LAUNDRY BUILDING (289)

Specifications for this building are in folder in RG 6/e-7/40/23. These Specs go with blueprints # 340 - 345 located in 054-878.
This is the way we wash our clothes

By Anna Sacorafos
5-18-77

The simple chore of doing the wash is almost a science at the University laundry, where everything from the pH balance of sheets to folding shirts is controlled.

The laundry facility "is the largest in the state of Ohio," said plant manager Tom Andres.

It handles about 6.3 million pounds of wash a year — a huge pile of dirty sheets and towels by anyone's standard. About 65 per cent of the wash comes from the University hospitals, he said.

TO HANDLE all this, the laundry facility not only relies on mammoth washers (800-lb. capacity) and dryers (400-lb. capacity) but on automation as well.

Among the more sophisticated devices is the "monorail system," a series of tracks that carry baskets of laundry from washer to dryer in ski-lift fashion.

Andres said the system channels laundry to the proper area without human assistance. Once a worker empties a basket into a dryer, the basket rolls back down the track to begin the cycle again, he said.

MACHINES ALSO help workers fold shirts, iron several uniforms simultaneously, fold towels and iron and fold sheets. Another machine guides uniforms along a moving metal clothesline, stopping and squaring corners with military precision, through a steamer.

Andres said the laundry facility hopes to purchase a sorting machine, "one of the first...in central Ohio," to increase productivity.

This is needed because the addition of the new wing to University Hospital (in 1979) will increase the laundry's workload by 20 per cent, he said.

This machine will sort and count soiled laundry, a process now done by hand, Andre said.

SOILED LAUNDRY is sorted in the upper level of the facility, Andres said, to avoid the possibility of contaminating clean laundry.

He said special care is taken when processing the laundry to insure its cleanliness, including the use of special soaps for special types of fabrics. The laundry uses about 10 such soaps, Andres said, buying them by the truckload to save money. Multi-purpose commercial soaps are a combination of many types of soap, Andres said, and are therefore less specialized and more expensive.

EVEN THE FABRIC softener the laundry uses differs from its commercial counterparts. The softener contains a "bacteria stat," which Andres said does not kill bacteria, but retards colony growth often caused by airborne bacteria. This product is essential for hospital sheets, he said.

Because so much of the laundry work involves sheets, extra care is taken to remove customer satisfaction. Soap is basically alkali, Andres said, which means that soap residue on sheets can irritate the skin.

To prevent this from happening, a "sour," or acidic, substance is added to the rinse water to adjust the pH by neutralizing the alkalinity of the sheet. In fact, the sheets are made slightly acidic.

Lantern Photo by Mark Stenke

Roy Provo (left) and Earl Albright unload laundry from one of the mammoth 800-lb. capacity washers at the University laundry. The largest in Ohio, the laundry handles about 6.3 million pounds of wash a year. Ten special soaps for special types of fabric are used, as well as fabric softener which retards colony growth often caused by airborne
Laundry gets hefty load

By Earl E. Steffensen

The next time you are doing your laundry consider this: How would you like doing an average of 25,000 pounds every day?

That is what the Ohio State University Laundry Service faces each day.

Dal Wymer, assistant manager for the laundry, said most of the work comes from sheets in the University Hospital.

"It's not uncommon for us to get approximately three to four tons of sheets each day," said Wymer. "There could be more on Mondays since we have two days of work instead of one."

The laundry is usually closed on weekends.

The laundry has seven washers and nine dryers. Each washer usually holds an average of 120 pounds and most of the dryers approximately 100 pounds.

Ken Miller, maintenance superintendent of the laundry, said it usually takes about an hour and a half for a load to wash and dry.

Miller also said if one of the washers goes out, the whole procedure of cleaning clothes would be delayed.

"We are set up so if we do have a shut down of one of the machines, we should have only about ten percent of our capacity stopped," said Miller.

