The Plant Exchange

The Plant Exchange is produced by members of the Plant Operations Division at the University of Michigan. Its purpose is to inform Plant Operations staff and the university community of activities, accomplishments, and information about our organization and the work we perform.

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Archives of previous Plant Exchange are located at: www.plantops.umich.edu/PlantExchange/

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Employees “at work” photos taken by David Judge

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From time to time it becomes important to refresh our thinking about various tenets of the business. Few of these tenets are as important as our Employee Relations Principles. For your guidance, I would like to review some of the guiding principles that we have incorporated into our Strategic Plan and discuss how these principles relate to certain topics.

Respect for the Individual – The rights of the individual should always be respected. It is a mark of humanity as well as a good business practice to be sensitive to the needs of employees at all levels of the organization. Toward this end, an essential foundation for our relationships is seeking first to understand and responding with direct, open, and honest communication.

Fairness in Promotions – When employees are being considered for promotion, the determining factors are: individual skills, capabilities, experience, and any unique requirements of the job. In the cases where union rules may govern, we must be sure to comply with policies established for our collective bargained for team members. When possible, we should try to fill positions from within. However, when we determine that properly qualified individuals are not present within Plant Operations, we may need to go outside the organization to find new team members.

Communications – Each employee has the right to know where he or she stands at all times and to receive full information on matters directly or indirectly affecting their jobs. Every employee shall have the opportunity for regular, individual appraisal and counseling sessions with his or her supervisor. Where contractual agreements preclude individual appraisal, the employee still has the right to an assessment at his or her request. It is equally essential to keep open the avenues of upward communication from employees to channel information to those who can take needed action. Plant Operations welcomes constructive criticism. No employee need fear reprisal or reprimand for questioning a practice or making a constructive suggestion. The value of two way communication between employees at all levels within Plant Operations cannot be over emphasized.

To further this principle, during the coming year Plant Lead Team members will be personally meeting in department group settings with each area of Plant Operations to provide Plant status information. Additionally, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Tim Slottow will continue with breakfast and luncheon meetings so that views on issues can be expressed outside Plant administration.
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**Opportunities.** – Plant Operations believes in equal opportunities for every employee or applicant for employment irrespective of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or national origin. We are constantly seeking to employ outstanding individuals. As an objective, Plant tries to maintain continuous employment of all satisfactory employees.

Continuing personal development is vital to the success of each individual and to the department. Plant Operations will continue to help employees increase their skills and knowledge through training programs and company support of education, both on the job and on the employee’s own time.

**Compensation.** – The University of Michigan through Plant Operations intends to provide compensation and total benefits that are competitive with benefits provided by other leading institutions. Severe budget constraints or contractual negotiations may at times cloud this principle. However, let me assure all that U-M’s commitment to a fair and competitive compensation package remains a principle of respect for our employees.

I hope these remarks serve to remind all members of the Plant Operations team that we are a team in every sense of the word. We will continue to work towards the goals and principles established in our Strategic Plans.

In closing I would like to thank all of you for your excellent work. One small way to show this thanks is to offer all members of the Plant Operations’ team an opportunity to relax in a setting away from the “office/shop” with our families, and Plant Ops friends and co-workers. Last year, the picnic at the Hudson Mills Metro Park was a great success. All who attended came away with the positive comments. So I am inviting all of you to mark your calendars and plan for an excellent fun filled day on Saturday, August 20th, from noon to four PM. I hope to see you all there.

Rich Robben, Director

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**UTILITIES & ENGINEERING**

**Central Power Plant - Water Master Plan**

**Phase 2 Completion** by Merrill Willett

On March 8, 2011 we completed Phase 2 of our Water Master Plan with the commissioning of the Reverse Osmosis System Unit #2. This completes the replacement of the existing Demineralizers for boiler water makeup. Reverse Osmosis (RO) is best known for its use in desalination (removing the salt and other minerals from sea water to get fresh water), but since the early 1970s it has also been used to purify fresh water for medical, industrial, and domestic applications. With the removal of the chemically intensive demineralizers, the Central Power Plant expects to realize a savings in regenerative and waste water treatment chemicals in excess of $150,000 per year and minimize the use of chemicals overall.
I always walk away from the (OS1) Train the Trainer with great ideas and corroboration on the one best way of cleaning and using the (OS1) processes. Coming home to Michigan from Orlando, John Lawter, Kristin Brancheau and I were inspired to make some changes immediately.

