

THE SEED SOWER

OU Facilities Management Quarterly Newsletter



Message from the AVP

OUFM Team Members,

Cooler temperatures have arrived, and it is time to wave goodbye to another academic term. I'm hoping all the hunters in our department have had a successful season this fall! Some of my fondest memories growing up were in the woods during the crisp fall mornings and evenings. I look forward to hearing about your experiences!

Facilities Management will undergo a few structural changes in the new year. Landscape Services will now report into the Facilities Services functional area similar to Custodial Services. The new landscape director, Michael Cox, will be on campus in January. I look forward to welcoming Michael to campus as we continue to enhance the legacy of our landscaping program. We will begin searching for a new Director - Skilled Trades to oversee our non-licensed maintenance areas. Glen Gordon will oversee our licensed trades as the Director - Licensed Trades. The new maintenance structure will allow each director to better focus on their areas and elevate the services we provide to our campus community.

I want to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication this semester. We have accomplished so much, and our successes would not have been possible without each person in Facilities Management. We all understand a little bit more what they mean when they say in the SEC, "It just means more." Campus was much busier this fall compared to previous years in all areas, not just on game days. This trend will continue in future years, and we will be ready to meet the challenge. For now, take a few weeks as we close out the calendar year to relax and recharge. I am looking forward to the new year!

-Matt

*Matthew C. Rom
Associate Vice President for Facilities Management*

UPCOMING DATES

WINTER BREAK

December 23rd-January 1st

SELF-EVALUATIONS DUE

January 6th

SPRING SEMESTER BEGINS

January 13th

LIVEWELL OU INFO SESSION

January 15, 9:00 AM, 705 Training Rm

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY HOLIDAY

January 20th

SPRING VACATION

March 17th-21st

SPRING FOOTBALL GAME

April 12th

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

May 5th-9th

Have an idea for the next quarterly newsletter? Email Facilities@ou.edu with your idea!

FEATURED TEAM MEMBERS

TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Mike McMillin



Mike was selected as the winner of the 2024 Annual Team Member of the Year award. Mike is a Utility Maintenance Mechanic within Utility Services and was previously awarded the team member of the quarter award in Q1 2024. Mike is recognized as the go-to expert on equipment, enabling Utilities to decrease dependence on external vendors. He's consistently demonstrates a willingness to mentor and train team members, and goes out of his way to engage with the OU community.

NEW HIRES

FACILITY SERVICES

Derrick Parker | Oct. 6
Noah Basnight-Tsotigh | Oct. 7
Breanna Woods | Oct. 20
Robert Parker | Nov. 17
D'Andro Simpson | Nov. 17
Kadence Deaton | Nov. 17
Jeremy Erb | Nov. 18
Travis Mammedaty | Dec. 1
Numas Aguilera | Dec. 2
Billy Atkinson | Dec. 2

MAINTENANCE

Shawn Worley | Oct. 21

UTILITY SERVICES

Lenora Tatah | Nov. 18

LANDSCAPING/GROUNDS

Cale Buchman | Oct. 21
Alekszander Prouty | Oct. 21
BJ Mulder | Dec. 3

WELCOME



MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

1 YEAR

Sean-David Kracke | Oct. 8
Daniel Hilsinger | Oct. 9
Chris Angie | Oct. 23
Steven Armon | Oct. 23
Carl Huff | Oct. 23
Chad Zasso | Oct. 23
Logan Kuhn | Nov. 13
Javier Contreras | Dec. 4
John Kutsch | Dec. 4
Timothy Nichols | Dec. 4

5 YEARS

Malinda Huffaker | Nov. 3
David Miller | Nov. 23
Jason Gann | Dec. 9

10 YEARS

Patricia Rettig | Nov. 10

15 YEARS

Mae Etta Laster | Nov. 3

25 YEARS

Timothy Winkelman | Dec. 18

40 YEARS

Greg Brezinski | Oct. 1

45 YEARS

Rex Brown | Oct. 6



QUARTER 4 AWARD WINNERS

Q4

LEAD/SUPERVISOR RONNY SENN



RONNY IS A LANDSCAPE AND GROUNDS SUPERVISOR FOR LANDSCAPE SERVICES. HE HAS WORKED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FOR 14 YEARS.

“

Ronny completes every landscape request with a positive attitude and is always willing to help where needed, even when the task doesn't fall into the 'landscape' territory.

”

Q4

CUSTODIAL SANDRA GONZALEZ



SANDRA IS A CUSTODIAN FOR CUSTODIAL SERVICES. SHE HAS WORKED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FOR 20 YEARS.

“

Sandra does an excellent job of keeping everything clean and ready for events during the week. She is highly knowledgeable, detailed, and her customer service skills are above and beyond!

