



# Monthly Newsletter

FACILITIES FORUM

04 December 2024



PHOTO BY SARAH MANRIQUEZ

## Exciting Updates Ahead: Check Out What's New This Month!

Welcome back to this month's edition of Facilities Forum. Time for the announcements!

Congratulations to **Chris Jordan**, he is December's Employee of the Month. If you know someone who you think deserves to be recommended as a future Employee on the Month, please visit this [link](#) to nominate them.

Keep watch on your emails as the holidays approach, there will be info concerning Payroll.

Please help welcome **William Payne**, a student with DDC, **Juana Galicia Castaneda**, a new shuttle bus driver, and **Paul Bruhn**, with the HVAC shop, who all started this month.



Happy Holidays and see you next year!

*Facilities team x*

In this newsletter you can expect:

Protecting Your Indoor Plants

Wood Center Ducting

Holiday Parties This Month

Nathan's 2024 Predictions: Wrap up

Current Recruitments



PHOTO BY LEIF VAN CISE



## Protecting Your Indoor Plants

by Juanita Magnetek

Indoor plants bring life, beauty, and cleaner air to our homes, offices, and campus. They may also attract unwanted pests like thrips, spider mites, and mealybugs. These pests can cause significant harm to your plants: discolored leaves, stunted growth, and even plant death. Infestations can occur on plants in private offices and common areas and periodically on purchased or donated plants. Plants that live outdoors for part of the year may harbor stowaway insects when transitioning inside for the winter. Cutting flowers and herbs from the garden to bring indoors is another way they can infiltrate your domain. Let's discuss recognizing, protecting, and treating indoor plants from thrips and other pests.

### Recognizing Thrips and Other Pests

Numerous varieties of tiny insects suck the sap out of plants causing damage to leaves, stems, and flowers. They can be challenging to spot, but look for:

- Tiny, moving dots: Thrips may be less than 1mm long and can be white, yellow, brown, or black. They have a narrow and elongated body and a pointed abdomen. You may also see tiny black dots on the underside of leaves, which may be fecal matter where bugs have been feeding.
- Distorted, discolored, or damaged leaves: Thrips can cause leaves to become curled, mangled, or deformed in appearance. They also may cause unexplained damage or blackened tips on unfurled leaves. Silvery, white, or rusty discoloration of leaves is common with infestations.
- Fuzzy or cottony patches: Mealybugs and spider mites can produce white, cottony patches on leaves and stems, as well as "webbing" that is present with spider mite infestations.

### Protecting Your Plants

Prevention is the key to maintaining pest-free and healthy indoor plants. Try this:

- Inspect plants before bringing them home or to your office: Check for signs of pests or diseases before introducing new plants to your indoor space.
  - Use clean potting mix, pots, and tools: Fresh potting mix is essential. Do not reuse soil from another plant. When reusing a pot, wash and disinfect it, allowing it to air dry before planting. Clean your tools between plants.
  - Monitor your plants regularly: Make a habit of inspecting your plants for apparent signs of infestation or disease, but also look closer. Check under leaves for black specks, discoloration, and moving "dust."
  - Leaf washing: gently wash leaves with a mild soap solution or water regularly, focusing on the undersides of the leaves where pests are more likely to hide.
  - Ensure good airflow: Appropriate plant spacing can help. When too crowded, airflow to each plant decreases, increasing the chance of mildew production and infestations. Pests can spread more easily in close proximity to other plants.
  - Consistent Watering: Overwatering can attract certain pests and be detrimental to your plant, creating the likelihood of fungal infections and root rot. Dried out or stressed plants are attractive to indoor pests.
  - Maintain optimal humidity: Thrips, mealybugs, and spider mites thrive in dry environments. Using a humidifier or placing plants atop a tray of gravel and water can create a more suitable microclimate. Misting tropical plants periodically also helps keep them refreshed.
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## Treating Infested Plants

If you do find pests on your indoor plants, do not panic. Take these steps:

