Energy Matters Mobile App

By Maggie Stephens

The Physical Plant, Auxiliary Information Technology, and the IU Office of Sustainability teamed up to create a new IU Mobile App that went live in March. The “Energy Matters” application displays important energy usage information to IU students, faculty, and staff via mobile phone. This mobile app educates users on how to modify behaviors in accordance with energy usage levels.

This app will bring real time information of campus and residential hall usage with the intended result of lowering electric consumption. Indirectly, the app aims to help change behaviors so that IU students and staff continue to minimize the electricity they use, therefore reducing their carbon footprint. Recent Energy Challenge results indicate that simple behavioral changes can have up to a 20% reduction in energy consumption.

The app displays real-time information regarding energy usage in portrait or landscape view.

Erica Steinfeldt is an Energy Analyst who helped work on providing information, tips, and energy equivalences for the app. “In my research I’ve learned that simply putting my computer to ‘sleep’ can save $50-$100 per year. I always unplug my power strip when I leave the office and I hang dry my clothes instead of using the dryer,” said Steinfeldt. Studies advise setting your thermostat between 68 and 72 degrees in the winter and between 72 and 74 degrees in the summer. These changes may seem small, but if you add up the savings over a year’s time, it is pretty significant.

For every 1000 kW lowered in peak demand, IU saves $23,000 per month in electric costs.
The new truck measures the weight of every individual stop. It also prints out a reading of the day’s total pick ups. Its signage reminds campus of the university’s “greening” efforts.

Moving & Setups Crew Helps “green” IU

The Moving and Setups Team picks up a vast majority of the trash and recyclable items on campus. The team of four utilizes four garbage and packer trucks to make multiple trips through-out campus per day.

In February, the Moving and Setups crew received new recycling trucks with scales built in them. The scale measures the weight of waste at each stop and prints out a receipt with the time, date, and weight of that pickup. This helps determine how much waste is coming out of each building.

Some buildings produce more recyclable waste than others, such as the Musical Arts building and Jordan Hall. Ballantine is usually consistent, producing 500 pounds each day.

Roy Chambers, a Truck Driver for the Moving and Setups Crew, said he wanted to learn everything he could about the truck operation. “I studied the manual and figured out how to use the scale and the features of the truck. It’s been fairly easy so far to use,” he said.

There are about 165 stops of trash and recycle together, 64 in recycling alone. Some of the stops have as many as four dumpsters. On a normal day, the amount of recycling in a dumpster will be 60-800 pounds, depending on the building. The team collects between 5.5 and 6.5 tons of trash per day.

The team is not like your neighborhood trash crew that just comes every Monday morning. They go around every day to pick up the trash. This helps keep the university’s environmental footprint small and utilizes labor in the most efficient way.

Randy Hancock had the opportunity to work with the Campus Children’s Center to show them the truck and teach them about the benefits of recycling. “The kids were so attentive and asked us tons of questions. The most common question was ‘Do you hate the smell?’ and I would say ‘Of course I do!’” said Hancock.

This summer the team will venture out to the CCC and give their lesson on recycling. As the end of the semester nears, the crew will be busier than ever. Coordinator Tom Fallwell is proud of the work they are able to accomplish for having such a small group of workers. After implementing a new survey to their customers, they found that they received the highest rating possible on almost all of the returned surveys.

“Over the last few years our Moving and Set-ups team has done a remarkable job of improving overall service to our customers while continuing to reduce the cost of the operation. They have become a very effective team in many aspects of the job. I am very proud of them,” said Fallwell.

Groovy Green Smoothie

When Registered Dietitian from the IU Health Center Katie Sheperd made this smoothie for a group of employees, they were very skeptical at first. After trying it, they all loved it. You will be amazed by how great this smoothie tastes. This is a tasty way to eat your greens!