”

Q4

FACILITY SERVICES TRISTAN KING



TRISTAN IS A PESTICIDE APPLICATOR FOR FACILITY SERVICES. HE HAS WORKED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FOR 10 MONTHS.

“

Tristan shows up everyday with a smile, a good attitude, and the willingness to solve any issues that may come his way. He shows a true eagerness to not only learn but to also educate.

”



**Nominate a Team Member for
Employee of the Quarter**

Scan the QR code for the nomination form
or email Jessica Shinabery at jshinabery@ou.edu



QUARTER 4 AWARD WINNERS

Q4

UTILITIES JAVIER CONTRERAS



JAVIER IS A OPERATOR FOR THE UTILITY OPS TEAM. HE HAS WORKED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FOR 1 YEAR.

“

Javier has consistently gone above and beyond with all tasks assigned with great attention to detail. He has shown the leads and his fellow team members what it takes to be an exceptional operator.

”

Q4

MAINTENANCE JONATHAN HARPER



JONATHAN IS A SENIOR ELECTRICAL JOURNEYMAN FOR MAINTENANCE SERVICES. HE HAS WORKED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FOR 6 YEARS.

“

Jonathan does a great job in everything he's asked to do. No matter what the tasks is, he keeps a positive attitude and can get it done!

”

Q4

LANDSCAPE STEPHEN OSBURN



STEPHEN IS AN SR. LANDSCAPE AND GROUNDS SPECIALIST FOR LANDSCAPE SERVICES. HE HAS WORKED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA FOR 2 YEARS.

“

No one can describe the work and effort Stephen has. He always shows up ready to do whatever is necessary to beautify the campus by day and night and does it with a smile and can-do attitude.

”



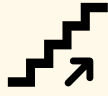
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FEATURED TEAM MEMBERS

UTILITIES STEP COMPLETIONS



Javier Contreras

Step 2, Operator Training Program
Operating Engineer

Brandon Doty

Step 4, Operator Training Program
Operating Engineer

KUDOS KORNER



Mikal and Ryan

"Two Carpenters came over to Carson to assemble a chair. I wanted to let you know that they were very nice and Mikal went above and beyond to help them. We really appreciate their hard work and wanted to make sure they were recognized."

PROMOTIONS

Congrats to the following team members on recent promotions!

Phillip Lee

Landscape & Grounds Supervisor

Dustin Browning

Environmental Systems Manager

Chris Stone

Storm Water Technician

Andy Start

Storm Water Technician

Logan Kuhn

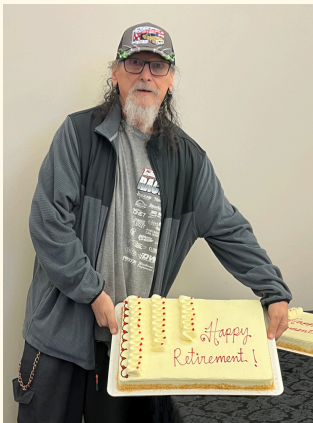
Inventory Associate

Edgar Balvantin

Landscape & Grounds Specialist

-Retirement-

TONY PAYTON



Congratulations, Anthony 'Tony' Payton on your retirement! Tony served as a Senior Painter in Maintenance Services. On December 12, his family and fellow team members celebrated his 34 years of service with the University!

Pictured Right: Customer Services wins a pumpkin decorating contest in Facility Services with Jackie Lantern, who was decorated using items from Lost and Found.



FEATURED ARTICLES

Michael F. Price Statue

Several Facilities Management teams worked together on the installation of the Michael F. Price statue. From the pad, lighting, irrigation, sod, statue base, lettering, and installation of the statue, our teams put in a lot of effort to make the statue honoring Michael F. Price perfect. This project was completed within 2 months. The statue was revealed to the public on Friday, November 22.



Chem Annex Teaching Lab

FM recently worked on a tight schedule to complete the 156-24 Chem Annex – 222 Teaching Lab, in time for fall classes for a large incoming class of freshman students. This project was a collaboration between Facilities Management and A&E services. The project manager was Larry Carter.

BEFORE



AFTER



FEATURED ARTICLES

FM Compound LED Retrofit

This fall, Facilities Management completed a pilot LED retrofit project in two buildings in the FM compound, upgrading existing T8 fluorescent lighting to energy-efficient LED lights. This initiative marks the first step toward identifying retrofit opportunities that could be implemented campus-wide.

The LED upgrade resulted in a 50% reduction in energy use at the lamp level, offering significant savings and reducing the need for frequent lamp replacements. The new lighting also supports the university's sustainability goals by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Retrofit installations were performed separately by OUFM electric shops as well as outside contractors. Looking ahead, the success of this project will pave the way for an estimated 55 buildings across campus to undergo similar upgrades, contributing to long-term sustainability and operational efficiency.

