

The Energizer Bunny Doesn't Have a Thing on Ernie!

Whoever said, *"Pick a career you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life"* must have known **Ernie Cruz**, Equipment Mechanic Lead for the Small Engine Shop (SES). Right out of high school, Ernie earned a degree in Auto Mechanics from Pima Community College. After a brief job repairing auto air conditioners, he came to work for Facilities Management as a night-shift Automotive Technician in the Motor-pool Garage; five years later, he became a Mechanic Lead. On February 24, 2025, Ernie celebrated **44 years** with the University and has never regretted his decision to work here.

Ernie began working on cars as a teenager, helping his father maintain vehicles so he didn't have to "bribe" friends for mechanical work. As an avid model car builder, he already knew a lot about cars and did it to ease his dad's burden. It became a passion that continues to this day. He enjoys the challenge of finding a way to fix something when most others would just walk away from it. He appreciates the vast diversity of vehicles and equipment he gets to maintain here, seeing it as an opportunity to learn something new all the time.

For about 10 years, Ernie exercised his adaptability retrieving broken-down motor-pool vehicles left in Mexico. That often involved making emergency repairs in primitive conditions to get the vehicles back across the border. The extent of damage, in some cases, was spectacular, especially when motor-pool customers overestimated their vehicle's and/or their own off-road capabilities or left them parked on tidal flats during low tide.

His last trip was particularly harrowing, involving delays crossing the border in both directions, performing major repairs in the dark, and a non-stop 50(+) hour marathon traversing remote mountain and desert terrain. His fluency in Spanish, friendly manner, and an ability to remain calm under pressure helped him de-escalate several tense moments during the trip.

For about the last ten years, Ernie has managed SES, which maintains electric-, gasoline-, diesel-, and natural gas-powered equipment including power-tools, golf-carts, landscape and excavating equipment, sidewalk and street-sweepers, and forklifts for UFS and other University departments.

While the challenge of working on many different types of equipment satisfies his drive to be continually learning new things, Ernie says the most satisfying aspect of his job is the people he gets to work with, inside and outside UFS. An unashamed extrovert, Ernie is recharged by the many relationships he has built in his career with us. He is known for his outgoing and enthusiastic personality. A morning "shot" of Ernie is even better than a stout dose of caffeine - *and it won't keep you awake at night!*

Thank you Ernie for your many years of dedicated service and for your positive and enthusiastic attitude that makes UFS a better place.

Chris Kopach



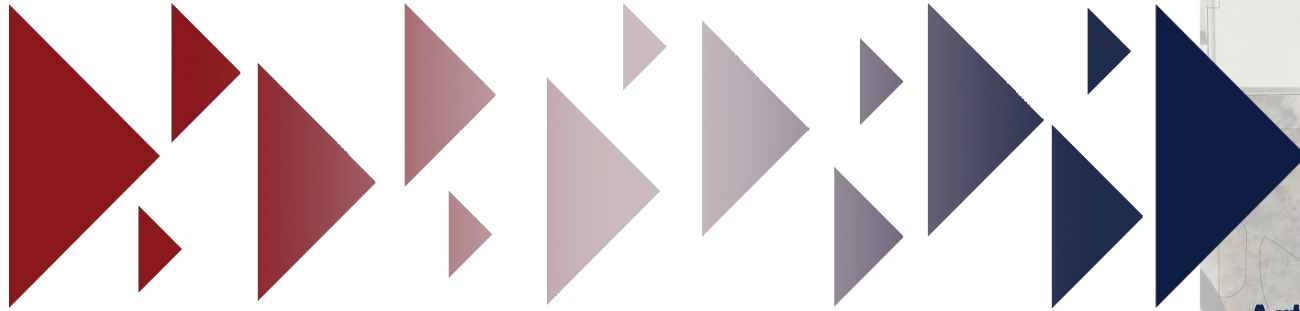
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Olive Street Underpass Repaving Project

