

Highway 1 revisited

By Jeff Inglis

The Antarctic Sun

Steve Bruce has been coordinating the renovations to McMurdo Station's Building 155 since the beginning of February. Tomorrow, the day the new offices will be repopulated, Steve is leaving town.

He leaves behind a major section of the million-plus dollar project, complete except for the finishing touches. The renovation work will continue during next winter, and extend into other parts of the building.

Though the improvements to Highway 1—McMurdo's busiest hallway—are obvious to anyone who saw the area before last winter, a lot of the changes affect more than the appearance.

Mark Neeley, the head of engineering at McMurdo, is quick to note other improvements. "There's probably at least that much work that you don't see."

The work was part of an effort to bring Building 155 up to par with modern construction standards. It was built by the Navy in the late 1960s.

"This building's been here a while," Neeley said. "Bringing a building like this up to existing codes is really a task."

See "Highway"—Page 2

“Highway”—from Page 1

The first stage of renovations saw improvements to the kitchen’s food preparation area.

The second phase, gutting Highway 1 and redoing it entirely, was this winter’s work, along with the kitchen’s dry storage, and freezer units, including refrigeration compressors.

The changes provide a laundry room, new computer training room, new barber shop, and increased office and storage space. It also makes the hallway more spacious and offers what Bruce called “parka parking,” as well as a handwash station for people to use before meals.

“Very nice,” said the first new occupant of Highway 1, hairstylist Kim Fabre. “We’ve made it a little bit our own here with the palm tree,” she said, referring to the decorations already up in her shop.

“The walls are brighter,” said recreation coordinator Liz Evenson.

Housing is enthusiastic, too. “It’s going to be wonderful,” said Heidi Kampe.

A large part of the work involved the infrastructure and building code

changes. Plumbing was torn out and redone, as was almost all of the electrical wiring. Walls were replaced with more durable, as well as more fire-resistant,



Maj. Al Ross gets the first haircut from Kim Fabre in Building 155’s new barber shop. Photo by Josh Landis.

material.

“This was half of the job—maybe the larger half,” Bruce said. And it wasn’t the only thing happening in town.

“We had quite a bit of work going on this winter outside of this project,” Neeley said, mentioning as an example the new Cape Roberts core storage facility in Cray Lab.

Over a dozen workers took part in the winter project, organizing and using materials delivered on the supply ship Greenwave in February. The staging area was in a small building called the Playhouse.

“We don’t have a good large warehouse where you can store stuff,” Bruce explained.

Major changes are in the works for the serving and eating areas of the galley next winter, too. The plan is to open out the seating area to the exterior walls, add windows along the walls, and put in a cathedral ceiling—including skylights.

Bruce is happy with the way things went over the winter, and is looking forward to his departure for warmer climes.

“A good thanks to all the hands that worked on it,” he said.

