

BY MARISA PALMIERI

# To the loo

A New York superintendent finds success with self-contained restrooms

Last fall, the staff at Anglebrook Golf Club in Lincondale, N.Y., surveyed its members for feedback about what improvements they sought for the 13-year-old golf course. Resoundingly, members had a common request: restrooms.

Because of the course's layout featuring returning nines, which theoretically allows golfers to use clubhouse restrooms mid-round, bathroom facilities weren't part of the course's original Robert Trent Jones design.

"But sometimes you can be out on that first nine for two hours before you make it back to the clubhouse," says Lou Quick, CGCS. "Mem-

bers asked for restrooms, so last fall we started to look into options."

When it came time to procuring on-course restrooms, Quick was entering uncharted territory because he hadn't purchased bathrooms before and knew his search required research.

Though he considered it, hiring a contractor to construct a traditional restroom facility out of stone or wood would've been too expensive, Quick says, estimating it would have cost about \$80,000.

"In the places where these needed to be, electricity, septic and sewage weren't readily

available," he says. "And the cost to send water out there was extremely prohibitive."

Holes five and 14, where the restrooms are located, are hundreds of yards away from the nearest potable water source.

Though Quick considered a number of options, self-contained, composting restroom units were his first choice because they didn't need to be connected to utilities and they don't require extensive maintenance.

"I considered other types, but it came down to this style – the composting," he says.

A bonus was Quick and his maintenance staff were able to reduce costs by installing the units with help from the manufacturer, Clivus Multrum.

Anglebrook, which is corporate owned and not member driven in terms of decision making, didn't require member approval of the purchase.

"It was strictly a staff decision," Quick says. "The g.m. and executive director took my input, and that's how we made the decision."

The club purchased two M54 Trailhead units in April, and they were installed and operating by May in time for peak season. Anglebrook's Trailhead structures each feature a urinal, a foam-flush toilet, a built-in composting system, a waterless hand-washing station and a solar-powered ventilation system. The 3 ounces of water needed each time someone flushes the toilet comes from the course's irrigation system.



Anglebrook, a high-end private club, opted to upgrade its restrooms' facades with stonework and cedar shingles. Photos: Lou Quick/Clivus Multrum.



## ON-COURSE RESTROOMS



The two units, which were funded out of a capital expenditure budget, cost about \$40,000, Quick says, adding the club didn't scrimp on upgrades.

"You can go lower – this was probably the high end," he says.

The Anglebrook staff opted for porcelain toilets instead of fiberglass and upgraded the exterior with a faux stone and cedar shank. Once installed, the restrooms also were appointed with wall art, plants, coat hooks and other extras to please the club's high-end clientele.

"For most of our male membership, it probably doesn't matter, but it's nice for our female members not to have it look like an outhouse," Quick says. "It's more homey."

It was important to add amenities to the inside of the restrooms so they didn't feel like outhouses, superintendent Lou Quick says.

### DIY

Though the manufacturer offers prefabricated units with turnkey installation, Quick decided to assemble and install the units with his crew and manufacturer assistance.

"We're pretty handy around here," he says. "Most facility managers and golf course superintendents have the ability to do this type of thing. Clivus sent out two technical people to help us put together the first unit, and we assembled the second one ourselves."

Though installation required a foundation hole (6 feet wide by 12 feet long by 5 feet deep) to accommodate the waste collection tank, the units don't require a concrete foundation or digging trenches for septic or sewage line hookups. Two of Quick's crewmembers dug the hole in about six hours with a medium-size backhoe.

In all, installation took about two weeks, though the maintenance staff didn't work on

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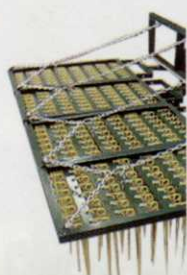
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it every day. The foundation hole and basic construction, completed by Anglebrook's staff, took three days. The extra stone work and shingles took a week. The shingle roof and siding were installed by a contractor for about \$5,000.

"The beauty of these units is they're self contained," Quick says. "Set up is very fast."

#### UPKEEP

In addition to the simplicity of installation, Quick selected the self-contained units for their low-maintenance requirements.

The units have underground containers that retain the liquid and solid waste in separate areas. The composting units require the solid waste be mixed with a bulking agent (any type of dried organic matter), such as mulch, which helps promote a colony of natural bacteria. The maintenance staff must occasionally turn over this matter with a garden fork.

"It's the same thing you'd do with any garden compost," Quick says. "Over time, the solid waste and bulking agent break down just like in nature."

The only other maintenance duty is monitoring the liquid tank. When it fills, a septic/sewage company will come and pump it out, according to the state's requirements. Though it's against New York state guidelines, some places consider liquid waste, which is essentially uric acid, to be a compost organic material and allow it to be redistributed as fertilizer, Quick says.