We held our first Job Fair on May 17 and I feel confident that we have implemented a positive move toward hiring quality employees that are willing to work, able to perform the required job responsibilities and can follow direction. We closed the door promptly at the start of our presentation and turned away almost as many as we had in the room. That was the first filter. Those turned away were invited to come to our next Job Fair and they were reminded that timeliness was very important.

Inside the room, there were no cell phones buzzing and everyone was very attentive. After an overview of our department and our hiring expectations, candidates filled out their applications and were briefly interviewed on a one-on-one basis, by our office staff and supporting supervisors who attended. Three of the potential candidates were hired as temporary employees for (OS1) buildings.

I think we all walked away feeling like we had accomplished a very good thing. We're planning another Job Fair in June and intend to continue holding them on a monthly basis as needed.

Plant Buildings and Grounds Services continues to receive accolades for the installation of the Maxicom irrigation system that has been installed since 2006. The system utilizes daily information from a campus weather station that monitors wind speed, rain, temperature and humidity to make adjustments to irrigation schedules.

Each day, this information is shared via telephone and radio signals with a central computer, which then calculates how much, if any, supplemental water campus plants and lawns need. The system is also capable of detecting leaks and breaks in irrigation equipment and will automatically shut off water to any damaged areas. This is especially important where the landscape is installed over part of the building. The result is an average savings of 22 million gallons of water on landscape irrigation each year, which is enough water to fill 33 Olympic swimming pools or sustain an average household for 172 years. At current water rates, this results in annual savings of $141,000. Since being fully installed, the system has helped the university avoid $564,000 in water costs.

A recent edition of the University Record has a more detailed article outlining our successes from Maxicom. The story was also picked up by several mainstream media outlets including CBS news, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal and dozens of other tech and sustainability publications. Plant Buildings and Grounds Services is currently working with auxiliary units to install Maxicom on their irrigation systems. In the near future NCRC, East Ann Arbor Health Center and others will be helping to save water!
What POCC Can Do For You  by Jesicia Klein

Buried under work orders? Need billing information? Think you need a better way to manage your work orders?

Did you know the Plant Operations Call Center is more than just the place that you call to report a problem and get a work order? POCC can provide other assistance to our internal Plant Operations customers as well as our external campus customers. POCC provides training on FMS once a month as part of the Plant Operations new employee orientation, although even experienced employees can attend these sessions to refine their skills and possibly learn new ones. We also offer individual customer training typically at the request of the customer. Both types of training can be classroom or one-on-one training to best fit the needs of the customer. The most common items we assist our internal customers with are updating work orders and completing finished work orders in FMS as needed. Our external customers typically benefit from learning how to interpret the coding on the work orders to obtain the information they need easily; including work status and billing information.

Outside of entering and updating work orders, building queries (filters) is by far the most popular service that POCC can assist you with. A custom query can assist you by having the information you regularly search for appear on your desktop (sorted and counted if needed) for monitoring at a quick glance. The data from these queries can also be exported to Excel and used for reporting purposes. By learning the capability of the FMS system, you can utilize the tools that you already have to get the information you need and keep it up to date.

Please feel free to contact POCC by phone 7-2059, or email POCC@umich.edu to ask how we can assist you. As teachers of the tool we can serve you better, allowing you to serve your customers better.
CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

International Center for Automotive Medicine

Suites Upgraded! by Taylor Jackson

One of the most successful projects that the Construction Services group has completed in recent months has been the ICAM suite upgrade located on the third floor of the University of Michigan Medical School. A component of the University of Michigan’s Department of Surgery, ICAM (International Center for Automotive Medicine) is a world-leading research group focusing on positively impacting the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of motor vehicle crash injuries in an effort to reduce deaths, disabilities, and economic costs. In pursuit of that goal, the ICAM group has conducted case reviews in Ann Arbor since 1998, and consistently ranks among the world leaders in automotive medicine research.

