

THE SEED SOWER

OU Facilities Management Quarterly Newsletter



Message from the AVP

As we move closer to the end of a busy and productive summer, I want to take a moment to thank each of you for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to excellence. The recent Safety Rodeo was a tremendous success, showcasing our shared commitment to safety through engaging demonstrations, informative booths, and strong participation across the organization. Thank you to everyone who helped make the event such a positive experience.

I am also incredibly proud of the significant progress being made on projects across campus. Your tireless work continues to move important initiatives forward and make a lasting impact on the University.

Finally, thank you for your outstanding response following the recent wind storm. Because of your quick action, flexibility, and tireless efforts, campus was able to return to normal operations remarkably quickly. Your work often happens behind the scenes, but its impact is seen and appreciated by the entire university community.

Thank you for all you do every day to keep our campus safe, beautiful, and operating at its best. Your dedication makes a difference, and I am grateful to serve alongside such an exceptional team.

Be Safe!

Matt

UPCOMING DATES

PANHELLENIC MOVE-IN
August 6-7

ALL HOUSING MOVE-IN
August 17-18

FALL CLASSES BEGIN
August 24

UTEP VS. OU/CAMPUS
CLOSED
September 4

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY
September 7

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

FEATURED TEAM MEMBERS

NEW HIRES

FACILITY SERVICES

David Patterson - 4/20/26
Jasmin Sneed - 5/18/26
Paola Conte - 6/7/26

CUSTODIAL

Jacob McLamb - 4/19/26
Kevin Holmes - 4/20/26
John Marquess - 5/18/26
Dalynn Sanroman - 5/17/26
Eliana Britton - 5/17/26
Michael Wolfe - 6/1/26
Heather Coleman - 6/14/26
Kayla Jamison - 6/14/26
Matthew Martin - 6/14/26

LANDSCAPING/GROUNDS

Hunter Hamilton - 4/6/26

UTILITIES

Tim Hudson - 4/6/26
Luke Cummings - 4/20/26

MAINTENANCE

Tyler Fiscus-Hainline - 4/6/26
Tony Nye - 5/4/26
Connor Perkey - 5/4/26
Justin Hightower - 6/15/26
Ricky McIntire - 6/29/26



TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT!



Patrick Downs, Utility Services



Patrick Downs serves as a Senior Project Manager within Utilities Services and has been a valued member of Facilities Management since March 2007. Early in his career, Patrick served as a shift lead and quickly became the reliable “go-to” resource for plant operations and knowledge.

Patrick played an instrumental role in the transition from traditional utility meters to Aclara smart meters, providing real-time data that allows for more accurate utility monitoring and quicker identification of issues such as leaks. In his current role as Senior Project Manager, he oversees numerous projects across the university’s utility distribution systems and plants.

In addition to his operational responsibilities, Patrick has demonstrated leadership and engagement within the department. Over the past two years, he has served as chair of the Events, Engagement, & Recognition Committee and has emceed multiple department events. Patrick also recently completed APPA Leadership Academy Level I.

Thank you, Patrick, for your dedication, leadership, and many contributions to the success of Facilities Management!

MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES

1 YEAR

William Stephens	4/21
Jessica Lamb	4/22
Tucker Craig	6/14
Tryston Shepherd	5/19
Alex McCann	6/16
Chase Davis	6/25
Greg Beller	6/30

5 YEARS

Lloyd Walkup	4/12
Nicholas Treaffis	6/7

15 YEARS

Jimmie Shockley	6/6
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20 YEARS

Stephen Blakely	4/10
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30 YEARS

Tammie Mitchell	4/8
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QUARTER 2 AWARD WINNERS

Q2



JEREMY SMITH MAINTENANCE

JEREMY WORKS
FOR THE ACCESS
CONTROL SHOP
AND HAS WORKED
AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF
OKLAHOMA FOR 2
YEARS

“ He is a very hard worker shows up to work early and is willing to stay late if need be. Jeremy always has a positive attitude and is will to help any one in the shop with questions or work. Jeremy is taking Leadership Development Cohort 31 classes in the afternoon. Jeremy has also sits on the Director council board and Council committee. Over all Jeremy shows hard work and dedication to this University and is an asset.

”

Q2



BILLY ATKINSON SUPERVISOR

BILLY IS THE
SUPERVISOR OF
THE ACCESS
CONTROL SHOP
AND HAS
WORKED AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF
OKLAHOMA FOR
1 YEAR.

“ Billy has been instrumental in several areas this past quarter. To begin with, he was assigned additional responsibilities to oversee the Carpenter Shop while their supervisor was away, all while continuing his daily oversight of Access Control. During this period, Billy worked closely with the Carpenter team and successfully reduced their backlog and overall work order volume to a manageable level.