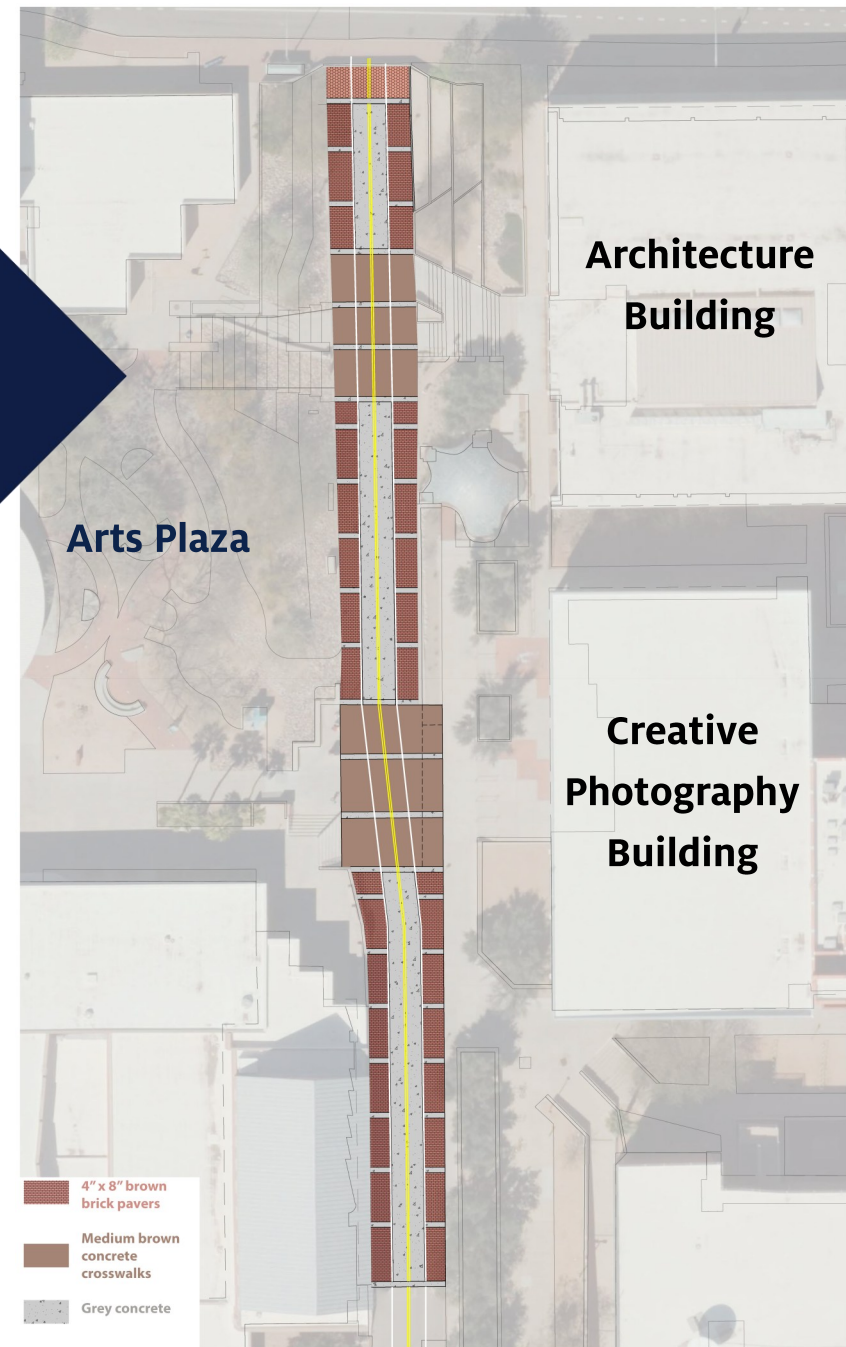
The bike and pedestrian paths south of the Olive Street Underpass are getting a much-needed facelift. The cracked and weathered asphalt pavement is being replaced to improve the aesthetics and surface textures and create more durable distinction between bike and pedestrian lanes. The pedestrian paths on each side of the bike path will be paved with brown brick pavers. Concrete cross-bands will provide visual breaks and structural reinforcement to prevent shifting of the pedestrian path pavers on the sloped surface. The bike lane will be gray concrete, to distinguish it from the pedestrian lanes and to provide a suitable surface for bikes, skateboards, scooters etc.



