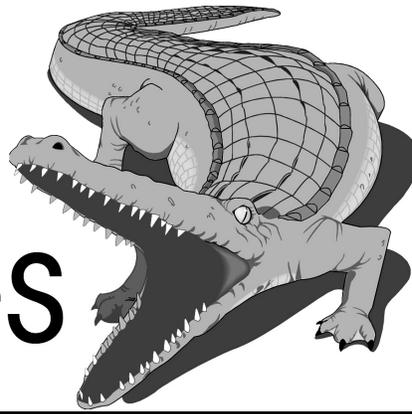


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Gatortales

From the Physical Plant Division of the University of Florida

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Question And Answer With Assistant Director Derrick Bacon

With over five hundred employees, Building Services is the largest department within Physical Plant. Recently, *Gatortales* sat down for a question and answer session with Building Services Assistant Director Derrick Bacon, to get his thoughts and ideas for the current state of the department and where he feels Building Services will be headed in the future.

Gatortales: What were your first impressions of PPD Building Services upon taking the Assistant Director position?

Derrick Bacon: The first thing I noticed was how friendly and relaxed everyone was. In my previous jobs in the private business sector everyone often seemed so uptight. I think that comes with having profit and growth being the preeminent goals and measures of success. Here at Building Services we're not profit driven. Our goals and measures of success all revolve around service to our customers and their assessment of what we do. Another thing that contributes to the relaxed atmosphere is the fact that our administrators and the BSD department are in close proximity to our customers. Goals are more easily established, communicated, and obtained, when the people who make the important decisions are close to the customers and the employees who will carry out the necessary tasks to achieve the goals.

GT: What do you feel are the department's greatest strengths?

DB: I've found that the vast majority of the Building Services employees are unselfishly

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Silver To Gold Breakfast At Main Street



Physical Plant held its annual Silver to Gold Breakfast in Main Street on June 14. The breakfast honors longtime employees who have been at PPD/UF for 25 years or more. For a complete list of honorees, see page 4.

John Thomas Leaves PPD

After 18 years as supervisor of the PPD Carpentry Shop, John Thomas has retired. A reception was held for him at Main Street on June 29.

John came to Physical Plant in August of 1985, beginning work as a carpenter. He said, "I had worked in construction all my life, with my own business and also doing union work. I was looking for something with a little more stability and possibly a pay raise."

After three years, he was promoted to Maintenance Specialist and given the responsibility of carpentry shop supervisor, and he remained in that position for the rest of his career at PPD. "It's been a good job to me," John said. "I've had nothing but good luck, and great support from all the other trades here at PPD."

Construction Projects Specialist Wayne Wainwright said, "John was a great supervisor. He was well qualified in the maintenance mechanic and carpenter trade, and had many years of experience in the trade that he supervised. Through the years, John had some challenging jobs given to him, and no matter how hard or complicated the jobs were, John would figure out the best way to get the job done and satisfy the customer. He was a team player and worked well with all of the other supervisors and the customers. John will be missed, and it is going to be challenging to get a replacement for him with the knowledge, skills and dedication that he possessed."

After retirement, John says his plan is to relax during the rest of the summer. His wife, Irene, is four years from her own retirement from the University, and he says he has no definite plans right now. "I'm just going to take it one day at a time, and then maybe do some construction work on the side, when the heat dies down – maybe some remodeling, something like that," he said.

"I just want to say that I appreciate all the people at PPD that I've ever worked with," he added. "Like I said, I've never had anything but good cooperation from the other shops, and hopefully I've made some friends out here over the years. Plus, I feel like I had the best crew out here, and they've always made it easy on me. I'll still be around occasionally, too – I plan to be back every year for the Christmas dinner. I wouldn't miss that for the world, that food is too good. So I'll see everyone at PPD again, from time to time."



Dave O'Brien (left) with John Thomas

4th Annual F&A Employee Appreciation Day

Finance and Administration's 4th annual Employee Appreciation Day will be held August 16th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the O'Connell Center. All Finance and Administration employees are invited, and we will receive our tickets a few days before the event. Admission will be through Gates 1 and 2. Magicians James Coates and Cameron Francis will be there to amaze us, and you won't want to miss this event. Be prepared for a great lunch, music, entertainment and terrific door prizes!

