New printers help Sign Shop increase efficiency

Tucked into the Service Building behind closed doors, Sign Shop employees Josh Payne and Doug Hobbs spend their days creating, producing, and installing signage in support of IU’s campuses. With IUPUI being the only other IU campus with a sign shop, the remaining campuses rely on Payne and Hobbs to provide them with signage. Payne and Hobbs’ projects vary greatly: building signage, lettering hard hats, making seals for podiums, providing move-in signs, and making fire and emergency personnel signage. Currently, they are creating signage to send to Evansville for the new medical building to be utilized by IU, the University of Evansville, and the University of Southern Indiana.

Recently the Sign Shop acquired a new tool that has helped make their work easier: a UV (ultraviolet) printer. This UV printer has made producing universally accessible signage quicker and easier. Previously, Payne and Hobbs had to drill the holes for braille themselves onto each individual sign before inserting a bead into each hole to make the raised dots. Now, the UV printer drills the holes itself, making the creation of signage more efficient.

In addition to the UV printer, the Sign Shop has also obtained a 3D printer that promises to be useful in the future, starting at small-scale models and working into bigger ones. For now, Payne and Hobbs are updating all existing buildings to universally accessible signage before new seasonal projects begin.
Employee Spotlight: Tom Abram

Many of us are used to seeing Tom Abram around the Service Building, but we’re not used to seeing him take on one of the best white water rafting rivers in the world. Abram first adopted the hobby 32 years ago after seeing an advertisement. Once each year in the fall, Abram journeys to West Virginia to craft on the Gauley River. On a scale from 1 to 10, the Gauley River is ranked a class 6 and boasts 7-foot waves.

This challenging hobby has given Abram the opportunity to connect with those who share the same love for white water rafting. Abram also has introduced others to his favorite pastime, including coworkers Perry Ferguson and Marty Sanders who joined Abram on a trip one year.

While white water rafting is exciting, it can also be very dangerous. Abram found that out one year when his foot got caught during a journey down the rapids, leading him to tear his ACL. Abram has also had to assist with recovery, helping rescue those who are thrown from the raft and find themselves stuck between rocks. Thankfully, Abram says that is usually a rarity.

What started as an inkling to do something adventurous has turned into a hobby that has lasted decades. Abram plans on taking his 13-year-old grandson this year to introduce him to the sport, something Abram did with his daughter when she was eleven.

“The best part is the butterflies you get in your stomach before you get on the river, because you know what’s going to happen,” said Abram.

Utilizing MoneySmarts

Managing money isn’t always easy, but MoneySmarts can certainly help ease the burden. Offering free appointments for the students, faculty, and alumni of IU, peer educators are available to help you figure out all of your finance problems. They offer a wide range of financial help, including managing credit cards, budgeting money, and problems with debt. You can even gather a group of colleagues and ask for a group presentation. To schedule an appointment, visit moneysmarts.iu.edu or call 812-855-9111.

Leadership Series

The VPCPF Leadership Training Series, led by Building Services Coordinators Tom Fallwell and Randy Sutherland, consists of seven sessions of guided discussion, along with guest speakers and multimedia presentations. The goal of the program according to Fallwell is not to drill management techniques, but to improve communications, share experiences and break down barriers.

Hein Receives CEFPP

In April 2018, Scott Hein, Maintenance Analyst at Facility Operations, received the Certified Educational Facilities Professional (CEFP) credential from APPA: Leadership in Education Facilities organization. The CEFP credential is used to validate the unique knowledge and competency required of an accomplished professional in the education facilities field. Congratulations Scott!
Spotlight on Support Staff

Behind the scenes of each division within Facility Operations there is a support staff member working diligently to keep the division running smoothly and efficiently. Each of these staff members deserves a huge THANK YOU for helping our divisions fulfill our mission to ensure a strong physical environment allowing our faculty to teach, our students to learn and our community to be engaged!

Kathy Heck

With six years at the university and most recently 3½ years in an administrative role, Heck has been responsible for supporting approximately 200+ employees in both Building Maintenance and Building Systems. In her role, she provides administrative support to the management teams, schedules workers for athletic-related overtime events and keeps the teams running smoothly overall. According to Andrew Lowry, “Kathy has a ‘can do’ attitude and carries herself with a brisk self-confidence topped with a smile that lights her path as well as those around her. She embraces every task, routine or completely one-off, with exuberance and returns successful.”

Kay Lee

With 41 years of service to the University, Lee has spent the majority supporting the Building Services division. She enjoys the challenges that come with coordinating such a large office, supporting staff that work three different shifts, 365 days of the year. Lee states that good communication is absolutely critical in this work environment, and makes the job interesting. With the variety of purchasing, attendance and human resources related work there is never a dull day! According to Greg Fichter, “Kay is in charge of managing and processing about all the information that comes through our central office. The institutional knowledge she has about our operation and how we interface with other divisions and departments on campus is priceless. In looking back at my tenure of 36 years with Building Services I have no doubt that she has been the most important and influential member of our organization. Her dedication and great work ethic has been the glue that has held our organization together.”

