



Monthly Newsletter

FACILITIES FORUM

05 July 2025



PHOTO BY TODD PARIS

VCAS Picnic: A Great Afternoon Thanks to You!

By Kellie Fritze

A big thank you to everyone who helped make the VCAS picnic such a success! From the crews who prepped, cooked, and cleaned to those who simply came to enjoy the food and company - your participation made it a great afternoon.

The food was delicious, the energy was positive, and it was a great reminder of the strength and spirit of our team. I appreciate everyone who pitched in and everyone who came out to enjoy the day together!



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PHOTOS BY LESA SEARS

Employee of the Month

JULY: Belinda Snyder

Belinda's initiative, positive energy, and commitment to continuous improvement make her an invaluable part of Facilities Services. From tackling dead stock and modernizing inventory to supporting preventative maintenance efforts and delivering top-tier customer service - Belinda does it all with professionalism and purpose. Her thoughtful work behind the scenes supports every part of our operation. Please join me in congratulating Belinda on this well-deserved recognition and thanking her for all she does!

Achievements and Accomplishments: I am pleased to nominate Belinda for Employee of the Month in recognition of her outstanding commitment to improving our inventory management and procurement processes. She has demonstrated exceptional initiative and dedication to continuous learning, rapidly expanding her knowledge in these critical areas. Belinda has proactively identified and surplused a significant amount of dead stock, freeing up valuable storage space and reducing inventory waste. Beyond that, she has taken strategic steps to modernize our inventory by replacing outdated items with more efficient alternatives, most notably, converting lighting inventory from incandescent bulbs to energy-saving LED options.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Additionally, Belinda has worked directly with the HVAC department and PM team to effectively track filter usage, which has played a key role in maintaining our preventative maintenance schedules. Her attention to detail and forward-thinking approach have improved operational efficiency.

Leadership and Initiative: These efforts have all been on her own initiative with little direction from myself which not only demonstrates technical proficiency but also a deep sense of responsibility and a forward-looking mindset that benefits the entire team. Belinda sets a strong example of what dedication, innovation, and teamwork can achieve.

Customer Service and Satisfaction: On top of these behind-the-scenes improvements, Belinda consistently upholds the highest standards of customer service. Whether responding to requests or anticipating needs, she never hesitates to step in and assist, embodying true teamwork and reliability. Her willingness to go above and beyond makes her an indispensable part of our team.

Congrats to Belinda!!

JUNE: Travis Malzahn

Travis's adaptability, technical expertise, and quiet leadership have made a big impact on the Preventive Maintenance and Inspection team. Since joining Facilities Services, he's not only built a full preventive maintenance program for the new power plant from the ground up - he's also developed and delivered training that's helping teams across the board succeed. Travis leads by example, brings a consistently positive attitude to work, and has earned the respect and appreciation of his colleagues. Please join me in congratulating Travis on this well-deserved recognition and thanking him for all he does!

Achievements and Accomplishments: Travis joined the PM team with a strong background in HVAC and plant operations and quickly took ownership of the new power plant's preventive maintenance program. He created a complete PM system from scratch and finished the work ahead of schedule. On top of that, he built a thorough training program for operators, maintenance, instrumentation, and safety personnel, helping the team stay aligned and well-prepared.

Positive Attitude and Behavior: Travis shows up every day with a great attitude and calm professionalism, even in the face of challenges. His steady, can-do energy sets the tone for those around him and contributes to a positive work environment, both at the plant and in the office.

Teamwork and Collaboration: Travis works closely with the power plant team to ensure that preventive maintenance efforts support daily operations. His collaboration with plant leads and maintenance staff has helped strengthen coordination between departments and keep things running smoothly.

Leadership and Initiative: Without waiting for direction, Travis took the lead on standing up the plant's PMI program. He's driven, reliable, and capable of managing complex tasks independently while staying in sync with broader team goals.

Customer Service and Satisfaction: He's worked hand-in-hand with the plant's maintenance planner to refine PM tasks and make sure they're effective and sustainable. Travis is quick to adapt, always ready to help, and committed to delivering quality support to the operations team.

Additional Comments: Travis is a dedicated professional who has already made a lasting impact on Facilities Services. His contributions ensure the reliability of key systems and support UAF's long-term success. We're fortunate to have him on the team!

Congrats to Travis!!

If you feel inspired to nominate a standout colleague for August Employee of the Month, the nomination form is [here](#).

Music in the Garden this Thursday

JULY 10, FROM 6 PM - 8:30 PM



Dejavou at 6 pm



Sourdough Rizers at 7:30 pm

Join us for this FREE family-friendly event.

With Dejavou at 6 pm, and the Sourdough Rizers at 7:30 pm, you can enjoy this live music in the full beauty of the Georgeson Botanical Garden.

With limited parking space, use our free shuttle from the Nenana parking lot (across the road from the Patty Center). The shuttle begins at 5:30 p.m. and will run until 9 p.m.

Golden Days Parade Float in the Works



By Nathan Platt

Exciting things are happening in Facilities our carpenters are kicking off construction on this year's Golden Days parade float! The frame rolled into the carpentry shop this week to begin the build. A big shoutout to John Smith in the sign shop for designing and printing custom banners in-house. With creativity and teamwork on full display, this year's float is sure to be a crowd favorite. Stay tuned for progress updates!

Want to be part of the fun? UAF employees, students, alumni, and families are invited to walk or ride with us in the 2025 Golden Days Grande Parade on Saturday, July 19. Line-up starts at 9 a.m., and the parade runs from 10 a.m. to noon. Participants will receive a free UAF T-shirt to wear during the event. Come represent Nanook Nation — we'd love to see you there!

[Learn more and sign-up here.](#)

PHOTOS BY NATHAN PLATT

Utilities Overhaul 2025

By Dean Ojala Jr.

This year's overhaul was exceptional, marking one of the most successful I have had the privilege of leading in my extensive tenure. Having been involved in outages since 2007, I now have the privilege of managing them.

For those unfamiliar with Utilities' annual overhaul or outages, this period involves shutting down our primary boiler and turbine and auxiliary equipment, allowing us to conduct comprehensive inspections and address critical maintenance tasks on essential equipment and auxiliary equipment that are integral to campus operations. This process enables us to identify and rectify issues that are only visible once a year.

Overhauls provide an opportunity for all team members within utilities to collaborate and accomplish numerous essential maintenance-related tasks safely and effectively. They also foster the development of diverse skill sets, enabling us to teach, repair, and gain a deeper understanding of how all equipment is interconnected with the various systems we utilize. Meticulous planning, preparation, and attention to detail are paramount to achieving a successful outcome, which this year's overhaul exemplified.

Our team, comprising members from various departments within Utilities, was exceptional in knowledge and skill set. It was a privilege to lead and manage them. They deserve recognition not only for their daily responsibilities but also for their unwavering dedication and hard work during outages. This endeavor requires collective effort and can indeed be an adventurous experience.

Despite encountering unforeseen setbacks in certain discovery work, we successfully prioritized tasks and persevered. The outcome was ultimately rewarding.

I encourage individuals interested in gaining insight into our operations and their significance to sign up for the tours available on the cornerstone. These tours offer a glimpse into the diverse and continuous work we undertake, regardless of weather conditions 24/7 365.



PHOTOS BY DEAN O

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