

## Trucking Along

A short-term solution has become a “wheel” food-and-beverage mainstay for Farmington Country Club.

A “slightly used” food truck was purchased in 2014 to serve meals while the Charlottesville, Virginia, private club’s main dining room was under construction. The 16-foot-long truck debuted at Farmington’s Fourth of July celebration that year and served between 1,500 and 1,700 members.

“We were surprised the food truck became so popular so early on,” says general manager Joe Krenn. “You never know

going into a club environment, and especially a traditional Southern club, what the popularity of something like that would be.”

The truck originally camped near the golf course and tennis courts for breakfast and lunch on Fridays and weekends. Today, it has branched out to member events and holiday celebrations. During construction, the truck became a “social

Farmington CC’s food truck has become a social gathering spot for members.



gathering spot,” where tables, chairs and even little fireplaces were placed around it. Not surprisingly, truck business slowed slightly in spring 2016, when the new grill opened. By fall, however, business began to increase.

“We started relaunching it in the fall and it has resulted in positive revenue increases,” he says. “We use it for private events and it’s still popular for parties and banquets.”

The menu has been slightly trimmed since the kitchen opened, but favorites such as tacos, grilled-cheese sandwiches and various kinds of hot dogs are still offered, while fried-on-the-spot doughnuts and hot chocolate are served for winter events.

The truck, weather permitting, was to make the rounds until November and is expected to reopen for business on early spring weekends—golf-weather permitting—by the new driving range.

“Because the new practice facility is more remote, we’re anticipating using the truck a lot more there than at the previous venue,” Krenn says.

The club’s banquet kitchen serves as the truck’s commissary, and most items are cooked to order on the truck. That being said, the truck has been a money-saver for the club’s setup and operation of remote food offerings throughout the property.

“There are no chaffing dishes, tables or chairs,” Krenn explains. “We set it up by popping up a few tables and chairs, and there are just two staff members—the cook and the house person, who stocks the coolers with drinks [and offers other help].” —S.D.



## Winter Wonderland

INTERLACHEN COUNTRY CLUB’S GOLFERS MAY HAVE TO STASH their golf clubs when the snow flies, but winter’s arrival means the Edina, Minnesota, private club is just warming up. Its course maintenance staff transforms the tennis facility into a skating lodge, with nine courts flooded and converted to hockey, ice skating, curling and broomball rinks.

But that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Interlachen’s winter recreation center does more business in three months of skating than six months of tennis, with the ice rinks generating roughly \$20,000 per winter, says general manager Eric Dietz.

“It’s a very active place in winter, [even] last year when we had miserable ice conditions due to a difficult winter,” Dietz recalls. “We don’t have refrigeration, so we rely on Mother Nature. Winter turns out to be a neutral proposition for us. We’re certainly not losing money, and we’re not making a ton, but it sure gives our members a place to utilize their club and—like any other club—the

important thing is, ‘How do we get our members’ cars in the parking lot?’”

Skating and hockey are Interlachen’s most-popular—and most formal—winter endeavors, while broomball and curling tend to be pickup games, Dietz explains.

The club even has an “aging” Zamboni it purchased years ago from another club, and the rink’s boards feature advertisements promoting Interlachen members’ families or businesses which help boost winter revenue. Interlachen also holds skating and hockey parties, for which it serves buffets in the lodge that are prepared in the clubhouse, and it charges \$4 to sharpen a pair of skates.

“If we had our druthers, we’d have a very different type of facility and we continue to look at those types of options,” he says. “We have some ponds near the clubhouse that we have also considered. Pond hockey is a large sport nationwide, and the Pond Hockey National Championships are held in Minnesota. We’ll see.” —Steve Donahue