

This 'Lady' deserves the best

Superintendent Steve Humphreys put together a great golf maintenance facility one step at a time at the historic 101-year-old Dutchess Golf and Country Club.

By CAROLYN STEADMAN

The trend in maintenance facilities is toward more secure, more efficient and more worker-friendly structures. Often these buildings offices for the superintendent and other maintenance managers. Computers are commonplace. Many also have employee training/break rooms.

Such is the case at "Golf's Lady of the Hudson," the 101-year-old Dutchess Golf and Country Club,



Meeting room at the shop is used for lunch or educational sessions. At right is the Trion equipment lift.

in Poughkeepsie, NY. Superintendent Steve Humphreys is, seemingly, constantly upgrading the maintenance facilities there. He's been at it a while.

Humphreys came to Dutchess in 1970. He inherited greens with a mixture of annual bluegrass and South German bentgrass, and roughs of annual

bluegrass, ryegrass and some bent. He also inherited an 80' by 40' cinder block maintenance building. It was a fine facility for its time, and just a few years old. It contained the supply room, an office, a conference room, lockers, equipment inventory and chemicals. It also had one heated bay and two unheated bays.

But demands for better golf turf keep pushing for more intense maintenance, and the need to periodically upgrade maintenance shops and equipment/chemical storage facilities.

After the fire

After a fire destroyed a smaller storage building at Dutchess in 1981, Humphreys oversaw the building of a 20' by 40' cinder block building. It was built with a 42' drive-through between it and the main building. In 1985, he enclosed the drive-thru. In 1995, his crew improved the building by finishing off a staff room.

Today's 5600 sq. ft. building includes three heated and three unheated bays. When they were designed, Humphreys decided to put the doors on opposite walls for easier access to stored equipment. The major equipment servicing is done in the winter in the three heated bays. Each vehicle has the date of purchase painted on it. The club works on a drop





◀ Equipment manuals are in plain view, floors are clean, and parts are right nearby.

Well equipped

The staff/lunch room is equipped with a television and VCR (for rainy days and training), three microwave ovens, and a handsome large oak table that Humphreys rescued from the trash at the clubhouse and refinished. The room is sealed from the floor to the ceiling. A large window looks out at the heated bays. Another window looks out on the 17th fairway. The greens

dead life cycle for all the equipment.

"The heated bays help us to meet the member requirement of maintaining not only the mowers and related equipment, but the ball washers, the benches, the trash baskets and the other accessories that are part of the game. They are all repaired and

committee holds its meetings in this room.

Humphreys says members are welcome anytime.

There's also a separate locker room with a washer and dryer. The locker room contains a shower, a bathroom and lockers for everyone which the five fulltime and between 11-13 seasonal golf course employees greatly appreciate.

Humphreys' office is in this building, too. Like the staff room, it's sealed from the floor to the ceiling and has huge safety glass windows that look into the shop and out on the course. He has a new computer and is a member of the GCSAA web site and TurfNet.

He uses the computer to glean information from the growing number of golf course web sites. "It's like being able to visit your neighbors on a rainy day and find how they are managing their problems. You can do it at your convenience. I do more of it in the winter than in the summer," explains Humphreys.

While change is often slow at a historic course like Dutchess, it comes nevertheless. Humphreys can document many of the recent ones. He has every work log for his long tenure there.

Humphreys says, "I maintain the course to keep the membership happy," which includes staying out of their way during play.

Crew members see themselves as the phantoms of the course. Their goal is to do all the maintenance before members tee off. Only the rough is mowed during play.

The Dutchess maintenance complex reflects the growing demands placed on golf course maintenance at Dutchess. The course has a maintenance facility that will serve "Golf's Lady of the Hudson" well into the 21st century. □

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painted during the winter," said Humphreys. A feature in one of the bays is the Trion equipment lift, a tool that Humphreys loves. "It's really increased our efficiency," he says.

Large windows made of safety glass allow lots of natural light into the improved maintenance building. The newest section also has skylights.



Never again will Humphreys or a crew member wonder if they have a certain part.