Two wide brown concrete crosswalks will connect Creative Photography and Architecture building stairs on the east side to the Arts Plaza on the west side.

The work is being done by the UFS **Masonry Shop**, with completion projected by the end of May, 2025.

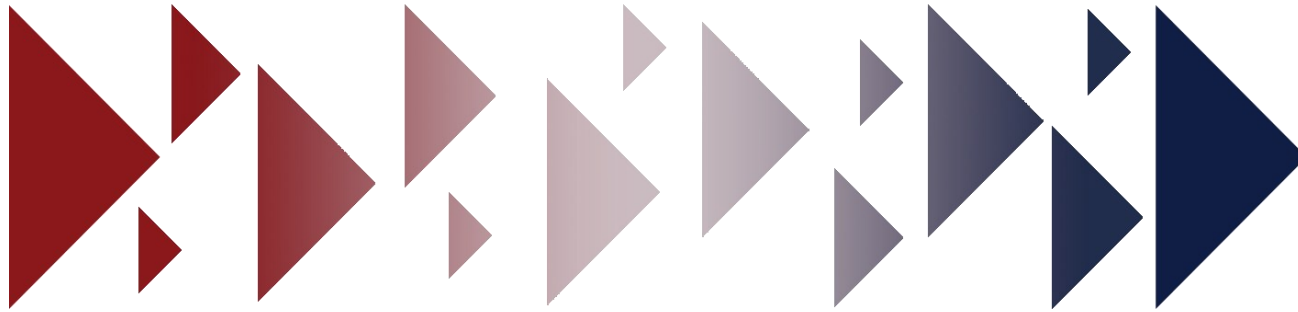
Pedestrian and “walk your bike” underpass access will be maintained throughout the project.



OLIVE SOUTH OF SPEEDWAY

- ~ 5,500 square feet of brown pavers
- ~ 3,500 square feet of brown concrete
- ~ 5,000 square feet of gray concrete bike lanes

OLIVE UNDERPASS BIKE & PEDESTRIAN PATH
U of A PD&C
REVISED LAYOUT
01/28/2025



One Mother of a Wildcat

Michelle Chaney's family came to Tucson during her high-school years, moving from Clovis, New Mexico. She started her career in construction as a purchasing agent for a Tucson homebuilder, and she worked in that industry for several homebuilders from 1999 to 2008. She helped develop the base costs for different home models and then determined the costs for individual homes based upon the options and changes the customers wanted. To do all of that, she had to learn about the various subcontractors involved and the labor and materials needed and bid out the work. It was a lot of detail, but she enjoyed it and found it stimulating, always learning new things.

When the housing market tanked in 2008 and stayed soft for several years, Michelle had an opportunity to concentrate on being Mom and appreciates the time she had with her two daughters. For a while she worked as an admin assistant for a chiropractor.

Her daughter Briana started at the University of Arizona in 2014, and when Michelle saw the size of the student loans required, decided that she needed to become a university employee so she could take advantage of the tuition reduction available to employees and their dependents. When she heard about the admin assistant position with PD&C, it sounded like a perfect fit considering her prior work history. She worked hard to prepare for the interview and got the job.

Michelle sees her **Administrative Support Manager** responsibility as providing the tools that Project Managers and their Assistants need to be successful with their jobs. While it is a demanding job and can be stressful at times, it's the kind of stress that energizes rather than drains her. She enjoys engaging with the user groups and other stakeholders and takes ownership in each building. She gets immense gratification not just from seeing a beautifully finished structure like HSIB but mostly in knowing how the building she helped build will contribute to the success of future University students and others that it serves, equipping them with the skills and tools for a brighter future.

Michelle is a devoted Wildcat. Part of that comes from being married to an avid sports fan. But an even greater part comes from being the mother of **Wilma T. Wildcat**. Her daughter Briana was Wilma from 2016 to 2018, so they attended every home event she was involved in. While she could never tell anyone until afterwards, it gave her a great sense of pride and it was wonderful to see her daughter grow in that role. It tied Michelle more deeply into the fabric of the University and intensified her zeal to help "graduate students" through the work she does. This is the job she intends to retire from!

