Collaboration is key

Tom Abram, Refrigeration Shop Supervisor, says replacing a chiller is not just a one-mechanic type of job. Chillers are the main source of cooling in larger buildings and are used in numerous locations on the IUB campus. Given that chillers are extremely heavy and contain all types of motors, hoses, and wires, repairs can be quite complex. Through the teamwork of various shops, tasks like replacing 200-ton chillers are made easier and can be finished in a single day. Abram says that collaboration between shops has been key, and that there are ongoing efforts to increase shop communication and break down individual work barriers. Chillers on the campus have been replaced more in the past 5 years than ever before, causing the trade shops to work with each other regularly on a day to day basis. This work can range from the sheet metal crew helping with moving and welding to plumbers helping to carry electrical cables. “It’s just amazing to be able to get two or three staff in there and get it done in a day. It’s a lot of work,” Abram said.

Recently, the Heat Shop needed to replace a large expansion tank in the basement of Read Hall. An expansion tank is connected to the water heater in buildings to make sure the water pressure doesn’t get too high. With the constant renovation at Read Hall, it has been difficult to find any areas large enough through which to move the tank. Every stairway and elevator was examined by the Heat Shop to see if there was a way that the tank could fit, but there was still no luck – the tank was just too big. Rick Whiteman, General Elevator Shop Supervisor, was consulted and he suggested a temporary removal of the metal frame on the roof of the elevator which would allow the expansion tank to fit inside. Miraculously, the new tank now fit in the elevator, making the replacement of the old expansion tank a quick operation. The Heat Shop could not have finished the job without assistance from the Elevator Shop.

Shops working together increases productivity, efficiency and boosts overall morale amongst the teams. Replacing chillers and expansion tanks are just a few of the many tasks trade shops will partner on this year while performing their work. Collaboration has proved to be vital to the success of Facility Operations, building trust and camaraderie between shops and creating a safe and enjoyable working environment for everyone.

"Everybody works together to get the job done."

-Tom Abram
Backup child and eldercare included in employee benefits

Did you know you can get last-minute care for children or elderly family members for a reduced cost through your IU benefits package? With the Backup Care benefit, all full-time Staff employees may request up to 15 days of child or adult care per year with co-pays of $6/hour for in-home care (4-hour minimum) or $15 a day for each child or adult in a local, participating care center.

Backup Care providers are put through an extensive screening process by Care.com to ensure they are qualified and safe. Care.com also follows up with caregivers to ensure they are maintaining high standards of care. Please note that Backup Care is separate from Care.com premium membership services for finding caregivers.

To receive backup childcare:

1. Register at ihcare.com.
2. On a day you need care, go to ihcare.com and select “Backup Child Care for Children.”
3. Care.com will identify a caregiver and call you to give you more information.
4. The caregiver will contact you to confirm details of the appointment.

Pet care, senior care, and home care are also services included in the benefit.

Perfect Attendance

Sharon Backfish and Jerry Hurt, along with a many other Building Services staff, have just begun their day. While third shift can be challenging, both Backfish and Hurt have made coming to work every day look easy. Backfish has had perfect attendance since June of 1999, while Hurt started his stretch in 1998. Backfish and Hurt both worked for RCA prior to joining Facility Operations, where they developed their commitment to never missing a day. Despite the numerous complications and hardships that can impede coming to work, they have managed to stick to their schedules without taking any unscheduled time off. “I just try to eat right and exercise to stay healthy,” Backfish said. While there are several custodians assigned to each building, the overall cleanliness of the campus would not be fulfilled without the contribution of each custodial staff member. Backfish and Hurt feel they have been able to maintain their perfect attendance records by prioritizing their health and wellness. “Jerry Hurt is a guy everyone enjoys working with he is dedicated, cooperative, good team member, and great example for his co-workers.” – Randy Sutherlin, Building Services Coordinator

“Sometimes getting up for work can be tough, but it’s always worth it in the end.”
– Jerry Hurt

Shops adjust to a new digital timekeeping system

When Brady Jones first began working as the Payroll Manager at Facility Operations in 2015, all Service Staff used paper tickets for timekeeping with no electronic system for clocking in or out. Though he has now been promoted to Service Center Coordinator, he is still actively working towards getting all departments switched over to a MMS timekeeping program that is more efficient, accurate, and easy to use. “It’s a benefit to employees,” Jones said. “It allows them to be more hands-on, provide better descriptions on what they’re doing during each job, lets them explore MMS, and pushes them to grow their knowledge of technology.”

With the original paper system, staff would write down a description of each job they did throughout the day on a small paper ticket along with the job ID number and how many hours it took to accomplish. Elevator Shop Supervisor Brian Smith said this left a lot of room for human error – if the hours did not add up to eight, he would need to contact the employee before submitting the ticket to payroll. Smith, who has been an electrician and used the time tickets in the past, added that it was common for a mistake to be made when the paper ticket was filled out during the end of the day rush.

