

With The HOST® Maintenance Approach, Ferris State University Guarantees 24/7 Use of New Library Facility

HOST Dry Extraction Carpet Cleaning System Keeps the Carpet Clean Every Day

Opening the new \$50 million FLITE (Ferris Library for Information, Technology and Education) facility, and the 160,000 square feet of carpet on its four floors, challenged Ferris State University employees to think outside the box. The goal was maintaining the pristine condition of the facility that had been in design for years.

Mission: Break Old Cleaning Habits

Gary Gawne, Superintendent of Custodial Services for the library and other facilities on the Big Rapids, Michigan campus, knew he wanted to preserve what the library designer, Richard Cochran, had envisioned. “Regarding the carpet, we needed to do



More than 10,000 students attend Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan. Student traffic throughout the university's carpeted buildings creates ongoing maintenance challenges for custodial staff.



The information desk is one of the high traffic areas of the FLITE Library.

something more than daily vacuuming and, then later, total extraction,” said Gawne. “We needed a method of maintenance that would be relatively easy and maintain all the carpet.” Finding that, he knew, would break the traditional cycle for education facilities (carpet restoration following severe soiling/usage) and provide instead, “better overall appearance” to students and staff using the new facility.

Experience and observation had taught Gawne the maintenance challenges he faced. Day and night, 24/7, thousands of students

would stream through the two main entrances of the library’s first floor to use the computers located there. He knew water buildup at entryways in other buildings had loosened adhesives and delaminated the carpet; and the excess of both tracked in water and residual water from wet cleaning promoted mold and bacteria growth with their resulting smells.

“Adhesives have changed too,” Gawne said. Today we are using water – rather than solvent-based adhesives to install the carpet manufactured for the library. The



The first floor of the new library at Ferris State University never sleeps. Custodial staff use the HOST Dry Extraction Carpet Cleaning System to maintain the 160,000 square feet of carpet throughout the building's four floors, and keep the carpet in continuous use.

manufacturer recommended a dry extraction method to avoid the problems he'd already experienced elsewhere. And while the library was under construction, Lansing Sanitary Supply, one of the university's janitorial/sanitation products suppliers, invited Gawne to an in-service seminar to see how the HOST method of cleaning could work.

Change of Thought Pattern Leads to New Solution

"You really have to get out of that idea of wetting the carpet down and washing it," said Gawne. He changed his perspective after attending the HOST School Carpet Cleaning College in Racine, Wisconsin, where the HOST Dry Carpet Cleaning System is manufactured. This three day school offers professionals a comprehensive curriculum regarding the construction and maintenance of carpet. What Gawne learned there caused "a total reversal of our thought process."

Carpet Cleaned While in Continuous Service

Gawne bought the HOST System for his staff of six custodians to use

throughout the library the second it opened. Beginning their shifts at 10:30 p.m., the crew uses large-area carpet sweepers in conjunction with two HOST® Liberator® extractorVAC® units and a Freestyle® extractorVAC machine to vacuum. Because HOST Machines feature unique dual-brushing action, they excel at cleaning the two 6 ft. x 20 ft. ribbed, walk-off mats that trap most of the sand and dirt tracked in at the entryways (and keep it from being tracked into the library).

The HOST Machines also are used to dry clean the peak traffic areas, particularly throughout the first two floors (floors 3 and 4 are used for administration and archives). All the carpet is kept in service as library users circulate in and out of the building.

For dry extraction cleaning, crew members brush the safe, nontoxic, biodegradable HOST SPONGES® Dry Carpet Cleaner through the carpet and then vacuum up the cleaner with the same machines. There's no mixing of chemicals, no hoses and accessories to set up, no water tanks to fill or empty, and no risk of damage. The dry

cleaning system keeps the carpet in continuous service and focuses cleaning on those areas where it is needed.

"You are brushing in the cleaner and then vacuuming it back up," notes Gawne, "it's that easy." "Four of the custodians, hired to work at the new facility, took to the equipment and its ease-of-use instantly," he said. While with time, he and two existing custodians have come to appreciate the benefits of the HOST System because of its labor and time saving features.

Removing Spills As You Go

Spills of coffee and soda from vending machines on the first floor, along with the soiling from high traffic areas such as entranceways and hallways, are also a daily cleaning challenge. Liquids from fresh spills are removed with a portable extractor, and then custodians use a HOST spotZAPPER® brush to work cleaner through the spills, or use the Liberator to clean the larger common areas.

Maintain Entire Facility, with Focus on Less than 10% of Carpet

All told, the maintenance schedule includes vacuuming all the main traffic areas on floors 1 and 2, plus entrances and mats, 7 days a week. Main traffic areas on floors 3 and 4 are vacuumed 3 to 5 times per week. All dry extraction cleaning is completed in conjunction with the vacuuming in



HOST keeps the busy Harris Union clean and dry 24/7.

those specific areas where traffic patterns have appeared.

“Daily we are cleaning 8,000 – 10,000 square feet of carpet, less than 10% of the entire carpeted area,” notes Gawne. It’s a smart use of resources for both people and equipment. It concentrates effort where people actually walk and where spills and soiling really occur.

Less Time in Maintenance Than in Restoration Cleaning Cycles

Laborwise, how does this daily regimen of effective vacuuming and dry extraction compare to the traditional method of yearly restorative hot water extraction cleaning?