”

Q2



EMMELINE BENALLY CUSTODIAL

EMMELINE IS A
CUSTODIAN AND
HAS WORKED AT
THE UNIVERSITY
OF OKLAHOMA
FOR 10 YEARS.

“ Emmeline is a fantastic custodian. She keeps an exemplary custodial closet that is well stocked and organized. Her APPA scores exceed expectations most of the time. She always looks for ways to help her fellow custodians and assist when there are employees absent. She takes on extra spaces to help out when the teams are down people. She handles orders for her assigned areas and takes the responsibility of stocking hers and fellow team members closets before an order. This maintains a proper amount of inventory without over or under ordering. She quickly responds to issues within the buildings and is quick to pick up overtime when available.

”

New Survey Link!

A new survey link has been created. Please delete the previous link and QR Code, and use the one below:



FEATURED TEAM MEMBERS

KUDOS KORNER

Karen Brownlee - Custodial

"just took a bit of a late breakfast and noticed Karen Brownlee (our Custodian) had just finished cleaning the Lobby. I looked at the table, and it was spotless along with every window in that Lobby and the floors are freshly vacuumed. I gave her a verbal compliment on her work. I just wanted to say how much I appreciate the care that Karen has taken with MY Secure Area and behind the Data Center over the years here in 4PP. Today is a great example, she has the Lobby looking so excellent for a near 60 Person Tour of The Data Center and The Oklahoma Supercomputer scheduled at 2pm. She has been doing an excellent job and always keeps a positive attitude around Tenants/Students of the 4PP Building.



David Kizer - Plumbing

WO 2657923 - they showed up and in a timely fashion. The meter had to have parts ordered and it got fixed. They didn't add to the messy room any more then it is:) The FM staff are always friendly and empathetic to our problems.



Collin Longman - HVAC

WO 2655026 - we really appreciate the work FM did. Yes, everything was timely; it was taken care of; they were friendly; and everything was cleaned up. Dr.Vishanoff was happy with everything and glad to have his office back.



Congratulations, Crystal!



After nearly 20 years of dedicated service to Facilities Management, Crystal Noah's last day with the department was May 1, 2026. Crystal began her FM career in Custodial Services before joining Customer Service in 2006. She also played a key role in supporting the expanding Material Management operation over the past few years. Throughout her career, Crystal contributed to the success of multiple areas within Facilities Management and built lasting relationships with colleagues across the department. We thank Crystal for her years of service and wish her all the best in her next chapter.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Staff Week Amazing Race

Two Utilities teams participated in the Staff Week Amazing Race, a campus-wide scavenger hunt, putting their problem-solving skills, teamwork, and campus knowledge to the test. Participants raced across campus following clues and completing challenges daily, all while enjoying some friendly competition with fellow staff members.

Team members highlighted several favorite moments from the event. Craig Carley proudly noted, "Winning each day's race by more than 10 minutes." Lincoln Fitts shared that he especially enjoyed "the teamwork aspect of the competition," while Jason Alvarado's favorite part was "running across campus trying to figure out what buildings to go to and where the clues were."

The event provided a fun opportunity for team building, friendly rivalry, collaborative spirit.

Congratulations to the the Natural Born Chillers for finishing in 3rd place.



Natural Born Chillers – Won Best Costume

Johnny Pitts; Lincoln Fitts; Justin Tripp

Patrick Downs; Kirk Bivens – not pictured



Megawatt Makers – Won Best Team Name

Michael Bergen; Craig Carley; Manolo Ramirez

Jason Alvarado; Kameron Madron

Promoting Safety and Wellness All Month Long

Throughout June, FM team members participated in National Safety Month activities centered on four weekly themes. Team members tested their knowledge through weekly quizzes and challenges, while safety tips and statistics were featured on the department's new digital display boards. Congratulations to all of our prize winners, and be on the lookout for next year's Safety Month activities!



FEATURED ARTICLES

Safety Rodeo Highlights Shop-Specific Challenges



FM team members gathered on June 3, 2026, for the annual Safety Rodeo, themed “Different Saddles, Different Battles.” The event, planned by the Events, Engagement, and Recognition committee, focused on the unique safety challenges faced across the department’s various shops and work environments while reinforcing the importance of maintaining a strong safety culture. Through interactive activities and friendly competition, team members learned from one another’s experiences. Congratulations to UT Maintenance, which won the daytime table competition, and Ashley Bowen, who earned top honors at the Custodial third-shift table. The Safety Rodeo continues to be an important opportunity to promote awareness, engagement, and a shared commitment to workplace safety.



FEATURED ARTICLES

Summer Projects in Full Swing



The sidewalk leading to Nielsen Hall was widened to enhance pedestrian flow and complement the building's overall appearance.