Great work to all involved in this important step toward a greener campus!



2024 Official Mum Photos



FEATURED ARTICLES

Grant Received for Recycling Trailers

The Recycling Shop and Sustainability Office at has been awarded a grant from the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality to purchase two mobile recycling trailers. The grant, which was submitted in January 2023, was officially awarded in fiscal year 2024.

The newly acquired trailers are designed to enhance recycling efforts by allowing the collection of four different types of recyclable materials. Each trailer is equipped with four 1.1 cubic yard bins, enabling the collection of large volumes of recyclables. This initiative aims to increase diversion rates and reduce waste across the university.

With the trailers' mobility, they can be deployed at various campus events, including football games, student activities, and other locations requiring temporary recycling services. The mobile units offer an efficient and visible way to promote sustainability across the university while helping to further its commitment to environmental stewardship.

The addition of the trailers marks another step toward enhancing the university's sustainability initiatives, making recycling more accessible and visible to the campus community.



Pictured Above: One of the two blue recycling trailers temporarily resides on Lindsey Street to accommodate tailgaters and football fans heading to the game.

Boyd House Decorated for the Holidays

Landscape Services and the Paint Shop joined forces for the annual tradition of decorating the Boyd House with garland and lights for the holiday season.



Pictured Above: Ethan Wisener and Edgar Balvantin use rope to transport the garland to the top of the columns.



FEATURED ARTICLES

Arrival of New Utilities Vac Truck

Vactor trucks are specialized vehicles designed to remove and transport materials like liquids, sludges, and slurries. Equipped with a powerful pump and large storage tank, they play a key role in maintaining campus infrastructure and supporting environmental management.

- 1.Suction and Collection: Using a pump to create a vacuum, the truck sucks up materials through a hose (2 to 4 inches in diameter) and stores them in the tank.
- 2.Transport: The collected materials are then transported to designated disposal or treatment sites, often for sewage, industrial waste, or environmental cleanup.
- 3.Versatility: Vactor trucks can handle both wet and dry materials, used for sewer maintenance, spill cleanups, and site preparation.
- 4.Safety Features: These trucks include safety mechanisms like pressure relief valves to prevent damage from pressure buildup.

By bringing vactor truck operations in-house, we eliminate contractor dependency, resulting in significant cost savings and faster response times for infrastructure maintenance.



Power Outage & Restoration on North Campus

In late October, North Campus faced a power outage caused by a malfunction in the OG&E switching cubicle and the subsequent failure of a building transformer. The dual failure necessitated complex troubleshooting and innovative solutions.

Our team, in close collaboration with OG&E, quickly restored power via an alternate supply after testing critical equipment. The UT Maintenance Shop, with OG&E's help, installed an emergency replacement transformer, fully restoring power. After nearly 23 hours of dedicated work, the teams successfully resolved the issue. Their commitment to maintaining safe and reliable utilities was outstanding, and we extend our gratitude to OG&E for their invaluable support in this effort.



HR UPDATES



SAFETY UPDATES

Well, another year passes by! Goodbye 2024, hello 2025.

I would like to thank all of you for working to make Facilities Management a safety-conscious workplace.

We have two new Safety Champions! Kristin Odom and Carmen Detar completed the Safety Recognition Program in the last quarter of the year. Give them congratulations on their achievement when you see them next.

2025 will be an exciting year for the Safety Program. We will begin training in several departments to help reduce our injury rate and keep our teams safer, implement a couple of different inspection programs, and continue promoting a safety-conscious work environment.

Have a great holiday! See you in 2025!



LiveWell OU Session

LiveWell OU is the University's wellness program focusing on mental, physical, and emotional health of employees. Lindsay Risley, OU Health & Wellness Manager, will be on-site to share information about the various programs and resources available through LiveWell OU. Attend the event below to learn more!

Date: Wednesday, January 15

Time: 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Where: 705 Training Room (705 E. Lindsey)

Who: All FM team members are invited!

HR UPDATES



Annual performance evaluations are among us once again! There are few changes to evaluations this year – enhanced rating scale, moving from a 5-point to a 10-point scale and a new merit tier designation has been created. Please make sure to complete your self-review by January 6. This is an opportunity for you provide important feedback to your supervisor. Following this step, supervisors will begin drafting employee performance reviews. In March, you will meet with your supervisor, and they will discuss your 2024 annual review. As a reminder, the process is electronic and completed through Cornerstone, the same website used last year.

Why are annual reviews important? They foster open communication between employees and supervisors, provide an opportunity to evaluate past performance and goal achievement, and serve as a foundation for planning professional development.

To learn more about the changes and timeline visit: <https://hr.ou.edu/evaluations>

Did you know?

The average class size at OU is 32, with less than 4% of classes having more than 100 students.

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