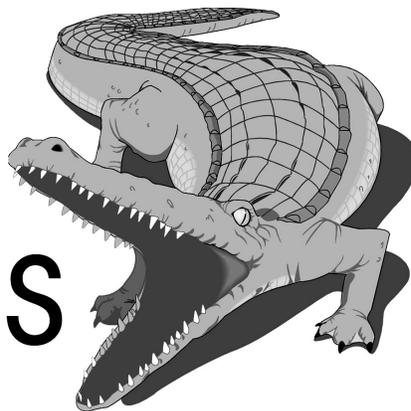


June 2006

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# Gatortales

*From the Physical Plant Division of the University of Florida*

**Vol. XXII, Number 6**

**Director  
Dave O'Brien**

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**In This Issue:**

**OB'Gram: Ride Your  
Bike To Work Day**

**Tips For Avoiding  
Heat-Related Illness**

**May Communication  
Breakfast Recap**

## ***PPD Safety Committee Is A Valuable Resource For Employees***

One of the functions of the PPD Risk Management Office is handling the meetings and actions of the PPD Safety Committee. Risk Management Coordinator Ron Hambrick explains, "The purpose of the Safety Committee is to represent each department at Physical Plant, give them a place to voice concerns about safety issues, and begin the process of addressing those issues."

The committee has been in existence for nearly twenty years at PPD. Dolly Warner, Program Assistant, who takes the minutes of each meeting, said, "The committee used to be run by Work Management staff members. In 2000 the Risk Management Office was formed and began overseeing the meetings."

Over the years, the committee has handled many issues pertaining to worker safety. Former Risk Management Coordinator (and current PPD Quality Office Coordinator) Allan Preston said, "One of the biggest issues that the Safety Committee worked on in the past was safety shoes for employees – originally, employees were assigned to seven styles of shoe that they were allowed to purchase. It was brought to our attention that some of those shoes were poor quality, or poor-fitting. The committee worked towards getting the rule changed, and now employees are free to purchase any type of safety shoe that meets regulations. Another example of positive change by the safety committee is earplugs – Central Stores now stocks three different types of earplugs, so that employees have a choice of which design they'd like to wear. These changes are all due to employee input and discussion."

Recent agenda items for the committee included issues such as installation of back-up beepers on PPD trucks, repairs and inspections of the vehicle lifts at Motor Pool, and the possibility of Central Stores stocking snake leggings for Grounds employees to wear. "The biggest item we've worked on since I've been here is the roof access at the Food Science Building," said Hambrick. "In order for our employees to get up there and check the equipment on the roof, they had to navigate a very small walkspace next to a four-story dropoff, with no railing. We looked at the area and recommended improvements, and A/E is currently working on a project to install a railing on top of the building to make access easier



**One of the major issues the Safety Committee has worked on recently is the roof access at the Food Science Building. Workers had to navigate a narrow walkway, beside a four-story dropoff, to inspect the roof. The committee looked at the problem and made recommendations, and a project is currently underway to install a railing at the roof edge.**

**See SAFETY Continued On Pg. 3**

# May Communication Breakfast Recap

Mr. O'Brien began by mentioning the PPD fleet management initiative. The administrative vehicle fleet at PPD has been reduced by almost 1/3 in order to save fuel and conserve parking spaces. In addition, a taxi service is being offered to PPD employees who need to make trips across campus. Interested parties should contact Work Management in order to schedule the service. OB said that we are looking at extending the taxi service to the entire university, as well.

Governor Bush has signed the new state budget, and there were additional monies allotted to UF in order to cover rising utility costs. OB said that there is also a provision for a 3% across-the-board raise for all employees, effective in October. More good news on that front comes with the announcement that employee healthcare premiums will stay the same this year. OB also said that the university is looking strongly at giving merit raises in October.



**The old Laundry Services building will be used for PPD storage and expansion.**

The UF Laundry Service is completely closed down and the equipment is being sold at auction. Physical Plant will be taking possession of the building soon. Mr. O'Brien said that Motor Pool and Central Stores will use the building to expand their workspace and storage capability, and the rest of the area will be used for general PPD storage. OB said, "You can never have enough storage space out here."

A new Assistant Director has been hired for the Health Center. His name is Bruce Bonham, and he comes to PPD from Lee University, in Tennessee. OB said that he expects Mr. Bonham to begin at UF sometime early in July.

OB mentioned the upcoming Civic Lights project that the university is participating in, along with the city of

Gainesville. The project comes from Europe and consists of aesthetically pleasing and interesting displays of lights in public areas. Campus locations for Civic Lights will be the Fine Arts B building, the 13<sup>th</sup> Street underpass, and Green Pond, in front of the Reitz Union.

PPD's Employee Appreciation Day was a big success, and OB thanked everyone for coming out and having a good time. Finance and Administration's Employee Appreciation Day is coming up in August. OB encouraged all PPD employees to attend.

Question and Answer:

Q: Will PPD consider allowing employees to wear shorts this summer?

A: This issue has been discussed many times. We have some employees who work mostly outdoors, mainly Grounds employees and some Building Services employees, and those individuals are allowed to wear shorts. Other than that, I don't foresee any changes to our uniform policy.

Q: Are the merit raises in October tied to negotiations with the union, for USPS employees? Will we have to wait for our raises like last year?

A: Hopefully not – every year, the contract between the university and the union allows for a limited number of articles to be re-negotiated, and it is true that wages are part of those negotiations again this year. However, I feel confident that we're going to get that done in a timely fashion. Last year's delays have already been discussed, and no one involved wants to repeat that.