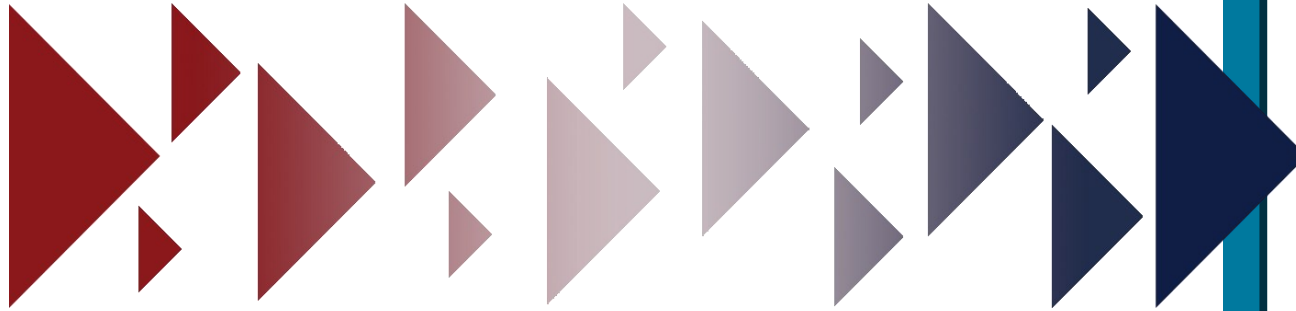


This picture was taken before Michelle's daughter Briana was revealed to be Wilma Wildcat. So when people asked how she got to pose with Wilbur and Wilma she told them that she paid them to pose with her.

Michelle is married to Dave, a retired Tucson Police Department Officer who currently works with JTED (Junior Technical Education District) teaching in their law enforcement curriculum. She also absolutely adores her one-year-old grandson, Jack.³

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Jason Emmons CAPM®

Project management is a critical component in ensuring the success of large or complex undertakings. While there is an art to effective project management, there is also a science to it. **Project Management Institute (PMI)** is, “committed to bringing people together—and on relentlessly defining, guiding and evolving the project management profession”. They do this through networking, education, and certification of people engaged or interested in project management responsibilities. They, “help current and aspiring project professionals build their skills so they are equipped to solve the toughest challenges now facing people, organizations and the planet”.

UFS Renovation Services Project Manager, **Jason Emmons**, has recently earned PMI’s **Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM®)** certification. PMI’s Website says that (CAPM®) certificate holders,

“... possess the foundational knowledge and skills that project teams demand. The CAPM proves that you’re ready to take on a wide range of projects—with ways of working that include predictive project management, agile principles and business analysis.”

Certification is a two-step process. The applicant must first document 23 hours of preparatory project management education, then pass the CAPM test (150 questions, 3 hours).

Entrepreneur Media, Inc. ranks the CAPM as number one out of “The 9 Most in Demand Professional Certifications”.

In an email, Jason writes,

“I wanted to take the time to thank you (Chris), and everyone involved in supporting me. I just received confirmation that I passed the CAPM exam. Setting goals and achieving them is a huge sense of accomplishment for me. None of this could be done without your support.”

Jason has been with UFS Renovation Services since April of 2023.

Congratulations Jason, and thank you for the dedicated and diligent work you perform.

Chris Kopach

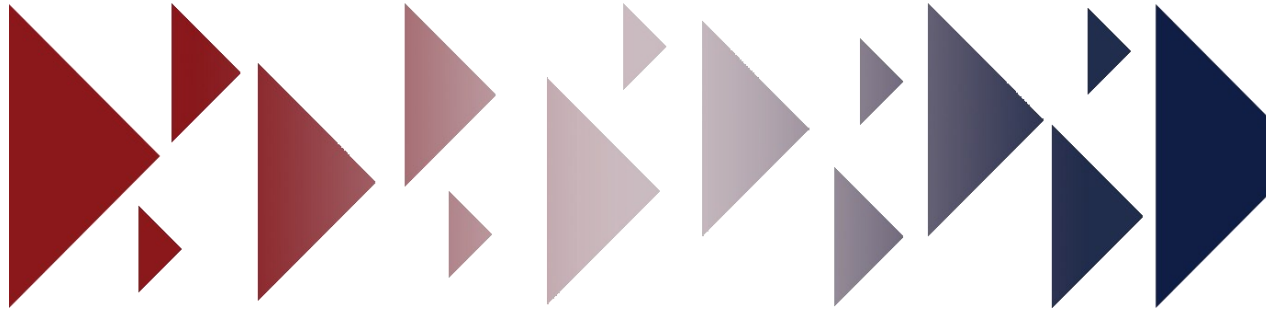
Don’t aspire to be the best on the team. Aspire to be the best for the team.