Now, everything is digital for the shops that have made the switch to the new system. They use kiosks to clock in and out and can record jobs using their iPads or smartphones. In addition, staff have access to everything they submit in MMS and can compare it to time logged in Kuali TIME, which helps to ensure every hour they work is accounted for and reflected in their paychecks. “It’s a learning experience, but in the end we have way more information at every level and it’s much easier to correct errors,” Smith said.

Both Smith and General Supervisor Rick Whiteman encourage elevator shop staff to be proactive about the new system. Whiteman is also a trainer for the elevator apprenticeship program and must fill out separate time entries for the hours he spends training apprentices, so he appreciates the simplicity of the digital system compared to manual timekeeping.

To help shops learn the system, Jones and the Payroll staff conduct training programs for supervisors and staff which allows them to begin using MMS the next day. He said he hopes to have the majority of Facility Operations service staff using MMS for timekeeping by November.
Employee Spotlight: Josh Cunningham

When the weekend comes around, Electrical Specialist Josh Cunningham switches gears to become a star of sprint car racing at local Paragon Speedway in Morgan County, Ind. Cunningham started car racing at age 11 and has been doing it ever since. After a series of race wins this past year, he has been able to add 2017 Track Champion to his six other Track Championship titles at Paragon Speedway.

"Josh’s hard work does not go unnoticed - he does what’s necessary to help, then goes above and beyond it."

-Ken Horrocks

Cunningham believes that being a successful sprint car driver goes hand in hand with the work he does as an Electrical Specialist. “From electric to automobile, there is a skillset needed for both,” Cunningham said.

Cunningham has been married for 10 years, and strives to be a role-model father to daughters Brianna and Hanna. After receiving multiple championship awards, he started a tradition with his daughters of giving away his trophies following a race win. This way, others have been able to remember him as a champion, as well as take a souvenir home with them. Cunningham feels it is much more rewarding to give his fans something they can cherish and use as inspiration to continue pursuing their dreams.

Cunningham believes his faith provides a common thread amongst everything he does. He has been a Senior Minister at the Heltonville Christian Church for the past 3 years, and feels this is one of the most important influences on his accomplishments as a racer, employee, and father.

Safety Programs Specialist has long history with IU

Seth Wagner is settling into his new role as Safety Programs Specialist after accepting the position in June. His responsibilities include managing safety programs and trainings, conducting fit tests, determining appropriate personal protective equipment, and once he is certified, instructing CPR.

Wagner’s father, Kenneth, has been a mason in Landscape Services for 21 years, so Wagner has felt a connection to the campus and the trades staff since early on.

In 2007, Wagner landed his first job at Facility Operations where he and his brother, Shane, were groundskeepers for Landscape Services. Wagner continued to work as a groundskeeper throughout college and for about a year after graduation. From there, he moved to the business side of Facility Operations, first as an Asset Inventory Technician and was then promoted to Mechanical Systems Specialist. He said working in an office at the Service Building has given him a better idea of how the organization works as a whole to make IU what it is.

Because of his background, Wagner feels he is able to identify with staff whose positions involve physical labor and trade skills. That connection – along with his experience working on the Lockout/Tagout project to ensure safe handling of campus machinery – was part of why he became interested in safety and is now pursuing a master’s degree in safety management. His goal is to keep Facility Operations staff working safely and efficiently while they do their jobs each day. In the course of his new role, he hopes to expand and grow the safety programs, develop a more streamlined relationship with IU Environmental Health & Safety, and familiarize himself with all staff.

Safety Reminder:

Indiana Law: Leave the building immediately when an alarm sounds or if you are instructed to do so by authorized emergency personnel.

- Secure hazardous operations and shut down any machinery, if possible.
- Notify others on your way out.
- Close doors behind the last person out.
- Walk quickly to the nearest safe exit, or follow instructions of floor warden(s).
- Do not use elevators unless authorized emergency personnel direct you to do so.
- Report any missing or trapped persons to authorized emergency personnel.
- Move away from the building, do not obstruct emergency personnel throughways.
- Go to your evacuation meeting site.
- Do not re-enter the building until authorized emergency personnel give the “all clear” signal.

Ready to schedule your free, annual health screening with $100 (before tax) incentive? with $100 (before tax)

Call the Health Center at 812-855-7688 today! Please have your Employee ID ready when you call.
The fifth annual Staff Appreciation Cookout was held at the Service Building on September 20. Both the day and night shifts enjoyed food, friends, and music.

Karen Correll and Faye Elkins setting out chips for the cookout.

Brandi Zikes, Stacy Arnick and Steve Mobley have a quick bite to eat before the start of their night shift.

Mike Miller and Jason Chandler enjoy the outdoors during the cookout.


Kim Paullk and other employees converse while enjoying their meals.

Jamie Gayer offers some delicious pie for dessert.

Hank Hewelson, Andrew Lowry and Keith Thompson take a break from cooking brats and burgers on the grill.

Tom Abram and Chris Pfaff fill up their plates in the food line.