“On a daily basis, sometimes you spend more time on it but if you take into consideration all the time and people it takes for restoration cleaning, we use far less time with this maintenance program,” according to Gawne. “Cleaning must be done on a daily basis. It is no different than mopping a hard floor or running the automatic scrubber over it.”

Reduction in the number of cleaning products needed for carpet maintenance has helped too. In addition to the vacuum/extraction machines, the custodians use only HOST SPONGES and HOST Spot Remover. Small packages of the cleaner and the HOST ZAPPER brush are kept on carts for easy access as cleaning progresses throughout each shift.

Beyond OK to Clean All the Time!

“What you get for daily maintenance is consistency – a very acceptable level of clean carpet all the time,” observes Gawne. “You get that, versus watching your carpet get dirty, then extracting it, and then having it look, well, okay.”

At Ferris, and for this new library in particular, having the ability to keep the carpet in pristine condition nearly two years after its opening has been



The HOST Liberator features a dual-brushing action which excels at vacuuming the 6 ft. x 20 ft. ribbed, walk-off mats that trap much of the sand and soil tracked in at the library's two entryways.

satisfying for both Gawne and designer, Cochran. “We consider this a state-of-the-art showcase facility,” noted Gawne. “The designer knows our equipment and how it works. We want to preserve this environment for all students and staff. We know now it’s possible to reach that goal day in, day out.”

Low Moisture Cleaning Agrees with Campus Energy Management System

Discovery and use of dry extraction cleaning has yielded other benefits too. A central building management system, with an eye toward careful use of energy, now deploys the HVAC system for each building based on the number of occupants in each. Air conditioning or heating are generally turned on an hour ahead of scheduled occupancy.

“We have had some major problems with air circulation and getting anything to dry late at night,” said Gawne. Since dry extraction cleaning uses very minimal moisture during the extraction process, this air circulation

challenge has ceased to be an issue when cleaning the library. “There’s no drying time,” said Gawne flatly. “Carpet is virtually ready to use the moment you’ve finished cleaning.”

“The absence of excess moisture from the cleaning system also is helping to minimize mold growth,” he said, “and the water-based carpet adhesives should hold until it’s time to replace the carpet.”

HOST Exceeds Expectations

Other Ferris University buildings and users will also benefit soon from all Gawne and his staff have learned at the FLITE Library. A new three-story student services facility, featuring 70,000 square feet of carpet opened in the summer of 2002, also will be cleaned using the HOST System. “Yes, this has been a test case,” said Gawne, “and it has met and exceeded our expectations. We now know how to provide students clean carpet every day that they are here.”

Training & Vacuuming Test Gives Ferris University Custodial Staff Facts to Forge Ahead With HOST Maintenance Strategy

"When in doubt, get the facts." That's the strategy Gary Gawne employed in his quest to make a radical change in his way of keeping carpet clean in buildings on Ferris State University's campus.

He stayed open to new ideas, attending first an in-service seminar put on by his local janitorial/sanitation products supplier. Intrigued by the possibility that an addition of a dry extraction system could help his staff preserve the appearance of the new carpet throughout the new FLITE Library, Gawne attended the HOST School Carpet Cleaning College at Racine Industries, Inc., in Racine, Wisconsin. The school, a combination of classroom study/discussion and on-site use and testing of equipment, focuses on letting professionals make informed decisions about all of their cleaning practices. "Being there was what really sold me," says Gawne, "got me to think outside of the box."

Training Like Learning Never Stops

Rigorous staff training followed his decision to purchase the HOST Dry Extraction Carpet Cleaning Equipment. An on-site training session in the library for the staff of six custodians and the building's designer, included five hours of equipment introduction and use. Two follow-up sessions included hands-on training late at night so third shift custodians could further

refine their use of the equipment. With most students leaving the campus in spring, further training seminars are scheduled for summer.

"The key is letting your staff know that the manufacturer is there for training purposes," according to Gawne. "They can hear me talk about it, but the guys from the equipment company are the experts for them; that's the source they need to hear from."

Laying Gossip To Rest With a Unique Test

Industry talk about buildup of cleaning materials left in the carpet troubled Gawne. This criticism from other vendors only increased following his purchase of dry extraction cleaning equipment.

"I had the guys do a section of carpet with the HOST System, and then they went over it and vacuumed it like they were supposed to with the Liberator machine," said Gawne, describing the test he devised to test the criticism.

Following that, he took one of the staff's regular commercial vacuums, put a brand new vacuum bag into it and went over the same HOST-cleaned area, "extremely carefully – very thoroughly and slowly to see what I would get in that bag in a given area," Gawne said. Then he cut the



Gary Gawne, Superintendent of Custodial Services for the new library and other campus facilities.

bag open, "and I found there was very little in there. I think anything that may have been there would probably be removed with the next day's vacuuming. This was just a way to visually prove to myself that there is not a lot of material left in the carpet."

The Benefit of Daily Maintenance

Opened for the start of classes in 2001, the carpet throughout the library continues to retain its appearance. That, Gawne has discovered, is the chief benefit of daily maintenance: clean carpet every day rather than only clean carpet for a little while after a restoration cleaning.

"I'd advise supervisors to jump in and gather the facts; break out of the old cleaning cycles and habits," said Gawne. "Look around here, need I say more?"



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