- Brian Tracy



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Making it all work better

Jon Ziegler is a Tucson native who has spent most of his adult life in the Old Pueblo. As a teenager, he worked in his parent's construction company and began leaning about HVAC controls and how to balance systems to optimize comfort. He was always interested in how things worked and took it upon himself to learn as much as he could.

He started at the University of Arizona, initially working towards a degree in Mathematics but changed schools to study Mechanical Engineering at Northern Arizona University, graduating in 2006. In his senior year, he was hired as a contract student worker with GLHN Architects and Engineers, taking initiative to go beyond the assigned tasks to help them gain greater insights on issues in projects at NAU.

Upon graduation, Jon was hired by GLHN as a Mechanical Engineer, eventually becoming a Sr. Mechanical Engineer/Analyst.

During his 18 years with GLHN, Jon had several opportunities to work with UA facilities staff in both FM and PD&C. He enjoyed interacting with UA employees and realized they were part of a very special culture that he appreciated. At the same time, he began to see that as a consultant, he rarely got to follow up on projects once they were finished, unless something went wrong. He was always curious as to how the systems he

designed really performed on an ongoing basis.

So, when Jon heard that UFS was hiring a mechanical engineer, he jumped at the opportunity and is happy to have become part of that special culture in July 2024. He is especially excited about being involved in the melding of the two departments into one. He has always believed that as an engineer, he can learn much from the technicians who regularly work on the systems he designs. At the same time, he feels he has an opportunity to help them learn things that will make their jobs easier and more effective. It fits well into his personal mantra, "Teach and Learn".

Jon looks forward to helping UFS better understand HVAC systems across campus and how they can be optimized to perform better and cost less to operate and maintain. He hopes to learn enough to be more proactive in optimizing systems from the beginning, so that less time and resources are required in the future to operate and maintain them reactively.

He seeks to bridge the artificial boundaries that too often separate designers from operators, so that we can all work together to make UA an even better place to work.

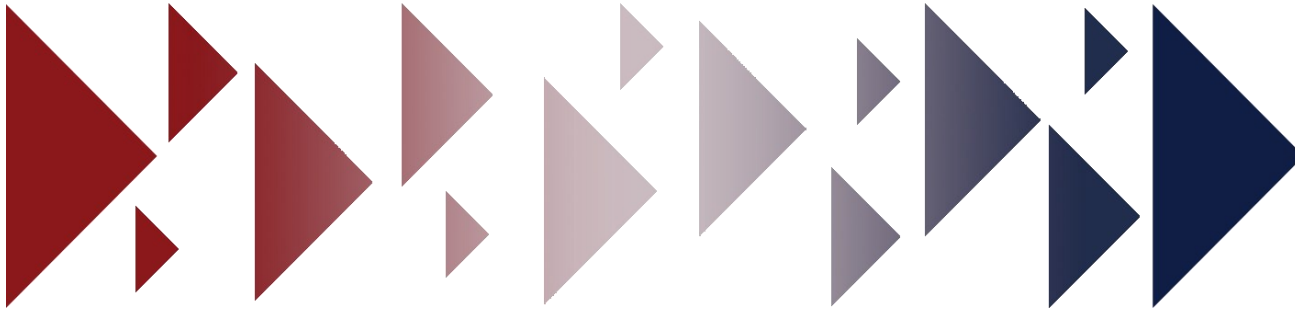


When he took time to help the man up the mountain, lo, he scaled it himself.