1 banana, cut in chunks
1 cup grapes
1 (6 ounce) tub vanilla yogurt
½ apple, cored and chopped
1 ½ cups fresh spinach leaves

Place all ingredients in a blender, cover, and blend until smooth. Feel free to increase the amount of spinach -- it will still taste just the same and you’ll be getting an extra dosage of this super food’s numerous health benefits. Enjoy!
Retired Employee Creates Campus Portrait Book

This month Indiana University: Portraits of the Bloomington Campus will be released. This book was the idea of long time and now retired Physical Plant employee, Sandy Lynch. The book was assembled with the help of University Landscape Architect Mia Williams, Assistant Vice President for Capital Planning and Facilities Linda Hunt, and the Indiana University Press.

Lynch spent many years photographing buildings and scenes on campus and decided she wanted to put all of her photos in a book that could be shared with the public. The idea was taken to IU Press who was more than willing to take on the project.

The university hired freelance photographers as well to help complete the book. From snow covered limestone buildings in the winter to budding red and white tulips by the Sample Gates in the spring, every inch of our picturesque campus has been captured and pieced together in a professional way that effectively shows just why IUB was named one of America’s Most Beautiful College Campuses.

The book is $25 and is available at IU Press, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and most independent Indiana bookstores.

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five to six tons of trash is collected on campus each day

Reusable Water Bottles for Employees

As of February 17th, the Physical Plant stopped supplying plastic water bottles to our 500 full-time employees.

Mary Robbins headed up the search to find reusable water bottles. Through her research, she found that annually, the Physical Plant uses 58,000 plastic water bottles. Research provides a 25% recycle rate of disposable plastic bottles, so 75% end up in the landfill. That means up to 43,500 bottles from our staff alone are going into local landfills. Whoa!

Per guidance from EH&S, we are not allowed to use water coolers due to potential contamination of the water. After looking at sustainable replacement products for the plastic bottle, the Physical Plant purchased an American-made recycled aluminum bottle. This bottle is thicker than other bottles, has 100% BPA- free food grade coating, and requires a simple ¼ turn on/off for easy cleaning.

This water bottle meets all the usability goals of effectiveness, efficiency, safety, learnability, and memorability. They have been a great addition to the work day and have made a big environmental and health impact on our employees.

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Training Spotlight

Physical Plant is committed to developing comprehensive training programs to guarantee the safety, growth and success of our work force. Our goal is to provide training to improve individual job safety and skills thereby increasing efficiency and productivity collectively.

Since January, hundreds of Physical Plant employees have participated in training such as:

- Hazard Communication & GHS
- Hearing Conservation
- Scaffold Safety
- Asbestos Awareness
- Asbestos Operations & Maintenance
- Asbestos Building Inspector & Supervisor
- New Hire Orientation

But, the training and development doesn’t stop there. Supervisors hold monthly toolbox talks to bring safety awareness to issues like Lockout/Tag-out and Personal Protective Equipment. Individual employees have also attended job-specific training, committing to keep their knowledge and skills current. Dave Fisher (Plumber, Zone 5) attended a Back-flow certification course. Kevin Bucy (Distribution Manager, Utilities) attended APPA U - Institute for Facilities Management and Leadership Academy, and the Capital Business Projects office organized SharePoint IT training.

As many of you have noticed, there is a new look and feel to the way Physical Plant employees are participating in training these days. Since her hire in October 2013, Emily Haygood, Staff Development Coordinator, has been redesigning the way we look at training for all of our staff. The move is towards more electronic resources and computer based training. Her creative mind and advanced computer skills have allowed her to build in house server of our new trainings. Whoa! Emily has also been an integral part in developing the new Supervisors Seminar series that began this April and will continue through July. The core material for this series is from APPA, but now it has an IU flair to its presentation. In May, Emily will lead eTraining on the new software MSDSonline. The eTraining will instruct employees on how to access important up to date safety information on the chemicals and cleaning solutions they handle.

The new trainings Emily created have received positive feedback from employees. It’s a fast and efficient method that we hope to continue to improve upon and utilize for years to come.
A scaffold training session was held at recently remodeled 408 N. Union.

Employees learn how to use equipment that will help them when dealing with asbestos.

Tom Fallwell and Randy Sutherlin lead the Supervisor Training Series held this month.

Every six months, Utilities employees attended Smoke School out at the Monroe County Fairgrounds.