A curved drive was added on the west side of Brooks Mall near Nielsen Hall to allow larger vehicles to navigate the turn more easily.



An additional sidewalk was installed near Dunham College to improve pedestrian traffic flow and provide a more direct walking route. A new BigBelly trash and recycling station was also added to enhance waste collection and support campus sustainability efforts.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Staff Week Memories



Facilities Management team members joined colleagues from across the university in celebrating Staff Week, participating in events that recognize the dedication and contributions of OU staff. Several team members were honored during the Staff Awards Ceremony for their years of service, marking important career milestones and a continued commitment to the university. Others enjoyed opportunities to connect with coworkers through Staff Week activities, including Bingo and the annual picnic. The week provided a chance to celebrate accomplishments, strengthen relationships, and recognize the people who make our campus a great place to work and learn.



FEATURED ARTICLES

Rose Garden Relocation



The Rose Garden has found a beautiful new home! Relocated to accommodate construction of the new Life Sciences Lab Building, this project was a true team effort

led by Project Manager Ricky Pope. Crews from MRTTP, Streets, Electric, Plumbing, Paint, Utilities Maintenance, Utilities Non-Pot, Landscape, HVAC, and Fabrication shops invested more than 3,300 work hours to bring the new space to life.

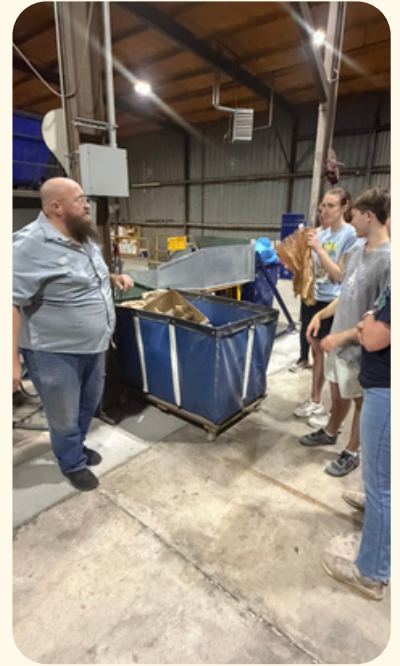
At the center of the garden, a stunning new water feature—Triple Lotus Bowl in the color Portland—serves as a focal point, surrounded by more than 100 newly planted rose bushes. The garden now showcases a vibrant mix of varieties, including The Grand Champion Rose, Champion Sunblush Rose, Coral Knock Out Rose, and Double Pink Knock Out Rose.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, expertise, and dedication to this project. Some of the team members who helped make this relocation possible are featured in the accompanying photo.

Students Get an Inside Look at Campus Recycling



Members of the Green Week Student Committee and the Sustainable Energy Society toured the campus recycling facility on April 24 to learn more about how recycling services are provided across campus. The tour was led by Pat Higdon of the Refuse and Recycling Shop, who shared information about the collection, processing, and management of recyclable materials. The visit provided students with a behind-the-scenes look at campus sustainability efforts and the important role Facilities Management plays in supporting them.



Quarter Two Safety Summary

SAFETY SUMMARY

Quarter Two 2026



ON THE JOB INJURIES

10

REPORTED

0

RECORDABLE

TOTAL RECORDABLE INCIDENT RATE

5.3

Closer to the goal of 5.00!

OTHER

- 13 shops inspected for general safety items

ACCIDENTS

5

- Leaking sprayer caused dye to enter storm drain.
- Kubota ran into Big Belly trash container.
- FM Pickup truck ran into retaining wall.
- Mower kicked up bolt which then imbedded in door to home.
- Kubota hit tree limb causing front window to shatter.

OBSERVATIONS

1. Landscape team members consistently wearing proper PPE in dim lighting/early morning hours. Good job!

2. Seatbelts not being worn by FM team members in vans, trucks, and kubotas.

3. Team members not wearing hearing protection around loud equipment.
Reminder: Any environment over 90db requires hearing protection!

4. Common Shop Deficiencies

- Clutter / Trip Hazards on floors due to lack of organization
- Keeping tools or other items that are not used, have not been used, and will not be used.
- Lack of Emergency Evacuation Procedures, Drills, and Training.
- Lack of documented training on tools, equipment, or processes.
- Damaged cords on power tools.
- Lack of JHA or SOP for processes, tools, and equipment.
- Chemical Inventories and associated SDS not available.

NEAR MISS

1

- Grate missing from part of drain in parking garage.

