

## Mount Carbon View Flushed

The summit of Mount Carbon in suburban Denver, Colo., once offered a 360-degree view of the metropolitan area and the surrounding Rocky Mountain skyline. However, when restrooms were built on top of the mountain for a future golf course on the northeast side of the mountain, one resident has been anything but relieved.

Lakewood, Colo., residents Steve Holben, president of Holben Building Corp (Denver), and his wife, Maggie Holben, opposed the construction of the facility on the summit to preserve the view.

"As a cyclist, runner, and nature walker, I simply enjoy Mount Carbon's wonderful 360-degree view of Denver and the Rocky Mountains," Steve Holben said. "And further, as a home builder who often sites structures, I've been shocked that toilet buildings for the new golf course are located directly on top of the mountain."

He took his concerns and his 22 years of building experience to the City of Lakewood, which owns the golf course, called Homestead at Fox Hollow, but the city wasn't interested in his suggestion to move the chemical toilets to the side of the mountain, preserving the view.

"Lakewood just was not interested in my comments or thoughts or ideas or opinions," Steve Holben said.

"We have listened, but do not agree that we should move [the toilets]," said Bill Jewel manager of regional parks and golf. "We wanted to be able to serve both bicyclists and golfers and the site that we picked would most effectively do that," he said. The structure sits near a tee so golfers can use the restroom while others begin play on the hole; slowing down play is an issue the city must address, Jewel said.

The effort to relocate the toilets is in no way directed at the golf course, it is simply about protecting the view at the top of the mountain, Maggie Holben said. She said a better location must exist for the toilets.

"I've studied the golf course plan, and there are two locations that I feel would better serve the players, and for bikers there is an existing latrine just 1.3 mi [2.1 km] away. I can assure you that as someone who has biked about 60,000 plus mi [more than 96,500 km], having to ride another mile or so is not a problem," Steve Holben said.

Even though the Holbens raised these issues in the early stages of the project, the city built the toilets and, according to Steve Holben, built the structure very poorly. Upon inspection, Holben noticed several problems with the structures, such as not being plumb, level, or properly supported, he said.

"I think these things were improperly installed to the point where with ... the frost considerations, the potential for soils expansion, and the very poor methodology they used to construct them, there's a pretty strong probability that those vaults could be stressed in some manner, and could crack and leak waste and chemicals," Steve Holben said.

Again, Steve Holben contacted the city and raised his concerns about the safety and suitability of the toilets. He sent a letter about defects he has seen, and was told by the city that the units were built correctly. However, according to an installa-

tion manual received from the company that manufactures the modular units, the toilets are built backward because of the north-facing vent stacks, Holben said.

While there were some concerns with the installation, the company that produces the prefabricated unit said the structures had been built exactly as the manual instructs, Jewel said. Jewel further explained that while the toilets' vent stacks are not on the south of the building as preferred, the sun does shine on the pipe and "does a good job of venting it."

"I was totally rebuffed and dismissed by the City of Lakewood, who is responsible for these toilets, on June 11 in a letter from their public works director at the direction of their city manager," Steve Holben said. In that letter, according to Steve Holben, the city said it considered the matter closed.

With the city no longer listening, the Holbens sent letters to U.S. Sens. Wayne Allard (R) and Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R) asking the senators to look into the matter. Both senators agreed and issued congressional inquiries to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to investigate the matter, Steve Holben said. At press time, those inquiries were ongoing.

Since taking up the issue, the Holbens have received the support of the local Sierra Club and several noted local residents, such as nature photographer John Fielder, and state historian and professor Tom Noelle. They also have received approximately 60 e-mail messages through the Save Mount Carbon Web site (<http://www.savemountcarbon.com>) from concerned citizens.

"As a builder, I am held to the standards of the communities I build in, including respect and consideration for natural amenities, such as Mount Carbon," Steve Holben said. "Therefore, I think it is correct to expect the municipality to express the same level of respect and consideration when it builds projects. Lakewood truly is a beautiful city and we feel it's very important for us to do our part to preserve the Mount Carbon view."

