

# What a Maintenance Facility Tour Won't Teach You

*This article is reprinted from "Tee to Green," newsletter of the Metropolitan GCSA, Mamaroneck, NY.*

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 here 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.

Mike Mongon, Arcola CC, Paramus, NJ  
**Lesson #1:** Don't get pigeonholed into salvaging your old facility unless you have proof-positive it's the best way to go. Suggest that the club allow an architect or engineering firm to conduct a feasibility study. They'll be able to give expert opinions and options.

At Arcola, we hired a project manager and engineering firm to evaluate all buildings and devise a plan of attack for the project. They not only supported the idea of building an entirely new facility, but also eliminated the need to rely on a volunteer committee of club members to make day-to-day decisions on the direction of the

project.

**Lesson #2:** A sprinkler system—at least in New Jersey—can be your ticket to a new maintenance facility because, over the long haul it'll save your club thousands of dollars.

At Arcola, for example, our fire sprinklers cost us \$60,000 to install, but the club now saves an average of \$12,000 a year on insurance premiums. so in five years, the sprinkler system will pay for itself, and the club will continue to reap the financial benefits.

**Lesson #3:** Plan for the future. Before settling on the square footage of your building, don't forget to project future equipment purchases and storage for space needs. It's better to start off with a little extra space than to invest a lot of money in a facility you'll soon outgrow.  
 Our

plans included heating additional work space and installing insulated block at our present cold storage facility to enable us to expand our heated work space as needed.

**Lesson #4:** Design in a buffer zone. Whether you call it a reception area, secretarial office, or computer room, it's time we get away from having visitors enter through our facility's equipment repair area or directly into our office.

*Continued on page 8*



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*Facility, from page 7*

At Arcola we have a reception area to the right, as you walk in the main entrance of the maintenance building. It's where we keep our files, and it's equipped with a computer, printer, and phone system—a perfect setup for secretarial support.

**Lesson #5:** Don't automatically assume your current building site is the best site for your new building. It may be in your best interest, for instance, to build in an area that's more accessible to the course or in one that's farther away from neighboring homes so that you'll comply with noise ordinances.

At Arcola we opted to build on a new site for a couple of reasons. First, our new location allows room for growth. and second, the club, guided by site evaluations, decided that the

facility's old location would be more reasonable site for the construction of a cart barn/employee dormitory.

### The Arcola Facility Facts and Figures

**Project Duration:** October 1990 to July 1991

**Facility Specs:** Three buildings; two constructed on new site, one on existing site.

*Building 1* is 3,900 square feet and includes a sizable equipment repair area with hydraulic equipment lift, a grinding room, men's and ladies' lockers and showers, a lunch/meeting room, a utility room, a reception/secretarial area, and a superintendent's office.

*Building 2* is 4,000 square feet of equipment cold storage.

*Building 3* is 3,000 square feet and is divided into two sections. The larger area is devoted to storage of fertilizer, irrigation supplies, and less frequently used

equipment. The smaller area is used exclusively for pesticide storage.

**Cost:** \$400,000.

[This article will be concluded in the April issue of Turfgrass Matters.]



Dean Graves introducing Dr. Peter Dernoeden of the U of Maryland at MTC's Turfgrass '93.

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