– Tibetan Proverb

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Best of Show

Every year, the University of Arizona **Employee Recognition Committee** runs a competitive art exhibition called "On Our Own Time" (OOT). The competition is funded by the **National Arts Program**, which partners with US workplaces to recognize the artistic talents of employees, retirees and their family members.

This year, **Jennie Norris**, Graphic Designer II in the UFS Sign Shop, won the **Best of Show Award** with her entry *The Guardian*, a watercolor painting featuring an owl perched in a tree. Jennie loves owls and has always looked on them as guardians, hence the title.

Much of her recent work had been in graphite and she was looking to do something new when she heard about the **Joseph Wood Krutch Garden Florilegium** project.

A florilegium is a collection of scientific illustrations that

document the various plants in a garden or location through detailed drawings or paintings that show distinctive features of the plants useful for identification and research purposes.

Jennie saw the project as an opportunity to revive her watercolor skills in a totally new way. She painted two watercolor illustration plates that are now part of the florilegium archived at the University of Arizona Special Collections. She really enjoyed the project and it reminded her how much she missed doing watercolors.

She then came upon a small sketch of an owl she made a long time ago that had since languished on her desk.

"It had been on my desk so long I actually don't know what the initial inspiration was. One recent afternoon I saw it again and got a picture in my head of a watercolor painting. I sat down that day and started working on it. The Guardian is what transpired."

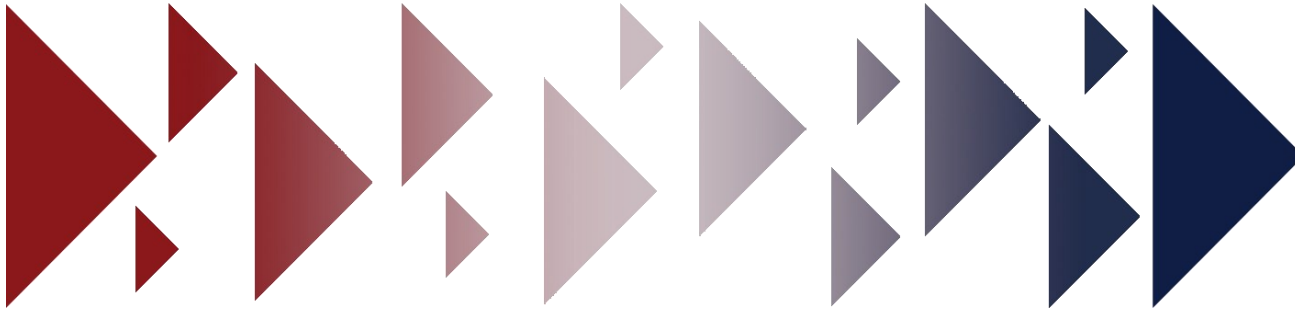
We are proud to have such a skilled artist on our staff and congratulate you Jennie!

Chris Kopach



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Ryan Tucker – Facilities Project Manager

UFS is a busy organization. According to **Ryan Tucker**, our employees currently manage about 1,500 distinct projects spanning a wide spectrum of specialties, complexity, budgets, and timeframes. That number does not include the routine daily tasks like cleaning, scheduled maintenance, monitoring, and responding to work requests from customers.

In January, Ryan assumed a new role as **Facilities Project Manager**, with responsibility to monitor and coordinate all UFS projects. As a central coordinator, he will track and document the status of all projects to identify potential conflicts and ways to optimize use of the department's resources to keep projects on schedule and under budget. The data will also be used by senior management to prioritize and justify budget and staffing requests.

Managing such a diverse portfolio of projects requires standardization of processes and reporting into a centralized platform to ensure timely and accurate assessment of project status across the board. Standardization will also improve communication between project managers and department leadership by creating a common vocabulary and documentable key performance indicators.

Ryan is creating and maintaining a master schedule that will show the current status of every project, using an industry-standard software platform called "Smartsheet". The

software allows integration of schedules into one database with the capability to easily create dashboards and reports that provide a real-time view of project status at all scales, filtered and sorted as needed for planning and reporting use.

Another important part of Ryan's duties is the creation and maintenance of a document repository that will simplify periodic reporting and future reference and will facilitate preservation of institutional knowledge for smoother succession and capital improvement planning. As Ryan says, *"You can't manage what you don't measure"*.