1. Isolate the infested plant/s: Remove the affected plant from other healthy plants to prevent the pests from spreading. Check all surrounding plants for signs of infestation and isolate any other plants infected.
2. Prune back the infested areas: remove infested portions of the plant to prevent spread.
3. Use insecticidal soap or neem oil: These gentle, non-toxic pesticides can help control pest populations. Use as directed, ensuring that the entire plant, including the undersides of leaves and soil, is wet.
4. Increase air circulation and humidity: ensure plants are spaced, have good airflow, and receive enough moisture. A humidifier and lightly flowing fan may work wonders.
5. Consider a biological control: Introduce natural predators such as ladybugs or lacewings to control pest populations.
6. If you prefer, try natural remedies. Natural options may be helpful, such as diatomaceous earth, cinnamon powder, and garlic spray. Research natural remedies and their effectiveness before attempting to use them.
7. Discarding the plants: While this can be difficult for a plant owner, it may be necessary. Curing plants of infestations is not easy. Consider this option if the infestation and damage are severe or you cannot provide consistent treatments to the affected plant over several weeks to months.

*With patience and persistence, you can enjoy beautiful, pest-free indoor plants all year round.*

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Facilities Services/Grounds Department can help assist through our Indoor Plant Program (I.P.P.). Feel free to reach out directly at [jlmagnetek@alaska.edu](mailto:jlmagnetek@alaska.edu) with any concerns regarding indoor plant care. Our website also has information on plant care and how to identify and treat pests: <https://www.uaf.edu/fs/services/indoor-plant-program.php>



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# Wood Center Ducting

**by Leo Faro**

Eric Burton and Clinton Snyder installed new ducting in the Wood Center Green Bike office this week. The goal was to lesson the noise from the Bowling Alley that transmits through the old ventilation system into the Green Bike office. They installed new ducting with sound dampening material installed in it.



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# *Celebrate* CHRISTMAS

*With the HVAC Crew*

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Family Fun, Bowling, Pot Luck Buffet

*Mexican theme Bring your favorite dish*

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## @ Arctic Bowl

December 7, 2024 • 6:00 pm onwards

Contact: any HVAC Shop Leads • Email [cjsnyder@alaska.edu](mailto:cjsnyder@alaska.edu)

• Cost \$10 per adult

Please respond to ASAP to allow for head count and gifts for all Children under 17 planning to attend

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**Save the Date!**

**You are invited to the Administrative  
Services**

**Holiday  
Lunch**

**Tuesday December 10**

**11:30am - 1:30pm**

**Wood Center Ballroom**

**Please *RSVP* at the link below**

**<https://forms.gle/JRWHuNXjF3qdZdvk6>**

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UAF Facilities Services  
**Holiday Luncheon**

Tuesday, December 17th, 2024 @ 11:30am

HVAC	Mashed Potatoes & Gravy
Vehicle Shop/PM/Utilities	Rolls & Cranberry Sauce
Labor/Grounds/Rural & Remote Site Mgr/Safety Officer/Shuttle Drivers	Pies & Desserts
Electrical & Trades Mtc Shop/ Warehouse	Salads (pasta, coleslaw, potato, fruit)
Housing, Plumbing & Dining Shop	Stuffing & Sweet Potatoes
Central Receiving/Mail Center/ Customer Service	Beverages
DDC/Alarms & Insulation Shop	Veggies (hot & cold)
Business Operations/IT	Butter, Paper Plates, Plastic Utensils, Napkins

Please plan to provide for 150-200 people.  
Thank you to the Leadership team for providing the turkeys and hams!

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# Nathan's Facilities Services Predictions for 2024

## by Nathan Platt

Every year, I make **ten predictions** about what might happen in and around UAF Facilities in the year ahead. It's fun to look back at the end of the year to see how right or wrong my guesses are. Here they are, in no particular order.

10. After much back and forth between the University, the Alaska State Legislature, and the Governor's office, the FY25 budget for UA will look much better than we initially thought. I predict we will receive substantial funding beyond the \$6.1 million already offered in the Governor's budget proposal for compensation increases, as well as some additional funding (as much as \$10 million) toward our deferred maintenance priorities.

*I was not correct on this one. For FY25, UA received funding to support a 2.5% compensation increase and \$8.4 million to support rising fixed costs. We only received \$5.25 million for deferred maintenance and modernization projects, far short of my prediction of \$10 million.*

9. The West Ridge Cafe (in the Arctic Health Research Building) will open in late January or early February, featuring a new name and exciting menu. Although only intended to be in operation for a little while until the Campus Cache reopens, I predict it will be busy enough that Chartwells will keep it operational next academic year. It will become a popular coffee break spot for Facilities Services employees working on West Ridge.

