



Monthly Newsletter

FACILITIES FORUM

05 May 2025



PHOTO BY TODD PARIS

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

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

Utilities Prepares for June CHP Maintenance Outage

The Utilities Department is currently preparing for the upcoming Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Plant maintenance outage scheduled for June. This planned maintenance is a critical part of our commitment to ensuring reliable and efficient service across campus.

During the outage, our team will be conducting essential inspections, repairs, and system upgrades to maintain operational safety and performance. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we work to minimize disruptions and complete the maintenance efficiently.

Thank you for your continued support.

Facilities team x

In this newsletter you can expect:
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Current Recruitments



PHOTO BY LEIF VAN CISE

Employee of the Month

Congratulations to Nick Middelstadt, he is May's Employee of the Month.

Nick's incredible dedication, collaborative spirit, and thoughtful leadership make him an invaluable part of Facilities Services. Whether he's solving complex mechanical challenges, mentoring student interns, or finding creative ways to keep projects on budget - Nick leads with both expertise and heart. His work truly embodies what it means to serve the UAF community with integrity and purpose. Please join me in congratulating Nick on this well-deserved recognition and thanking him for all he does!

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.



Russ Steiger

BY THAD WILLIAMSON



Russ began his career with the University over fifteen years ago as the UA Statewide Director of Health, Safety, and Environmental Management. When that office was later restructured and moved to Anchorage, Russ chose to remain in Fairbanks. He joined UAF's Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management team as Environmental Compliance Officer so he could continue raising his family in the community he had come to call home.

Russ brought a remarkable depth of experience from the chemical industry and a strong background in environmental regulatory compliance. His leadership was instrumental in advancing AF's efforts in air and water permitting. He played a critical role in securing and maintaining the air permits necessary for the construction, commissioning, and operation of UAF's Combined Heat and Power Plant - an achievement that will continue to power the University into the future for decades to come.

Yet Russ's contributions went far beyond his professional accomplishments. He was a deeply personal man who possessed a profound reserve of quiet generosity powered by an enormous heart. He lived by the belief that kindness was best practiced secretly and without recognition. Whether it was bringing hot meals and coffee to colleagues working late or checking on coworkers who were required to stand outside in subzero temperatures taking air measurements, Russ consistently went out of his way to support others- professionally and personally.

Despite his many achievements, Russ was never one to boast. He often said that the only things worth bragging about were family, friends, dogs, and the Buffalo Bills. And he lived by those words - keeping close to his heart the people and things that truly mattered. Russ will be remembered not just for his expertise and dedication, but for his compassion, humility, and the warmth of his humor he brought to all who knew him. He will be deeply missed.

If you are struggling with this loss, please remember that free counseling is available through the Employee Assistance Program. Their phone number is 1-888-969-0155. They are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Really Free Market is May 17 - start collecting your donations

The annual Really Free Market, the ultimate freecycling event, is right around the corner. As you do your spring cleaning, please set aside things that are clean, safe, and usable but belong in someone else's home. Drop off will be between 8-10 a.m. in the Lola Tilly Parking Lot (1850 Tanana Loop E, Fairbanks). The market opens at 10 a.m. and runs for one hour.



Want to help? Volunteers are needed to help:

- unload and sort items as they arrive,
- Keep traffic moving safely through the lot,
- be of assistance and keep an eye on the public while they scoop up all the great stuff,
- clean up as the event winds down.
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The volunteer sign-up sheet is online - bring your friends and please sign up in advance! The volunteer duties sheet is here - please review before you arrive.

For more information, contact Summer Sessions and Lifelong Learning at 907-474-7021 or email summer@alaska.edu

<https://www.uaf.edu/news/really-free-market-is-may-17-start-collecting-your-donations.php>

First Friday Tour at the Central Heat and Power Plant

The Utilities Operations Division of Facilities Services offers monthly tours of the UAF Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Plant. Tours take place on the first Friday of each month at 1:30 p.m., meeting on the first floor of the CHP Turbine Building (north side entrance).

To help us plan for the appropriate number of tour guides, please email UAF-chptours@alaska.edu in advance to reserve your spot. If you have any questions or would like to arrange a special tour, please contact us at the same email address.



We look forward to seeing you!

TOUR STARTING SPOT

Stepping Up

By Nathan Platt

The UAF carpentry shop has started their summer repairs on outdoor concrete stairs. The first project they took on was just outside the Great Hall. Here are some before and after photos. Steve and James from Carpentry are the ones doing the work, and it looks great. They finished the repair in time for the PhD hooding ceremony last Friday.



PHOTOS BY NATHAN PLATT



Engineering the Underground

By Lesa Sears and Dean Ojala

Graduating students from the College of Engineering and Mines (CEM) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks were treated to a rare behind-the-scenes tour of UAF's iconic utilidor system—a vast underground network that keeps the campus warm and functional through the harsh Interior winters.

The tour was led by Dean Ojala, Utilities Maintenance Manager, and Tod Kozevnikoff, seasoned utilidor mechanic, who guided the students through the underground tunnels that carry steam, water, and communication lines across campus. Their firsthand knowledge and stories about the inner workings of UAF's infrastructure gave students a deeper appreciation for the complex systems that support the university.

Dean William Schnabel, who joined the students on the tour, captured several moments from the afternoon and shared his reflections in an email:

Hey Tunnel Tourists,

Thanks for a great time this afternoon -- and thanks to Deano and Todd for acting as our guides. That was a highlight for me... I don't get a chance to go on adventures with students much anymore. Congratulations on your upcoming graduation. This is a big deal for all of us -- we're proud of you. I'm going to throw some pictures into this message. If you have any to share, please feel free.

We'll see you tomorrow on the big stage.

— Dean Schnabel

The experience not only offered an educational perspective on UAF's infrastructure but also served as a meaningful send-off for graduating engineers who will soon be designing and maintaining systems of their own.



PHOTOS BY DEAN SCHNABEL

Current Recruitments

[Procurement Technician](#)

[Maintenance Mechanic](#)

[Contract Specialist](#)

Thank you for reading!



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