

# Bathroom BREAK

Lee Terry turned to solar-powered, waterless restroom facilities to troubleshoot a pressing problem at Denver's Pinehurst Country Club.

BY MIKE ZAWACKI

It's a fact of life. People need to use the bathroom and golfers are no exception when it comes to "taking five" at the ninth hole.

But how do you provide ample restroom facilities for a 27-hole golf course?

It's a problem Lee Terry needed to fix.

Terry is the superintendent at Pinehurst Country Club, a private, member-owned club in Denver that features 27 holes – the par-70 Maxwell 18 and the par-36 Pfluger 9. Terry operates with an annual maintenance budget of about \$1.5 million.

In the middle of its Maxwell course, Pinehurst features a ninth-hole diner with a full-service restroom, but it wasn't enough capacity to meet club members' needs.

To some people, this problem has an obvious solution: strategically place a few plastic silo-style portable restrooms around the course. Terry says the club's membership expected better accommodations.

Then why not build a few, full-service restroom facilities around the course? This solution wasn't practical, either, Terry says, because no utilities run through the course, which was built in 1958.

"In one scenario we would have had to run a half-mile of sewer lines through the golf course and it would have crossed five different holes," Terry says. "It would have cost us more than \$300,000 to bring in the utilities – sewer, water and power – through the golf course and to any new restroom facilities. It could have been done, but the expense and the disruption would have been there."

Instead, Terry turned to Fort Collins, Colo.-based Biological Mediation Systems, which provides prefabricated, custom restroom facilities. To meet its needs, Pinehurst settled on a pair of waterless, solar-powered restrooms.

Operationally, each unit is fairly simple. A bacterial and enzyme solution breaks down the waste in a cement basin underneath the building, and a solar-powered ventilation fan minimizes odor. Other than periodic cleanings, they require very little maintenance.

From the outside, the restrooms look like nondescript buildings. They're sided, painted and feature a rock frontage as well as landscaping. Each building has separate men's and women's facilities.



The addition of solar-powered, waterless bathrooms allowed Pinehurst Country Club to address the restroom needs across its 27-hole golf course.

"We had to dig the holes and put the cement basins in underneath each unit," Terry explains. "Since each building is a kit, we contracted (with a third party) to stick frame the building and add the siding and the roof. The whole thing, from start to finish, took less than a week."

Following construction, Terry installed foam hand washers and added carpet to the floors of the two buildings.

The first unit went up on the Maxwell course about three years ago and is located between two lakes. The club added a restroom unit to the Pfluger about a year ago.

"From where each is located they can service more than one hole," Terry says. "You should be able to go no more than three holes without finding a bathroom."

With everything included, each unit has a price tag of about \$60,000. But compared to the cost of running utility lines through the two courses, the waterless restroom facilities were a substantial savings in time, money and course disruption for the club.

"They're environmentally friendly and require very little service," Terry says. "They've worked out very nicely for us, especially when you consider the cost factors of what we would have had to do to place them in the middle of the courses." **GCI**