June Communication Breakfast Notes

June's communication breakfast was held on June 20th. Dave O'Brien discussed several topics of interest to PPD employees before taking questions from the attendees.

President and Mrs. Machen have purchased a home in Gainesville and will be vacating the President's mansion this summer. Plans are underway for the house to be available for UF Departments and Colleges to use for meetings and entertainment. PPD's commitment to caring for the house and grounds will continue.

PPD Motor Pool is investigating using both ethanol and bio-diesel fuels in PPD vehicles in an effort to conserve gasoline. A couple of mowers and one pickup truck are currently using biodiesel fuel. PPD has also negotiated the use of an electric truck for a month to test its efficiency for the work we do.

The governor has approved a 3% across-the-board raise for employees effective October 1st.

UF is growing – two new buildings are set to open soon and construction will begin on two more in the near future.

A new Assistant Director has been appointed for Physical Plant operations at the Health Science Center. He is Bruce Bonham, who is coming to UF from a small college in Tennessee where he was the director of the physical plant department. He will begin work here on June 30th.

The Finance and Administration Employee Appreciation Day will be August 16th.

PPD is planning an Open House this fall to introduce ourselves and our work to customers at UF.

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dedicated to service. I don't believe you can perform custodial work effectively if you have an "it's all about me" attitude. Fortunately most everyone here that I've come in contact with believes that our job is not only to clean but also to make our customers happy.

GT: What areas do you feel the department can improve on, and how do you plan to address those areas?

DB: One of the things that needed improving was already addressed with our new performance appraisal process. When I started working here several employees told me that they were taken by surprise by the nature of their evaluations. We did a lot better with that this past evaluation period, but there is always room for improvement. We are now tracking our evaluation scores so that we can see how we do individually and collectively from year to year. The bottom line though is that if an employee is surprised about their evaluation then we as supervisors haven't done our job.

Another problem is a perception that our custodians don't have enough to do. I think that there are a few things that may inadvertently contribute to this notion. The first thing is that a lot of our custodians work from 5:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. While the shift time in itself is not a problem I believe that when some people on campus see custodians taking a breaks during the times of the day when the campus is busiest (10:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m.) that person may say to themselves, "I'm busy doing my job so why are there four custodians standing outside talking amongst themselves?" Since 10:00 a.m. is not the typical business lunch time the person may not realize that that is when our day shift E&G custodians go to lunch. Add to that the fact that we are scattered about campus with few designated places to take breaks. So, if the weather is nice, a lot of our staff tend to congregate outside. I've asked a group of our supervisors to come up with suggestions on how we can change this perception.

I do understand that there may be a few employees that take unauthorized breaks or feel that they've finished everything they intend to do for that day so they stop working. Our work here is never finished, and there is always something to do. It's incumbent on BSD management and supervisors to make sure that our custodians stay busy and are effectively doing their jobs. The assistant superintendents and supervisors need to make sure that they identify project work that can be worked on so that their assigned areas continue to improve in appearance. This is especially true during the summer, spring break, and holidays when the campus is not as busy as usual.

A major thing we need to tackle is that Building Services needs to be able to have current, presentable, information to prove that we provide consistent, high quality work. To this end I have started an information seeking project on how we can computerize and centralize all of the information that is available to us. Some of the processes are already in place, but are tedious because we are not utilizing available technology. This is especially true when it comes to our inspection process. We must be able to have statistical data to show where our strengths and weakness are so we can continue to improve.

GT: Can Building Svcs. employees expect any new training programs?

DB: Yes, very soon we will be adding recycling information to our initial training. The information will elaborate on the benefits of recycling, explain why recycling is so important, and talk about Building Services' role in helping to meet the University's sustainability goal when it comes to waste.

We'll also continue to work with PPD's Human Resources department on our supervisory development training. Whenever possible and prudent, we would like to be able to promote from within our own ranks.

There are also training classes, seminars and conferences held by nationally recognized custodial and management associations. These types of training events are often beneficial in that they can provide a perspective on custodial work and/or supervision outside of the routine. However we must be able to justify the expense of sending employees to these types of events. The seminars and conferences that are low cost and are held locally are the ones that we'll be utilizing the most. I won't be spending hundreds or thousands of dollars to send employees, (including myself), to training seminars out of state unless there is a specific need or benefit to Building Services and our customers.