COMMITTEE UPDATES



Events, Engagement & Recognition

The Events, Recognition, and Engagement Committee successfully hosted the 2026 Safety Rodeo on June 3 with the theme "Different Saddles, Different Battles." Feedback on the theme was overwhelmingly positive, as it gave each shop the opportunity to highlight the unique hazards and safety challenges they face. Based on supervisor feedback, the committee is exploring moving the Safety Rodeo to February to better accommodate summer workloads, and adjustments to food and beverage offerings are also being evaluated. Looking ahead, planning is underway for the Fall Festival on October 9, while the committee reviews awards distribution practices to promote equitable recognition across all shop divisions. As I transition out of the Chair role, Kristen Odom will assume leadership of the committee, and we encourage anyone interested in getting involved to contact her at kbulch@ou.edu.



Safety

Listed below are just a few of the topics that we, the FM Safety committee, have discussed and found solutions to in the last quarter.

Forklift storage after use: reports of forks being left in the improper position (not flat on the ground) as well as the forklifts being parked in the wrong areas.

Ladder inspections: With the basic ladder inspection sheet made by Jeff, the rest of the committee members have spread these sheets and gave basic run downs of what to look for in these inspections to take defective ladders out of service.



Safety Continued

- Vehicle safety: the committee has been discussing multiple ideas regarding phone usage while driving. While it is already against the rules to operate a cell phone whilst driving a company vehicle it has not stopped people from doing it.
- Equipment training: many shops have not had proper training or even had training prepared for some of the tools in the shops such as grinders, drill press, press, parts cleaners. Since this was discovered during the recent shop inspections, we've been working to get all training created and printed out for the shops and getting the training to the employees.
- Possible trainings for employees: we discussed creating new trainings that have not been implemented yet for all workers and all specialized training for property managers to help them identify common problems that may come up and how to address them for example if a piece of equipment continually trips the breaker it is getting power from then the electric shop need to look at it before it starts a fire.

These are just a few subjects that the Committee has discussed in the last quarter. We feel that these meetings are improving the work culture here at OU keeping workers safer and keeping moral higher by getting rid of hazards that have been issue for some time.



Policy

The committee reviewed all current departmental policies and newly revised Motorized Vehicle Policy, with the Key Policy as the focus for revisions this upcoming quarter.

UPDATES

SAFETY UPDATES

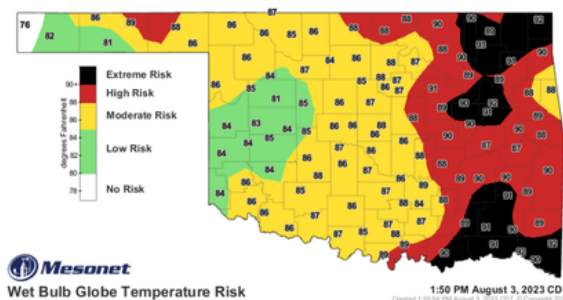
It's getting hot again! Here are some tools you can use to keep yourself safe in the heat. **Make sure you talk with your supervisor if you feel you need to implement a work/rest schedule.**

Heat index is the combination of temperature and humidity. Basically, the higher the humidity, the warmer it feels to us. You can monitor the heat index on the Oklahoma Mesonet since it is updated every 5 minutes

Another tool you can use is the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT). WBGT takes into account air flow and sun exposure in addition to temperature and humidity and may be a more comprehensive index of human heat stress. I have attached the WBGT documents found on the Oklahoma Mesonet. You can also check the WBGT on the Mesonet and make appropriate decisions for your team based on the current WBGT.

WBGT is most appropriate to teams working outdoors since it factors in sun exposure and wind speed while heat index may be more appropriate for those working indoors in hot environments with minimal air movement (i.e. tunnels, basements, powerplants).

Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Risk



Please, stay vigilant and stay safe!
-Jeff Mlekush

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATES

The FM Human Resources office has now two team members. Let's meet the them!

Jasmin Sneed, HR Coordinator

Jasmin developed her career working in customer service, student advisement, and human resources. After she received a degree in Human Relations at OU, she accepted an opportunity to work in Washington D.C. for a federal agency as a human resources specialist, dabbling in the fields of staffing, benefits, and employee relations. Her time on the east coast came to a close, but Jasmin was excited to come back to Oklahoma and is now bringing her experience to the FM team. In her spare time, Jasmin enjoys music and spending time in nature. She is excited to serve you all and learn more about the department.

Paola Conte, Sr. HR Coordinator

As a human resources professional, Paola started her career as an employee with the U.S. Army overseas and continued at the University of Miami where she also managed financial operations and earned a master's in public administration. In 2016, Paola was accepted into a Ph.D. program at the University of Oklahoma, where she continued her professional career as a program manager. In the daily practice, she weaves her experience in human resources with theory and research to serve employees throughout their professional lifecycle.

At FM, Jasmin and Paola are looking forward to developing long-term relationships with all team members based on collaboration, trust, respect, and accountability.

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