Beth Parker

Since beginning her IU career 8 years ago in the Service Department, Parker tried two different positions before finding “the right spot” supporting the Utility Services division 2 ½ years ago. The role started as a temporary assignment and has since become permanent. She provides administrative support and purchase orders for the teams, as well as supports the hiring and interviewing process. According to Mark Merefield, “Beth is a joy to have in the office and keeps the team upbeat while quickly accomplishing all the tasks she’s been given.”

Karen White

After working with students at RPS for many years, White wanted a more behind-the-scenes job while still getting to interact with people. She found just that kind of work when she took the position of Office Services Assistant with Building Services. While the multitasking and workload sometimes can be difficult, White loves getting to talk to everyone in different departments and the fact that everybody works so well together. Being a part of this team has made the last 10 years of her 40 years of service that much easier! According to her supervisor Kay Lee, “As our receptionist, Karen’s cheery voice is the first thing that callers hear and her knowledge of the RPS operations has been very helpful on more than one occasion.”

Jill Neihart

With 26 years at the University under her belt, the promise of a day shift instead of an evening shift is what drew Neihart to Landscape Services 18 years ago. In her daily work, she processes requests, receives and distributes items that come through electronically, and provides a variety of administrative support. She enjoys the customer phone calls and emails as they can come from anyone at the University such as building representatives, staff members and even students. According to Mike Girvin, “Jill is a very dedicated, conscientious and hardworking employee. She is always willing to help her coworkers and she is our critical first responder. We’re glad to have her on our team!”

Fleener Recognized by Mauer School of Law

In March 2018, Tim Fleener, a day shift custodian in the Law area, received a certificate of appreciation for outstanding service to the Maurer School of Law and its students. According to Randy Sutherlin, Area Coordinator in Building Services, “Tim is one of our many dedicated staff in Building Services. He deserves this recognition as he strives to give his best every day. We are proud of his dedication and quality work!”
Management Training Program

The Facility Operations Building Services Division (BSD) created an internal “Management Training Program” (MTP) over 35 years ago. During that time we have promoted approximately 150 BSD staff members who successfully graduated from the program to Group Leader and/or Supervisor positions. Only those who graduate from the MTP program are eligible to be a part of our Management Team. Not only has this program developed Supervisors for our organization but over the years several other departments at IU have taken advantage by hiring our Management Team members to fill leadership roles in their areas.

“This is a unique program in that is constantly enhancing the quality of service provided by our organization, as well as improving the morale of our staff members who have the desire and ambition to grow their careers here at IU,” said Greg Fichter, Assistant Director, Building Services.

Recent graduates of the MTP are shown at right.

Meet Safety Intern Isabella Byers

Please tell us a little about yourself, and include a fun fact.
My name is Isabella Byers, but I like to go by Izzy. I am currently a sophomore at IUB, with an intended graduation date of May 2020. I am from a small town in southern Indiana called Boonville. I am very active on the IUB campus and am involved in the Indiana University Dance Marathon, as well as an officer for the American Society of Safety Engineers student section. I love to travel, attend concerts and comedy shows, and try to visit as many different Bloomington restaurants that I can. I was on the golf team in high school and have continued to play golf and it is one of my favorite things to do with my friends and family.

What is your major and why did you choose your major?
I am an honors student in the School of Public Health, studying Safety. I also am minoring in Psychology. I chose safety because it is a career that constantly gives back to others, and it is very interesting to me. Safety is always changing and evolving, so throughout a career in safety one has to be growing and continuously learning with the profession. I feel like I will always be challenged in safety and that it will never bring a boring day.

What is your primary focus area of interest regarding safety?
My primary area of focus in safety is construction safety. Construction safety is very broad. There are many different areas of construction, so each day there is a new site or area that will be getting work done, so the environment is constantly changing.

This constant change means there will always be different areas of safety that need to be considered and dealt with, which I find very intriguing. Construction safety gives the opportunity to travel as well, which I love to do, so that is another reason why it is my primary focus area.

What have you liked the most about this internship so far?
My favorite part about this internship so far is all the different aspects of safety that I have gotten to work on or observe. I’ve gotten the opportunity to go on site visits, do some inspections, do research and present on those findings, learn how to use safety administrative databases, develop training programs, and even sit in and observe other training programs. I have also enjoyed getting to meet new people and expand my knowledge in safety.

How will this internship benefit you in your career path?
This internship has helped me realize and ensure that I do in fact love safety and want to practice this for the rest of my life. It has given me a broad range of activities to prepare me for what I will have to do in my profession after graduation. It has also taught me that I do enjoy working in safety in a larger facility/corporation that involves mostly construction safety with the occasional general industry hazard to mitigate. It will benefit me in making sure that I have gotten a background in many different areas, so when I go to do future tasks I will most likely have a basic knowledge of the area I will be working in. Overall, it has really opened my eyes to what my future job will entail and has allowed me to figure out where my strengths and weaknesses are in safety, which will help me when I am trying to make a career choice in the future.