GT: One of the major points you stressed upon taking the reins at Building Services was a focus on customer service and meeting customers' needs to the best of our abilities. Do you feel that focus has improved during your tenure?

DB: Yes, over the past several months the number of letters and emails that we've received with praise and thanks for our efforts have increased, so we set up a "Kudos Board" here at our main office building to display the commendations for all to see.

Complaints have been fewer, and the ones that we do receive we make sure that we follow up so that there is a satisfactory resolution. This "Make-'Em-Happy" approach regarding customer service has allowed my staff and me to handle customer complaints promptly, while leaving customers feeling good about our service. Also by doing some jobs that in the past may have been outside of our normal operating procedures (like pressure washing the buildings at the Alachua Progress Center, or shampooing carpets on short notice), we've made customers even prouder of their facilities.

We will also continue to educate and communicate to our customers about what Building Services does. "Customer Contact" cards are one project we're working on in this regard. These cards would be used as an introduction with new customers, new custodians, and to assist with complaint resolution. The customer contact cards not only will give the customer the pertinent information about Building Services but will also allow the customer to put a name with the face of the person that is coming in to do the cleaning. This "personal touch" allows the customer to better interact with the custodian and vice-versa.

In addition, the Building Services portion of the PPD web-site was just recently updated with more accurate and customer friendly information. Our customers can now fill out a customer satisfaction surveys online via our web site.

Finally, one of my main goals is to continue meeting our customers. With a customer base of this size I know that it may take some time. Fortunately, this is one of the things I like most about my job.



All About PPD Employees...

May Employees of the Month:

New Employees

- Juan Acosta, Grounds
- Bruce Bonham, HSC
- William Cooke, Building Svcs.
- Antionette Ford, Building Svcs.
- Sarah Hanson, PPD HR
- Daniel Huddleston, Grounds
- Michael Jordon, Building Svcs.
- Anson Peppers, Building Svcs.
- Della Ross, Building Svcs.
- Sharon Smith, Building Svcs.
- Amy Thacker, Building Svcs.
- Henry Thompson, Jr., Building Svcs.
- Tyrus Watson, Grounds
- Tommy Young, Grounds



Bill Fowler
Grounds



William Krause
Health Center



Beverly Wallace
Building Services

Promotions

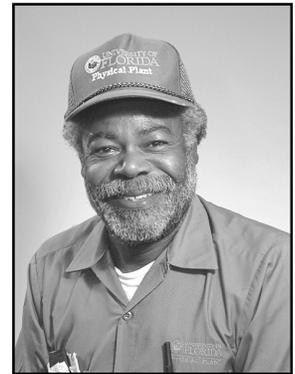
- Roman Abadia, Facilities
- Marsha Hamm, Building Svcs.
- Jeremy Joiner, Grounds
- Jessie Robinson, Building Svcs.
- Dawn Smith, PPD HR
- Ike Smith, Building Svcs.
- William White, HSC
- Genita Woods, Building Svcs.
- Teresa Young, Building Svcs.



Roosevelt Waters
Building Services



Craig Williams
Systems



John Young
Facilities



Not Pictured:

Julia Kimbrough, Building Svcs.

Congratulations!

Son Truong, Building Svcs.

Silver To Gold Honorees

Joel Allen, Annette Boston, Gloria Brown, Willie Mae Bryant, Johnnie Chandler, Madine Cobb, Daniel Crenshaw, Sally Danzy, Paul Dennis, Ophelia Gilliam, Robert Godwin, Betty Graham, James Graham, John Graham, Danny Grant, Larry Hamilton, Shirley Henry, Willie Hill, Rufus Hutchinson III, Avery Jones, Anh Lac, Henry Lewis, Arthur Lovett, Jr., Bertha Markham, Pauline Memory, Johnny Miller, Lillian Mitchell, Linda Mitchell, Tony Pearson, Johnny Richardson, Linda Slater, Bettye Smith, James Thompson, Donna Waldon, Essie Wilder