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## ***OB'Gram: Summer Heat And Bikes On The Street***

by Dave O'Brien

We are in the midst of another hot Florida summer. I want to remind our employees who work outside to be mindful of the risk of heat stress. Our Risk Management office has arranged for Heat Stress training to be given here at PPD. Make sure you attend the training if your department schedules you to go. It's important to know the signs of heat stress and what to do to prevent it. You can call Ron Hambrick, PPD Safety Coordinator, if you have questions about this topic.

Many of you know that I got a Harley motorcycle a few years ago. I thoroughly enjoy riding my bike and I know there are several other bike riders here at PPD. Each summer we get together on "Ride Your Bike To Work Day". July 19th is Bike Day this year. I'll be bringing my motorcycle and I look forward to seeing lots of bikes in our PPD parking lot that day!



## **SAFETY Cont. From Pg. 1**

and less hazardous.”

Another major function of the Safety Committee is to schedule training for PPD employees. Hambrick said, “Training is a huge part of what we do. Just in the last few months, we’ve had CPR training, forklift training, trenching and scaffolding training, and classes on fall protection, chainsaw safety and bloodborne pathogens. We’re working with EH&S to offer asbestos awareness training, and we also have a class on safe lifting techniques scheduled in Main Street for the middle of June.”

Overall, the committee provides another excellent avenue of communication at PPD, according to Preston. “I think that one of the biggest positive aspects of the Safety Committee is just giving a lot of folks an outlet to bring up issues that they don’t feel entirely comfortable discussing with their supervisor, for whatever reason,” he said. “We provide a communication conduit to discuss those issues, and that’s extremely valuable to our organization.”

Dolly Warner added, “The major thing we want employees to know is just that we’re here, that they can come to us and voice their safety concerns. We get a lot of reports from our department representatives, and that’s great, but we also welcome suggestions and input from all employees. If you have a safety issue or concern, feel free to come to one of our meetings, or contact the Risk Management Office at 392-6217.”

The PPD Safety Committee meets in Main Street on the fourth Thursday of every month. Meetings are open to any employee who wishes to attend. The committee’s department representatives are: Vinnie Herman, Central Stores; Terry King, Building Services; John Black and Bill Fowler, Grounds; Buster Johnson, Operations Engineering; Jim Thompson, HSC; Michael Richarme, A/E; Derrick Williams, Motor Pool; Paul Vlahos, Facilities; and Dwayne Selph, Systems. Additionally, Tom Ladun attends each meeting as a representative of the Environmental Health and Safety Division.

## ***O’Connell Beautification Project***

***Donnell Douglas (left) and Otto Ingram hard at work planting flowers outside Gate 1 of the O’Connell Center. Grounds Department recently re-did the Gate 1 circular planter with a variety of bright, eye-catching foliage. The project was designed to accomplish two goals: eliminate the existing overgrown plants in the space, and add an attention-grabbing splash of color to a heavily-trafficked area of campus. In addition, the flowers (which included salvias, native hibiscus, buddleias, pentas, and asclepias among other varieties) are supposed to attract butterflies to the area.***



### ***Tips For Avoiding Heat-Related Illness For Outdoor Workers***

- Wear light, loose-fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible.
- Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher and re-apply every 2 hours, if sweating heavily.
- Wear a wide-brim hat and sunglasses.
- Drink lots of water, about four cups an hour.
- Avoid soft drinks and tea – caffeine makes the body lose water. Also avoid heavy meals.
- Tell your co-workers/supervisor if you’re feeling ill.



**All About PPD Employees...**

**April Employees of the Month:**

**New Employees**

- Maggie Akins, Building Svcs.
- Paul Coleman, Facilities
- William Coutts, HSC
- Phillippe Etchinique, HSC
- Vali Lavakamur, ITS
- Rudolph Littles, Building Svcs.
- Minh Nguyen, Building Svcs.
- Truc Nguyen, Building Svcs.
- Derrick Scott, Central Stores
- Dawn Smith, Central Stores
- Martha Smith, Building Svcs.
- Tyrus Watson, Grounds
- Leroy Williams, Building Svcs.



**Mark Ferguson**  
*Health Center*



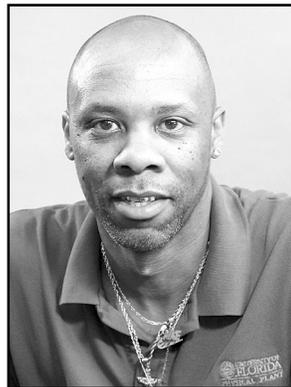
**James Lee**  
*Building Services*



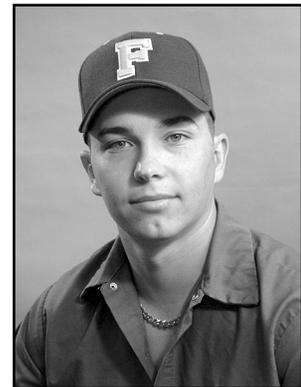
**Be Nguyen**  
*Building Services*

**Promotions**

- Chris Arters, Facilities
- Kevin Drye, Building Svcs.
- Rufus Hutchinson, HSC
- Rudolph McCleary, Grounds



**Tony Pearson**  
*Building Services*



**Chris Roberts**  
*Facilities*



***Congratulations!***

***Not Pictured:***

***Alonzo Bivins, Building Services***

***Paul Huntley, Systems***