

CHULA VISTA RESORT MOVES LAUNDRY OFF-SITE



INVESTS IN TECHNOLOGY, SLASHES LABOR, CATAPULTS PRODUCTION

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At Chula Vista Resort, in Wisconsin Dells, Wis., owner Mike Kaminski recently moved his on-premise laundry to an off-site location in order to cut labor costs, boost laundry productivity and create two new profit centers. The new laundry location, offering more space, allowed Kaminski to install critical pieces of equipment that cut labor costs by \$175,000 per year.

In the near future, Kaminski will develop a new bar and lounge in the space previously occupied by the old resort laundry—creating a profit center of an estimated \$1 million per year. Simultaneously, he expects the new off-site laundry to serve as a second profit center. Ultimately it will not only handle Chula Vista's annual influx of 2 million pounds of laundry per year, it will process other hotel and resort laundry, as well.

New Laundry Technology Cuts Costs & Ups Production

"The laundry was a special project," said Kaminski, who admits to involving himself in every operational aspect pertaining to Chula Vista. "I decided to automate the laundry, look at the costs and find out ways to save dollars. We've gone from 28 laundry employees to 12, which is a labor savings of \$175,000 per year. My intention is to take on the laundry needs of a half-dozen Wisconsin Dells hotels once all the equipment is in place," he said.

Stage 1 – Relocate Existing Equipment

Kaminski, who is setting up the new, off-site laundry in stages, worked closely with Haiges Machinery Inc., a laundry equipment distributor in Huntley, Ill. He jumped at the opportunity to lease an existing commercial laundry building. "There was no cost in developing the off-site laundry, because it was already in place, and the building was twice as functional in terms of space," he said. This allowed Kaminski to purchase and install needed equipment to drastically improve laundry productivity and cut labor. He quickly moved the majority of Chula Vista's existing equipment to the new facility, including one 50-, two 125- and two 85-pound capacity



Chula Vista owner, Mike Kaminski shows off his Girbau Industrial DRF Feeder.

hard-mount Unimac washers; and one 125- and three 175-pound Unimac dryers. The facility also features a wall-mounted NuTek International Inc. ozone system, which has been in use for six years. "The ozone system cut hot water from 160°F to 110°F," said Kaminski. "Our linens and towels are softer and whiter."

Stage 2 – Invest in GI Technology

Next, Kaminski invested in several key pieces of Girbau Industrial laundry equipment, including a DRF Feeder, 255-pound capacity HS-6 Series soft-mount washer-extractor and a 140-pound capacity ST-1300 Dryer. John Kubczak of Haiges Machinery Inc., helped Kaminski select and install the equipment.

The Wash Line

The new HS-6 Series Washer and ST-1300 Dryer have bolstered laundry productivity.

The HS-6 Series Washer offers automated tilt loading and unloading, while the ST-1300 Dryer boasts vacuum-assisted loading and automated unloading – making for ease of use and ergonomic value.

"The 255 washer is big, just like the dryer," said Kaminski. "I was interested in new technology from a workers' compensation perspective, even though we don't have many issues with it. The really nice thing is that we've increased productivity six times over what we were doing before. The washer produces two basket loads of terry and the dryer dries a 140-pound load of towels in 16 minutes."

Engineered to cut water, electrical and gas costs and boost productivity, the HS-6 Series Washer delivers high-speed extract, a freestanding design, energy-efficiency and advanced programmability. The washer is simple to install and reaches 387 G-force extract speeds.



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A resort worker demonstrates the vacuum-assisted loading of the ST-1300 Dryer.

The high-speed extract removes more water from each load—reducing dry time, operating hours, utility consumption and labor expense. By cutting dry time, heat exposure and mechanical action are reduced in the dryer, resulting in less linen wear.

While the other washers and dryers are still relied upon, it's the new additions to the wash line that have significantly catapulted productivity. Prior to their arrival, it took 100 minutes to wash and dry a load of any size, according to Kaminski. Using the HS-6 Series Washer and ST-1300 Dryer it takes just 46 minutes to complete a 255-pound load.

Ironing Line

To work in concert with the laundry's new DRF Feeder, Kaminski also purchased a used Chicago ironer that was already in the building and folder to process sheets and pillowcases. The ironing line is completely automated. Previously, linens were hand folded without ironing.

The new DRF Feeder, which can handle large- to small-piece items – pillowcases, fitted sheets, flat sheets, bedspreads, coverlets, bed skirts and duvets – has the potential to automatically straighten and feed more than 1,200 large-sized items into a corresponding ironer.

"The DRF is really fast," said Kaminski, "but we are limited somewhat because of the speed of the ironer and folder." In other words, the used ironer and folder cannot match the DRF Feeder's highest pace. In the near future, however, Kamin-

ski plans to rectify the problem by investing in a Girbau Industrial PC-120 Flatwork Ironer and FL Folder and Stacking System.

Stage 3 – New PC-120 Ironer

Heated with natural gas and up to 93 percent efficient, the ironer will feature two, 48-inch diameter rolls. It will also automatically adjust ironing speed and temperature according to fabric type and moisture content, which allows the laundry to feed damp linens straight from the washer into the feeder and ironer, bypassing dryer conditioning.

"The twin-roll 48 will allow us to have the DRF Feeder at maximum speed," said Kaminski. "Our ironer right now has a gas-fired cylinder. The new one will be more efficient, maintain a consistent temperature and be cooler for the staff. It will create a 36 percent increase in drying and ironing productivity," he said.

All told, Kaminski likes the savings of

the off-site laundry. Although he outputs \$50,000 annually to transport laundry from the resort to the new location, he's reduced staff from 28 to 12, saving \$175,000 per year in labor. "It costs us just 7 cents per laundry pound for labor, and less than 14 cents per pound for labor, chemicals, debt service and everything else combined," he said.

It's worked out for the best for everyone, according to Kaminski, who never let go of any of his staff. He simply shifted some employees from laundry to housekeeping, an area a bit light on labor.

Stage Four – Creating New Profit Centers

Next, Kaminski will further streamline the off-site facility to take on laundry from other area hotels, and in doing so, create a new Chula Vista revenue stream. Simultaneously, plans are underway to develop a bar and lounge – a \$1 million profit center – in the space once occupied by the resort's on-premise laundry.

At some point, Kaminski may bring the laundry back on property. For now, he says, it's more than serving its purpose.

To discover more about Chula Vista Resort, visit www.chulavistaresort.com.

For more information on Girbau Industrial laundry products, visit www.girbauindustrial.com, or call 800-256-1073.

Chula Vista Resort—a History

Chula Vista Resort is much like a self-contained city, offering 200,000-square-foot of meeting space; sleeping accommodations for up to 5,000 per day; indoor and outdoor waterparks; the 18-hole Cold Water Canyon Golf Course and Superstition Springs Miniature Golf Course; Spa del Sol; and the Wisconsin Dells Center, a 90,000-square-foot multi-use facility used for athletics, events, and more. It has grown enormously since 1950, when Kaminski's grandfather, Joe, purchased the summer resort. At the time, it featured 30 rooms, no indoor plumbing and a six-stool bar.