

by Wilma Blokhuis

Total makeover for PEI laundry



Photos are thanks to Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Manny Sandru.

Everything is state-of-the-art in the new laundry at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Charlottetown, PEI – except for one piece of equipment. “We kept one Air Chicago XXL small-piece folder that we acquired seven years ago,” said Ken Hughes, Director of Environmental Services.

The laundry, which opened February 1, is part of the hospital's 52,000-sq.-ft expansion, which also includes a new emergency department. Following a recent tour of the new facilities, PEI's Health and Wellness Minister Carolyn Bertram said, “Our government recognizes health care as a number one priority and we are committed to

ensuring the delivery of quality health care to all Islanders. Support services, such as laundry, supply, processing and distribution are important elements in that delivery process.”

EQUIPMENT MIX BRINGS FLEXIBILITY

The new 7,262-sq.-ft laundry's equipment was supplied and installed by Harco Co. Ltd. Previously, two 400-lb washers had been the heart of the washroom, plus other small washers. Now there are four 250-lb Braun open-pocket washer-extractors and four 250-lb Braun steam dryers.

These are linked by an automated shuttle system. Other new equipment includes a 100-lb and a 60-lb UniMac washer with matching 75-lb and 120-lb UniMac dryers.

FOLDERS AND MORE FOLDERS

For finishing there is a Chicago CrosStar single-roll 36" diameter, 120" wide steam flatwork ironer with an OPL spreader-feeder and folder/cross-folder. Over 80% of the sheets are knitted, fitted and require no ironing, which is why a small unit is sufficient for finishing flatwork.

Ken Hughes' favourite piece of equipment is the Chicago blanket folding system with a 120" wide Edge cornerless feeder and 120" wide single-lane folder/cross-folder/stacker. He says two operators can fold 1,000 blankets an hour with it, and one operator can do almost 700 an hour. He compares it to more expensive units requiring three operators to achieve this production.

To complete this little-pressing-but-lots-of-folding concept, the plant purchased an Air Chicago 36" folder, which it uses for gowns and soaker pads. The original idea was to also use it to fold blankets that had already been folded down the middle. However, the new blanket folder is more efficient than expected, and this use is not needed.

MONORAIL BRINGS BENEFITS

“We have a semi-automated, gravity-fed overhead monorail track system,” Hughes explained. “Previously, we used to post-sort, washed everything first then sorted it.

Top: left to right, Ken Hughes, Director of Environmental Services; David White, Director of Administration and Support Services; Tracey Cutcliffe, Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness; Carolyn Bertram, Minister of Health and Wellness; and Rick Adams, Executive Director, Queen Elizabeth and Hillsborough hospitals. New 250-lb washers in background.

Below: Shelly Willis feeds flannel sheets into the Chicago Edge blanket folder. Right: from left, George Dunn, Cody McLure, Andy Hurry and Jason Condon sort incoming soiled work into slings.





Crane lifts one of the 250-lb Braun steam dryers off the truck.

Now we pre-sort into slings, so that each load has the most efficient washing formula for its contents. Each washer takes two slings requiring the same formula."

The operator loads the washers directly from the slings, which eliminates any heavy lifting. When the wash cycle is finished the washer calls for the shuttle, and tilts to empty the load onto the conveyor belt. The shuttle automatically takes the linen to the first available

dryer and sets the drying formula according to the load. At the end of the cycle, the dryer tilts on the opposite side from the shuttle to empty the linens. Harco technician Manny Sandru describes the washing and drying operation as an "automated open pocket flex system."

AUTOMATION BUT NO LAY-OFFS

Although the new laundry equipment is fully automated, there have been no staff cuts thanks to a reassignment of duties and the taking on of new responsibilities. However, the hours of operation have dropped from 12 per day to 7½.

The staff of 19 full-time equivalents has taken on new duties, including linen inspection and OR pack makeup. These were formerly handled by the hospital's supply, processing and distribution department.

CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

The new facility can process up to four million pounds of laundry annually. It currently handles 3.2 million pounds and is prepared for inevitable increases in volume. The facility does work for 11 health care facilities including nearby Hillsborough Hospital. Ken Hughes is pleased PEI's government made this 'substantial investment' to meet the needs of its support services. "We are very fortunate they recognized the value of support services and how we contribute to the

overall health of patients."

HARCO'S ROLE

In addition to supplying and installing the equipment, Harco, which has an office in Halifax, also assisted with the design of the new plant and provided information for the support systems necessary to operate the equipment. In addition, the company was responsible for the start-up and training of staff on the new equipment. Manny Sandru was in charge of the operation. ■

COMING EVENTS

June 9-13 ALM ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Seelbach Hilton
Louisville, Kentucky
859-624-0177

June 11-12 ECLDA ANNUAL CONVENTION

Golf Tournament/Dinner Theatre
Nick Mazzoli
905-738-2070

June 22-23 AMERICAN REUSABLE TEXTILE ASSOCIATION

Château Frontenac
Québec City, Québec
www.arta1.com

September 23-26 INTERNATIONAL DRYCLEANERS CONGRESS

The Burlington Hotel
Dublin, Ireland
800-334-4982

October 14-17 OFA MINI TRADE SHOW AND SEMINARS

Airport Marriott Hotel
Toronto, Ontario
Registration TBA

October 15-18 EXPODETERGO INTERNATIONAL

Rho Fairgrounds
Milan, Italy
www.expodetergo.com

ESTABLISHED LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANING BUSINESS FOR SALE

Located in Saint John, New Brunswick, this well-established business has been serving St. John, Kings and Charlotte counties for over 90 years. Specializes in commercial laundry and dry cleaning, particularly for the hospitality sector. Employs 30 full-time and 10 part-time staff. Annual sales of approximately \$2.5 Million. Shows excellent returns, strong existing contracts, customer lists, and corporate reputation. Sale to include all property and freehold buildings, equipment, vehicles, and other business assets. Operating equipment includes Braun, Washex, and Milnor washers; 2 Planiform Ecolo dry-cleaning machines; 8 Huebsch dryers; a Canadian Hy-Pro Mangle, a Jensen folder; and various shirt, dress, and pant presses. All equipment has been well maintained and is in good working order. Plant is fired by a Cleaver-Brooks boiler, new in 2002, burning natural gas.

Annual financial statements are available.

Interested parties should contact:

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