

What a Maintenance Facility Tour won't Teach You

This article is reprinted from "Tee to Green," newsletter of the Metropolitan GCSA, Mamaroneck, NY. Part one of this article appeared in March Turfgrass; this is the conclusion.

Few things are more important to a successful golf course maintenance operation than a well-designed and equipped maintenance facility. Yet few things are more difficult to win support for—much less execute—than replacing or modifying a sorely inadequate shop.

Two member superintendents—Mike Mongon of Arcola CC in Paramus, NJ, and Greg Wojick of Greenwich CC (Conn.)—have successfully completed building projects on their course. What they offer are not the obvious pointers you can pick up from touring their facilities, but rather lessons you're not likely to learn until you're in the thick of the process. Their intent: to save you time and unnecessary steps when trying to justify, design, and then build a maintenance facility on your course.

Greg Wojick, CGCS, Greenwich Country Club, Greenwich, CT

Lesson #1: Use environmental regulations to your advantage. An outdated shop or storage building is subject to the scrutiny of environmental regulatory agencies, who can require sometimes costly modifications to bring the building up to code.

Our facility at Greenwich was so outmoded that complying with existing and future environmental regulations would have required much more than a few low-cost quick fixes. The Hall-Kimbrell Environmental Compliance Assistance Program, which the club

agreed to subscribe to, helped us map out where our facility was lacking and offered a credible proof source for doubting Thomases.

Lesson #2: Do your homework—and lots of it. You can't be too prepared when it comes time to sell—and spec out—the maintenance facility of your dreams.

Make the rounds at newly constructed maintenance facilities—with a key decision maker or two from your club so they could see firsthand where your facility is lacking.

Contact allied associations, such as the GCSAA, NGF, and USGA. They have articles and case studies on file that are chock-full of new construction specs and hints and cautions.

When it came time to pitch our maintenance facility, I was expected to spell out everything from the basic configuration to how an ideal facility should be equipped and furnished.

Lesson #3: There are few things more disruptive to a maintenance operation than building a new facility. Be prepared, for instance, to periodically pull several staff members off the course to pinch-hit for a construction worker.

In addition, if you accept responsibility, as I did, for managing the project, don't underestimate the time it will take away from your golf course duties.

During our nearly year-long project, almost one-third of my time was spent overseeing the day-to-day operations. I was fortunate to have good support staff. If you can't say the same, it might be worth hiring extra help for the duration of the project.

The Greenwich Facility: Facts

and Figures

Project Duration: October 1991 to October 1992.

Facility Specs: Two wood-frame buildings constructed on existing site.

Building 1 is a two-story, 4,800-square-foot facility with heating and air conditioning. On the lower floor, there's a maintenance shop, equipment storage area, grinding room, fireproof oil/grease storage room, painting/steam cleaning room, men's and ladies' restrooms with shower, laundry area, staff lounge with kitchen and lockers, offices for the superintendent, mechanic, and assistants, and a storage room. On the upper floor, there is 1,200 square feet of additional storage.

Building 2 is a one-story, 4,800-square-foot cold storage structure for equipment, fertilizer, and seed with outside, as well as inside, loading platforms.

Other features: Paved service yard with covered storage bins for sand, top-soil, crushed stone, and other materials. Two gas pumps—one for diesel, the other for regular fuel. Washdown area with sump pit for collecting grass clippings and in-ground separator tank.

Cost: \$900,000

Other Buildings Part of the Construction Project: A \$1.1 million, 7,612-square-foot staff dormitory.

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