Some of the major features of the ICAM suite upgrade included constructing several private offices, a new kitchenette, as well as a new computer lab and digital projection room, which enables research teams to sit down together and conduct in-depth case reviews for motor vehicle accidents. Thanks to the careful planning and hard work of Rick Eathorne (Senior Engineering Manager), Alan Swan (Project Foreman), and Taylor Jackson (Project Assistant), the upgrade was completed weeks ahead of the original planned timeframe, while remaining within the project budget. The newly renovated suites have already received lots of positive attention within the medical school, and the ICAM group is thrilled with their new space. Construction Services is proud of all the work they have provided for the University of Michigan Medical School and we look forward to serving them again in the future.
Facilities Maintenance

Custom Skeletal Display Stands by Laura Riley

Josh Blackmon hand crafted multiple skeletal displays stands for the Anatomical Donations Program at the Medical School. The customer was interested in display stands with features that were not available in retail stores. The heavy duty stands that Josh crafted have greater stability and are much more adjustable for multiple size variations of skeletal displays than anything else available. The customer also required that each unit be easily recognized as university property. To meet this requirement, Josh customized the stands with the U-M block M logo for easy identification. The Sheet-Metal and Welding Shop staff delivered just what the customer needed for “hanging around.”

Making Blue Go Forward: Thirteen Graduates Honored! by Tom Sullivan

On March 3, an awards banquet was held to honor the men and women that graduated from the U-M Skilled Trades Apprenticeship program during 2009-2010. A record class of thirteen graduates from a variety of trades had an opportunity to celebrate with family, friends, fellow graduates, JAC representatives, and managers while receiving public recognition for their hard work and academic achievement.

After a delightful dinner, Rich Robben addressed the graduates, reminding them that they are following in a centuries-old tradition of on-the-job learning. This tradition extends back at least as far as the 11th Century English guild system, and continued through the Industrial Age all the way to today’s Information Age. He restated his commitment to “foster a learning environment in Plant Operations through support of educational and recognition programs. We will continue to value and support our people. We will keep the tradition.”

Kim Kiernan, Business Manager for Facilities & Operations, had an opportunity to mingle with the graduates and their friends and families, and added her words of appreciation for the high level of skills that the journeypersons and apprentices bring to their jobs, and the importance of their work in the operations of the University’s facilities. Craig Butcher, General Foreman for the Mechanical Systems shops, added a few heartfelt words, reminiscing on his own experiences as an apprentice and journeyperson, and encouraging the new journeypersons to aim high and continue in their career development.

The graduates were each presented with a plaque recognizing their journeyperson status in their respective trades. This newest generation of skilled trades journeypersons were encouraged to improve their skills and share their knowledge with each other and with apprentices that will follow in their footsteps. Through this process of continuous improvement, skills development, and sharing of institutional knowledge, they will participate in this long-standing tradition and continue to Make Blue Go!
Graduate
Sarah Seymour
Benjamin Zick
Kevin Bordine
Bruce Everard
Jeremie McCoy
Denise Johnson
John Miller
Kevin Kelley
Aaron Pollock
Chuck Shepard
Jason Hackbarth
Mike Kinnard
Ted Dwornick

Trade
Electrician
Electrician
Steamfitter
Steamfitter
Electrician
Electrician
Elevator Mechanic
Carpenter
Steamfitter
Steamfitter
AC & Refrigeration Mechanic
Plumber
AC & Refrigeration Mechanic

Department
Construction Services
Construction Services
Facilities Maintenance
Utilities & Plant Engineering
Facilities Maintenance
Construction Services
Facilities Maintenance
Construction Services
Facilities Maintenance
Facilities Maintenance
Facilities Maintenance
Facilities Maintenance

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Kevin Kelley receiving his plaque from Paul Guttman.

The McCoys proudly display Jeremie’s plaque.

Graduates: l-r: Bruce Everard, Jeremie McCoy, Mike Kinnard, Jason Hackbarth, Kevin Kelley, Chuck Shepard, Ted Dwornick, John Miller. Not shown: Sarah Seymour, Ben Zick, Kevin Bordine, Denise Johnson, Aaron Pollock
As a world class leader in higher education, the University of Michigan’s relatively secure position and generous employee benefits make attractive the idea of a long career on campus. The world of work is rapidly changing - especially with new technology and the growing popularity of lean processes. The direction and pace of change is significantly impacting Plant Operations’ personnel. It is realistic to expect that new skills, new knowledge and new ways of getting the job done will continue to increase over time. Are you on track to grow in the changing world of work?

