

News and Views from Facilities



May 2019

I want to take the opportunity to highlight the retirement of Elizabeth Goplerud this month after 30+ years of service to Western. If you have ever called the Customer Service Desk or listened in on the FM radio chatter, you have almost certainly had the pleasure of talking to Elizabeth or hearing her voice. As you read this, she has already retired, purposely avoiding the fanfare of a large gathering...but I imagine there might be some of you out there who wonder what happened to that voice on the other end of the line! In that same vein, Jatinder Ghuman, a person you may have seen mowing grass, fixing bricks, and moving snow all over campus is also retiring this month after 36 years!

On a more routine matter, with the summer coming upon us quickly, this is my annual reminder to plan ahead! I refer you to the article on summer project planning. If you have work that needs to be completed in time for the fall quarter, the request needs to be in ASAP. You may already be behind the 8-ball depending on how complex the work is!

As always, if you are interested in receiving these notes personally rather than through Western Today, please email me (john.furman@wwu.edu) and I will place you on the distribution list.

John Furman, Director of Facilities Management

Highlight: The Electric Shop

We have seven journeymen electricians in the Electric Shop with a combined 90 years of professional experience. The group is on call 24/7/365, ready to respond to any electrical emergency!

Together, this group maintains a vast electrical distribution network in all parts of campus that includes underground 12470 voltage distribution lines, transformers, generators, exterior lighting, and building wiring. In the course of an 8 hour day, any one electrician can be on as many as 1 to 10 work orders ranging from changing lightbulbs to troubleshooting a circuit problem to installing an entirely new electrical service.

Also in the Electric shop are two maintenance mechanics who maintain almost 2,100 fire extinguishers on campus. This work includes monthly inspections as well as periodic testing & certification of the cylinders.



Pictured from left to right: Joe Weber, Billy Walker, Gerry Vermeulen (supervisor), Chad Campbell, Cheyenne Lofton, Craig Dienberg, Chris Van Allen, Mike Bisconer. (Missing Shirley Ebinger)

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Stormwater Reminder

One of the many obligations we have is to ensure our stormwater program complies with our permit requirements. Simply put, we try to prevent any type of contaminants from reaching a storm drain, since every bit of water in that storm drain eventually reaches Bellingham Bay.

What is stormwater?

It is any water that comes in contact with or collects on the ground. Stormwater includes rain water runoff, snow melt, or other waters that flow to creeks, rivers, wetlands, and other waterbodies. It also includes water from a hose or faucet that discharges to the environment!

What's the problem?

As it flows, stormwater runoff collects and transports animal waste, litter, salt, pesticides, fertilizers, oil & grease, soil, and other potential pollutants. Rain and snowmelt wash pollutants from streets, construction sites, and land into storm sewers and ditches. Eventually, these empty the polluted stormwater directly into streams and rivers with no treatment.



Toxic substances from motor vehicles can kill fish and other aquatic life. Bacteria from animal wastes can make lakes and waterways unsafe for wading, swimming, and fish consumption. Eroded soil is a pollutant as well. It clouds the waterway and interferes with the habitat of fish and plant life.

What can you do?

Pay attention to what you do and use common sense; keep your vehicles in good working order and check for oil drips. Don't litter! Pick up after your dog.

Thanks for helping!

Custodial Services for Events



There has been a recent uptick of occasions where group meetings in the evening or on weekends have gotten big enough or demanding enough to request an after hours call-out for custodial support. That support is generally about unexpectedly dirty spaces and/or inadequate products in bathrooms. In a future edition, I will elaborate on expectations for custodial services, but for now, please contact the customer service desk if you will be hosting an event that will serve food or which has the potential to have over 50 guests. The customer service desk will help guide you through the process of providing appropriate and timely custodial services.

Here's an example of a classroom NOT ready for morning classes following an uncoordinated event.

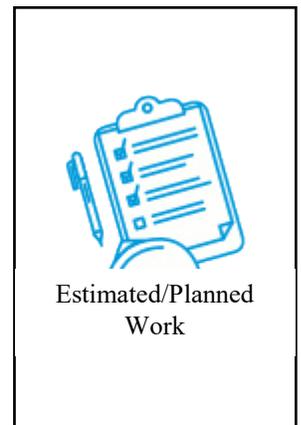


Summer Project Planning

With the summer season just around the corner, project planning is nearly complete, and FM crews are scheduled for nearly the entire summer, through to September. If you do have work that absolutely must be completed before the start of the Fall Quarter, please get your request in ASAP. Every year there is a customer who contacts us in early September with some work that can't possibly be finished in time – that particularly applies to work that requires a design and/or a City of Bellingham permit.

Customers often want to know how much work will cost before they commit to actually spending the money. You can get either a preliminary cost range by submitting a Ready request for Estimated/Planned Work. Once in Ready, look for the graphic to the right and click on it. After filling out some basic information, you will be asked to check either “Preliminary Cost Range (PCR)” or “Time & Material”. The PCR is a free service we offer customers in lieu of a more time consuming and more costly guaranteed fixed estimate. Depending on how complex the need is, our estimator will independently develop an estimate or may ask Facilities Development to add some technical know-how to the problem. Ultimately, you will receive an estimate that brackets the time and cost we expect to pass on to you.

Because we only charge the customer for actual time, we recommend you choose the “Time and Materials” option for small jobs (i.e. those that won't require any design). In all jobs, regardless of what the PCR was, we only bill the labor and materials it actually takes to do the job. In other words, if the PCR is \$1500-\$2500 and it costs us \$1200, we bill \$1200. If the costs exceed the PCR, FM may absorb the cost; if the new expenses are due to customer requested changes or drastic market issues, we will ask you to change the budget amount.



If you absolutely have to have a guaranteed estimate, we will provide that – and will spend time precisely nailing down the scope of work, building in appropriate contingency to cover any errors. Using the earlier example again, if the customer requires a guaranteed estimate for that same job, we might have estimated the job at a mid-range of \$2000, then assessed a mandatory 10% fixed estimate fee of \$200. We still would bill only \$1200 for labor and materials, but you would also be billed the \$200 fixed estimate cost.

It really comes down to where the real or perceived risk is – “Time and Materials” jobs rely on FM to responsibly and efficiently complete the work, and the customer takes on some cost risk. While FM must always live up to the responsible and efficient standard for fixed estimate work, since FM must “guarantee” a price, we charge for taking on the additional risk of a fixed estimate.

More questions? Please let me know so I can address them as well!

Closing Thoughts

If there is some topic or project you would like to see addressed in these notes, please let me know. If you are interested in receiving these notes personally rather than through Western Today, just email me at John.Furman@wwu.edu and I'll place you on the distribution list.

Anytime you see thing that needs to be fixed or looks out of place, please don't hesitate to call our Customer Service Desk at extension 3420. You can also text or email to fixit@wwu.edu.