At this time, Quick can't cite actual upkeep costs because he hasn't had to maintain the units yet. But, based on Clivus Multrum's usage statistics, a course like Anglebrook, which generates 9,000 rounds annually, might not have to perform any maintenance for as long as two years.

"It's all based on the amount of people who use the unit," Quick says. **GCI**



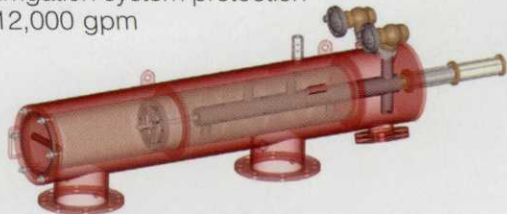
A contractor installed the units' shingle roofs and siding for about \$5,000.

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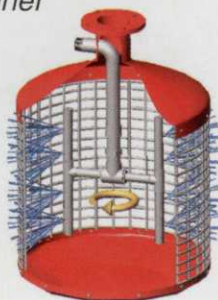
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BY MARISA PALMIERI

# Weather watcher

A Web-based monitoring system serves the maintenance staff at Evanston Golf Club well

It's a bright, sunny morning in Skokie, Ill., one of the first days of fall. The maintenance staff at Evanston Golf Club has plans to seed part of the facility's nursery, but before superintendent Dan Charlton gives the go-ahead, he has to check the weather.

With seed prices rising along with everything else, Charlton's not going to OK preparations for an early afternoon seeding project if there's a chance of rain showers.

Charlton logs on to his Web-based weather-monitoring system, runs the radar and, sure enough, there's a storm coming in from Milwaukee.

"We need it to be dry so all the seed doesn't wash away," he says. "So I'll monitor this storm, and if it's going to come in, we'll find other things to do today."

There are a number of reasons Charlton swears by his weather-monitoring system, but the efficiency it creates in terms of scheduling is the No. 1 benefit to him.

"It's a great scheduling tool," he says. "Not only with our daily routines, but also with the forecast throughout the week. If it's predicting rain two or three days from now, we'll mow or fertilize before that."

Ultimately, a well-scheduled maintenance crew saves money in terms of labor, Charlton says. But savings don't stop at labor costs. Like in the nursery seeding instance, accurate weather-monitoring systems can pay for themselves in terms of materials, too.

"All it takes is part of an application to get washed away because you were unaware of a weather system coming in," he says. "Preventing that could pay for the weather-monitoring system for an entire year."

Evanston Golf Club uses the online version of DTN/Meteorlogix's WeatherSentry Turf Edition, the subscription for which Charlton estimates is \$95 a month. Before

There are numerous reasons Dan Charlton swears by his weather-monitoring system, but the efficiency it creates in terms of scheduling is the No. 1 benefit to him.





upgrading to the online version, the club had a stand-alone system, which required a monitor and an on-site satellite dish. Because Charlton wasn't working at Evanston when this unit was purchased, he's unsure about the initial hardware and set-up costs.

**SHOPPING AROUND**

Last year, when Charlton's subscription for the Meteorlogix system ended, he shopped around to see if he could find any free or cheaper services that provide similar results. Alternatives he considered included the National Weather Service, a free site called Intellicast and a local television station's weather page.

"I checked those out for about a month to see what I liked better," he says. "But I ended up renewing my subscription because I couldn't find anything that was better or equal for less."

At the time he renewed, Charlton also added the service's Lightning Manager feature. At first

he was hesitant to add the lightning-protection upgrade because the facility already has a Thor Guard lightning prediction and warning system. But now he's glad he did – the systems complement each other well.

"My system is more of a check of Thor Guard," he says, noting the real benefit to that product is its sirens, which take the human element out of warning golfers and employees a lightning strike is possible.

The WeatherSentry lightning feature tells him if lightning strikes within a set radius and has tracking capabilities that allow him to see what direction the storm is coming from.

"If we got rid of Thor Guard, it would be my duty to sit in front of the computer and then run outside with a bull horn to warn people and hope they hear me," Charlton says. "But if I can predict a storm faster than Thor Guard and can get employees to a safe area, that's invaluable. You can't put a price tag on preventing someone

from getting injured or killed because a storm came in."

Charlton's 17 maintenance employees appreciate the warnings, too – they keep them safe and dry.

"I always make sure to get them off the course before the heaviest rains come," he says.

Charlton can even check the radar from out of town on his smartphone and advise his staff about the weather. He recalls one instance when he was on the road for a long weekend and checked the weather at the course.

"I called my assistants and told them a storm was coming, but they argued it was a bright, sunny day," he says. "I told them I checked the radar and they better pull it in. Twenty minutes later they got hit with a huge storm. Later, someone at the club told me they made the comment, 'Here he is halfway across the country and he still knows the weather better than we do.'" GCI



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