*I got this one half-correct. The West Ridge Cafe did open, and was rebranded as CRAVE. It offered BBQ and Mediterranean cuisine for the Spring 2024 semester, and from what I could tell it was fairly popular. I was incorrect in that it was closed down last May, and didn't reopen for the Fall semester. At this time, there are no plans to resume operations there.*

8. The Bartlett and Moore Hall restroom renovation project will conclude smoothly, and on time. The towers will reopen for students in late August as planned. This will prompt discussions about what to do with the lower campus residence halls, and I predict at least one of them (probably Stevens) will be closed for the 24-25 academic year while Residence Life and campus leadership decide whether to start tearing them down.

*I got this fairly correct. Moore and Bartlett did open for the Fall semester, and the end of the project was fairly smooth. As it turns out, three lower campus residence halls (McIntosh, Nerland, and Stevens) were kept offline for the Fall semester, with most of the student population concentrated on upper campus. Campus leadership and Residence Life are currently debating the future of those facilities, and as of the publish date of this article, no formal decisions have been made.*

7. We will discover a new sinkhole (also called a Thermokarst) on West Ridge following a heavy rainstorm in June. This new sinkhole will be unusually large, and will potentially impact a parking lot, but will be an exciting opportunity for the engineering departments to study this climate-change related phenomenon.

*I'm very happy to announce that we did NOT find a new, unusually large sink hole on campus in June (but there were some smaller ones). The big depression in the north Akasofu parking lot did get worse, and we ended up fencing it in this past summer. We're monitoring the subsidence at the moment, and will determine what to do about it at a later time.*

6. Progress will be made in raising funds and support for the Troth Yeddha' building, and although construction won't start during the 2024-2025 academic year, I predict that, by December, we will have scheduled a groundbreaking ceremony for some time in the summer of 2025.

*At this time, no groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled, but fundraising efforts are progressing.*

5. The new Student Success Center at the Library will open to great fanfare and lots of excitement in late summer of 2024. It will immediately become an important resource for students, and will have a positive impact on academic success and degree completion rates.

*Yes, I think I got this one 100% correct. The Student Success Center opened, it's a beautiful space, and it's being utilized for its intended purpose.*

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4. We will award a new custodial contract in late January or early February. I won't predict who the vendor(s) will be, but I predict there will be a steep learning curve for everyone involved, particularly since UAA and UAF partnered on the contract, so one contractor may get both schedules on the contract. I predict that the most successful part of the new contract will be a renewed focus on cleaning residence hall rooms during the summer break, and residential students will appreciate the additional efforts put into making their spaces safe, clean, and well-maintained.

*I got this one partially correct. The new contracts weren't awarded until May. My prediction about "steep learning curve" was absolutely on target, since a new contractor (Clean & Serene) was awarded the Residence Life portion of the UAF contract, and it really remains to be seen if there will be "renewed focus" on cleaning residential spaces during summer break. ABM kept both the UAF and UAA main campuses. The original contract didn't cover everything, so a large addendum was added in early November, which should keep us on track.*

3. We will successfully fill many key positions within Facilities Services in 2024, and at the end of the year we'll be a stronger team with fewer vacant positions.

*Yes... I think we did a good job with recruitments this past year, particularly in Maintenance and Operations, and we have fewer vacancies now than we did a year ago.*

2. A site for the on-campus Hotel that the Chancellor announced at last year's convocation speech will be finalized, and efforts will begin to pursue a public-private partnership (P3) with a local developer to begin plans. Although I don't have a specific prediction for the location of the new hotel, I do predict that it will NOT be built where the sledding hill is now.

*Unfortunately, this didn't happen. Although the idea for a hotel is still alive and well, neither a developer nor a final location have been chosen.*

1. I'm going to recycle this prediction from last year, since it hasn't come true yet. I predict UAF will get our first on-campus drive through coffee stand in 2024!

*Much to my disappointment, this didn't happen in 2024. Maybe next year!*

## Current Recruitments

Maintenance Mechanic - Utilities

HVAC Technician

Procurement Technician

Painter/Maint Mechanic

Project Manager

Instrumentation Mechanic

*Thank you for reading!*



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