Leroy Huston, assistant manager of production for the laundry, said the whole process of cleaning has been worked out very carefully.

"The first thing of course is the delivery of the goods," said Huston. "When any one of our three trucks comes in we first weigh the laundry and then sort it. We weigh the laundry because our billing is based on that. Weighing is also important because our machines must have a certain weight to achieve the best balance in centrifugal force."

Huston said after weighing and sorting the laundry is put in chutes taking it to the washers and dryers. Huston said delivery is usually about two days later.

There are three categories for billing: Rough Dry work is 15 cents per pound; Flat work is 18 cents per pound; and Press synthetics, either 33 cents for synthetics or 45 cents for cottons.

Laundry fees for students come from room and board payments.

Wymer also said the biggest problem with the laundry from students is over the weekends during the football season.

"On football weekends it's not uncommon to see students painting signs on their sheets such as 'Be Michigan'," said Wymer. "What we have done is supply torn sheets."

Workers at the Laundry Service wash many bins of laundry every day. Their majority of the laundry is sheets from both University Hospital and dormitories.
Heavy duty cycle

Jim Kerr, a senior in psychology from Ashland, helps a 275-pound washing machine dump a load of laundry onto a conveyor belt at the OSU laundromat. See related story and photos on page six.
Students clean up

When the 3 p.m. whistle blows at the OSU laundry, CWA workers head home and 26 students punch the time clock to spend the next six hours folding, pressing and sorting laundry.

The responsibility of laundering 6,000 to 7,000 pounds of linen, most of it from University Hospitals, rests on students who do everything from keeping the laundry's books to folding towels.

Amid the whirl and clamor of dryers, washers, and mangling machines that fold and press, students work weeknights and Saturday mornings, at the facility at 2560 Kenny Road. Students need not qualify for work-study and earn one workday off each week once they've been employed for 10 weeks. Every other Thursday is payday and students earn $3.65 an hour to start.

A student would begin an average workday feeding damp sheets into a mangler machine. Another student would catch the dry sheets at the end of the mangler and sort out ones that are stained or folded in-
OSU's act

correctly. After two hours, everyone gets a 15-minute break and then moves to another machine or to an area where they fold blankets, patient and doctor gowns, and other laundry for about two hours.

Floor supervisors then collect the finished laundry, bundle it and load it into baskets which are weighed and sent to the dock where a student loads it into an OSU truck and hauls it usually to University Hospitals and returns with soiled laundry.

Other students operate washers and dryers that hold up to 600 pounds of laundry. The largest washers are large enough for an average man to stand inside them.

Near the end of the last two-hour shift, all the workers move to the "rough dry" area where they work together folding bedspreads, towels, mattress pads and gowns until they reach the poundage quota needed each night.

The students clean about one-third of all the linen laundered at the facility.

Photos and story by Donna Ihle

Kent Detweiler, a senior from Marion majoring in biology, pushes folded pillowcases down a conveyor.
John Roderick, a junior from Canton majoring in ceramic art, loads blankets into a basket that will be weighed and sent to University Hospitals.
Laundry employees operate a mangler machine that dries and presses linen. The workers on the left feed articles into the mangler while the students on the right fold and count the items coming out.
Anna, and Brad Sommerkamp, a senior in accounting from Columbus, work together to fold a bedspread.
OSU laundry facility closes doors; workers find other university jobs

By Matt Wagner
Lantern staff writer

The OSU Laundry Facility is closing its doors September 1, after losing about $35,000 each month, said the assistant vice president of business management.

Augustus Van Buren said Economy Linen and Towel Service will take over the university's laundry duties.

The service put in a bid of 26 cents per pound, he said.

"That amounts to about a one-half million dollar savings to the university per year," he said.

Van Buren said the university goes through about 4.5 million pounds of laundry each year.

Marvin Vinar, director of business management, said for the university laundry facility to break even it would have had to charge almost 36 cents per pound.

He said the facility's expenses were not being covered by charg-