



Out With the **OLD**, In With the **NEW**

A culmination of others' ideas helps form Town and Country Club's new environmentally friendly turfgrass management center

By John Walsh, Contributing Editor

IT WAS ACTUALLY YEARS IN THE MAKING. It has a bit of Augusta, a dash of Shinnecock, a pinch of Hazeltine and a sprinkle of various other maintenance facilities throughout the world.

I'm talking about the new, environmentally friendly turfgrass management center at the oldest club in Minnesota — Town and Country Club in St. Paul, established in 1888. (To read the details about the environmental friendliness of the building, see sidebar on page 66.)

Certified Superintendent Bill Larson, who has been at TCC for 20 years, and his crew of six full-timers and as many as 25 part-timers had been working out of an old, 9,000-square-foot maintenance building (built in 1976), which was basically a steel-pole barn. According to Larson, it needed to be replaced because:

- there was a lack of ventilation;
- it was too small for the staff;



1 The turfgrass management center is comprised of two buildings, totaling 18,500 square feet. 2 The WaterStax system separates clippings and solids from water. 3 There is much more space in the new maintenance facility for equipment and employees.



- there was inadequate office space;
- drainage was a problem;
- there was only one bathroom;
- there were no locker rooms;
- the building was too cold in the winter and there weren't enough heated areas;
- it was located in a landing area surrounded by nets;
- lighting was poor; and
- there were code issues with the city and state.

"It wasn't a good place for employees," Larson says.

The club has been involved in a long-range plan to renovate or rebuild its facilities, starting with the swimming pool and tennis center, which are complete; followed by the turfgrass management center, which is complete; followed by the halfway house and clubhouse. The last two projects won't be done until after 2014, which is when the new \$2.3-million turfgrass management center will be paid off.

The new maintenance building project started in September 2008 and finished last May. First, the four buildings making up the old maintenance facility — one heated building and three pole barns separate from that — were torn down. Larson stored the equipment in the basement of an auto dealership (the owner is a club member) during the winter while the new building was built.

"We planned for this, so the mechanic started winterizing the equipment early," he says. "We tried to get as much equipment as possible off site."

There was a short period of time (about a month and a half) after the project started and before the season ended during which Larson and his staff used a makeshift building — a fence surrounding the equipment with a roof overhead — for storing equipment.

The new 18,500-square-foot turfgrass management center, which is located dead center on the golf course, is comprised of two buildings — a 6,000-square-foot enclosed two-story cold-storage building and a 12,500-square-foot heated maintenance building. The lower level of the cold-storage building houses greens covers and items not used daily, such as aerifiers.

Larson helped design the building, using ideas from other maintenance buildings he saw after years of traveling to golf courses throughout the world — Augusta National, St. Andrews, Shinnecock Hills, and clubs in Canada and Palm

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Springs. Larson's mechanic, assistants and area superintendents also provided input.

The automated lubricant dispenser in the lube room came from Augusta; the half-moon bay sink in the mud room that allows three people to wash their hands at the same time came from nearby Dellwood Hills Golf Club; and the sprawling tabletop that creates more work space for two assistants and a horticulturalist instead of three individual desks also came from Dellwood. Additionally, Jim Nicol, the superintendent at Hazeltine National Golf Club, suggested porcelain tile in the office, hallways and bathrooms because it doesn't show wear patterns and is classier than linoleum.

Larson also took one idea from his son's kindergarten class — an interactive SMART board, which is a computerized whiteboard tied to his assistant's computer.

"The long-range planning committee, which has members on it, wanted to do it right the first time," Larson says. "We gave them options for what to cut, but they decided not to. We got pretty much everything we asked for." ■

Walsh is a contributing editor to Golfdom and is based in Bay Village, Ohio.

A 'Green' Building

The new turfgrass management center at the Town and Country Club in St. Paul, Minn., is environmentally friendly. Here's what makes it so:

- 1. WaterStax system** ■ Microbes digest all petroleum and pesticide residues. ■ Clippings and solids are separated from water. ■ Water leaving the system is cleaner than gray water.
- 2. Lighting and utilities** ■ Office lights are on motion sensors and timers. ■ High-efficiency light bulbs and fixtures. ■ Switches are wired to turn off lower-use work areas. ■ 93 percent efficient forced-air heaters (old industry standard was 80 percent efficient). ■ In-floor heat. ■ Outdoor lighting is on timers. ■ Bathroom fans are on timers to turn off during nonworking hours. ■ Dyson Blade hand dryers are paperless.
- 3. Water** ■ Drip irrigation around building landscaping. ■ Variable speed drives on wells reduce electrical use. ■ Use of native grasses means no input landscape.
- 4. Building** ■ 12-inch concrete walls — 3 inches of concrete, 6 inches of insulation, 3 inches of concrete. ■ Roof contains 5 inches of Styrofoam insulation to reduce heat loss. ■ Built into hillside reduces heat loss.
- 5. Paint booth** ■ Prevents paint fumes and overspray from emitting into the environment.
- 6. Watershed** ■ 48-inch pipe that's 250 feet long holds and controls storm water. ■ Water feeds from large pipe to smaller pipes/percolation areas. ■ No direct dumping into the Mississippi River.

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October THIS MONTH'S HEALTH TIP



Lost dogs without tags usually end up being put to sleep at the shelter when they lose their way home. Even worse off are the dogs that never had homes to begin with. There aren't enough good homes for all the dogs out there, so have your dogs spayed or neutered, and do not allow them to breed. In America, 4 million cats and dogs are euthanized every year. That's far too many! If you want another dog, consider adopting one.

Jake. His owner is Greg Hill, superintendent at The Ridges Resort & Club in Hayesville, N.C. (Photo by: Curtis Miller)



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