

Galley's gone...

It's now called the "dining facility." More than the name has changed.

By Jeff Inglis
Sun staff

Dining workers are experimenting on McMurdo Station residents. With the opening of the new dining facility in Building 155, food service staff have been trying out new configurations of equipment and different traffic flows.

The new space opened in mid-August, just before Winfly, and eaters and servers have both shared confusion at its use, said food services manager Lester Bracey.

"Initially we didn't know what everything was supposed to do," he said.

Some of the kiosks on which food is served can be rearranged, which allows for flexibility. The new structure, though, is designed to be less of a cafeteria line and more like a food court.

"It's supposed to scatter people around," Bracey said. "You're just supposed to move in and out."

With fewer bays, the kitchen staff can spend more time preparing food.

"They're actually able to focus on a better-quality product for fewer slots," Bracey said.

Not all of the food-serving areas are open yet. With new staff and a new facility, they're moving slowly to be sure things run smoothly, said Bracey. "Over Winfly we moved



Left: John Harris sets down tile in what will be the new serving area. Right: Dylan Roan works on the sub-floor heating system which keeps the new room warm. Photos courtesy of Mike Kelly.

things around a lot."

But some things are not working out so well, such as the dish-return area.

"We've got a bit of a traffic jam," he said. However, people are responding to that by staggering their arrival times for meals and leaving earlier to get to work on time.

There was no logjam when it came to construction. Things went very well, said winter construction and maintenance manager Mike Kelly.

The first task was to open up the space.

"The first month was almost completely tearing things out," Kelly said.

He said new features of the dining area include ventilation equipment that exchanges the entire volume of the room 42 times each hour, skylights with motorized shades that can allow light in or seal it out, and radiant, under-floor heating, which uses the same glycol-based waste-heat recovery system as the rest of the building.

The construction crew numbered anywhere between 15 and 25 people, Kelly said. But even with all the demands of the job, Kelly said they only had to work one Sunday

of overtime to finish the work on schedule.

Several people, Kelly said, were truly crucial to the success of the construction, which is the first major winter project completed on time in several years. Kelly credited electrician Dale Role, plumber Paul Rogers, metal-worker Fred Cunningham, and Ken Robinson and his crew of sheet-rockers.

"We were lucky to get people who can do this quality of work," he said.

Kelly also gave credit to Vince Scopa, who coordinated the project. Scopa, Kelly said, became known as a hard-driving boss, but one the crew wanted to work with.

"They jokingly called this (building) 'Cellblock 155.' But they all wanted to work in Cellblock 155," Kelly said.

With 358 seats, the new facility holds 60 more seats than the old galley.

Some things have been left to be finished this summer season. For example, there will be clear glass blocks placed in the railings to better separate the sections of the dining space. ■