Here are some noteworthy career development investments for the changing workplace:

1. Get to know the computer. For early skill building and fun, start with emails and the internet. To get started; support can come from a family member, a friend, a co-worker or supervisor, your local library or Plant’s open computer lab in the fall and winter months of each year.

2. Invest in your personal satisfaction and future by giving the very best to your present job. Take the initiative to seek new skills or help improve current processes with the guidance of your supervisor or a mentor. Help others to learn new skills to succeed in their work.

3. If you wish to advance to a new job someday, polish your resume now. Update it and improve it (now). Creating a new resume (now) is an excellent way of taking stock of your abilities and accomplishments. By keeping your resume updated, you’ll only need to add the finishing touches when a new opportunity strikes. Attend workshops on resume writing at Plant Academy and other campus locations that we can direct you to. There is no time like now!

4. Get help with career guidance. Plant Academy can help steer you to places on campus and neighboring communities that assist with job interest assessment, career decision making and more.

5. Consider additional training and education for current job placement or a possible future career change. Attend the annual career fair co-sponsored each June by Plant Academy. Take advantage of your tuition benefit by taking one or more classes at a community college or at a four year campus near work or home.

Professional development is a shared responsibility; coupling employee initiative and workplace/community resources. The requirements of time and courage to ‘get ready and stay ready’ can result in great personal satisfaction and pride. Your actions may also positively influence family and friends through good role modeling.

Progressive career satisfaction is a process. Waiting for an opportunity before taking action results in undue stress; perhaps too little too late. If you daydream about a new door opening for your career, what steps might you take to prepare for that dream to turn into reality? For more information on these pathways and more, contact Plant Academy to get the conversation started. You may reach us at 734-647-0831 or sarahely@umich.edu.
On February 8, Plant Operations had the privilege of honoring eight retirees with a combined total of 214 years of service to the University.

Participating in the Celebration and being honored were: Jerry Pauley from Plant Building and Grounds Services with 38 years of service; Bill Widmayer from Construction Services with 34 years of service; John Gleason from Plant Building and Grounds Services with 30 years of service; Barbara Woniewski from Plant Building and Grounds Services with 26 years of service; Dale Schaedig from Construction Services with 25 years of service; Wally Stellberger from Facilities Maintenance with 23 years of service; Paul Renaud from Plant Building and Grounds Services with 22 years of service; and O’Sun Graham from Plant Building and Grounds Services with 16 years of service.

Rich Robben, Executive Director, opened the celebration with welcoming words for visitors, guests, and employees as well as congratulations for the retirees. Following the welcome, each retiree was honored with a few words by members of their department. Paul Renaud from Plant Building and Grounds Services was not able to make it to the Celebration. Throughout the celebration, the guests enjoyed refreshments and had the opportunity to chat with and congratulate their retiring co-workers. There was a large turnout of family and friends to honor the retirees.

The next Retirement Celebration is scheduled for August 3, 2011. If you are planning to retire, we would like to encourage you to participate in the next Plant Operations Retirement Celebration. Please contact the committee member for your area (please see the committee list below) and allow Plant Operations and your co-workers to celebrate your accomplishment!

Retirement Celebration Committee by department: Plant Building & Grounds Services- Amber Morton; Construction Services- Jeanette Craft; Facilities Maintenance- Gina Flowers; Plant Administration- Betty Alberts; Utilities & Plant Engineering- Lisa Sheldon; and Work Management- Von Hardesty.
PLANT PICNIC
You’re Invited!

On behalf of Rich Robben and the entire Plant Operations Lead Team, we would like you to save the date to join us for the 2011 Plant Operations Employee Appreciation Picnic!

When:      Saturday, August 20, 2011
Where:    River Grove Shelter
           Hudson Mills Metropark

Join your friends and colleagues for a day of good food and good times!

MHEALTHY
by Julie Nelson

MHealthy exercise programs for people with special health needs. Call for free consultation.

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For more information, visit: www.mhealthy.umich.edu/fitscript