the change order. Their tank asset management contract is a true peace of mind solution,” says Davidson.

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