Eventually, all project managers will use standardized automated processes to quickly update the status of their projects and enter milestone information as the project progresses, eliminating the need to dig through emails and other documents to answer questions or prepare periodic or final reports.

Ryan will train project managers to use the system and keep it populated with current information and generate the reports and schedules they need to manage their projects and coordinate labor and access considerations with customers, shops, contractors, and other project managers. That will relieve them of the need to keep it all in their head or scribbled into notebooks.

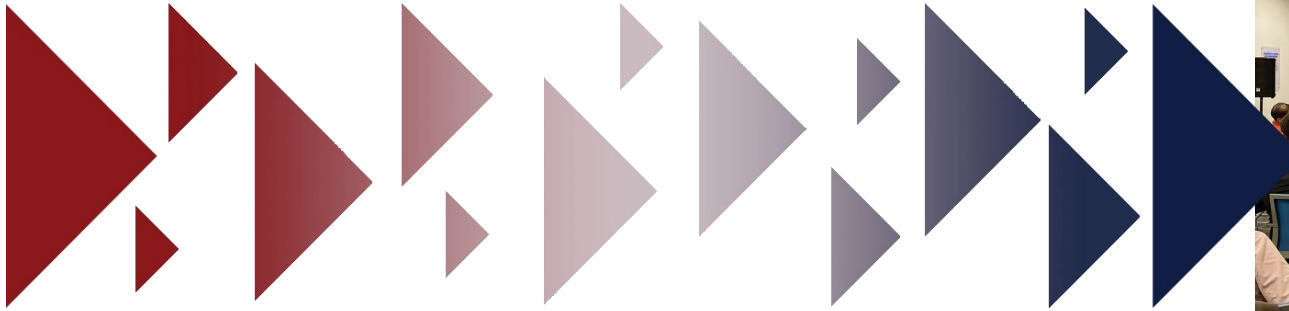


Such detailed and up to date information will also smooth permanent or temporary handoff of projects during vacations, illnesses, retirements, emergencies, etc., leaving a clear record of what has been done, what remains to be done, with whom they need to coordinate at various stages, and any known challenges that may affect the project budget or schedule. Having that information will allow a new manager to quickly get up to speed and allow the one stepping away the peace of mind that the project will be in good hands during their absence.

Ryan has been well prepared for his new role. In December 2022, he completed a master's degree in project management at Northern Arizona University (see Facilitator volume 122). His master's work was a related project management integration project. He is enthusiastic about the opportunity to use his skills and passions to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of UFS project management and helping all our project managers in projects ranging from floor refinishing to new building design and construction.

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Tri-University and Friends

For about two decades, the facilities departments from University of Arizona (UA), Arizona State University (ASU), and Northern Arizona University (NAU) have periodically met together to discuss best practices, project management, and new ideas to learn from each other about effective construction and maintenance technologies and processes. Twenty Business Partners involved in facilities projects at the three state universities participate in this Tri-University Facilities Meeting. This year, Grand Canyon University (GCU) joined us to share perspectives from a private-university point of view.

The meeting, held in the UFS Building on February 19 and 20, featured eleven presentations by University and Business Partner staff and discussion sessions. Part of the discussion focused on use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in building design and construction.

Presentations addressed a range of categories, including Organizational Management, Economics, Technology, Project Management, and Sustainability. Individual topics included Cyber Security, Customer-Contractor Relations, Smart Building Technology, Trades Staffing, Agility and Adaptability, Water Conservation, Monitoring and Controls Technology, and Decarbonation.

The Tri-University Meeting has a long tradition of emphasizing close cooperation and coordination between contractors and customers to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in construction and maintenance of university buildings and facilities. This year's meeting reflected that relationship in the mix of customer and vendor perspectives presented, with five of the eleven presentations including perspectives from both sides.

Sixteen Business Partner representatives from eleven companies presented in seven of the eleven presentations.

From the four Universities, ten UofA representatives presented in five of the sessions (7 from UFS, 1 from College of Applied Science and Technology, and 2 from the Office of Sustainability). Two ASU staff presented in two sessions, and one NAU staff member presented a session.

Just as within UFS, the greatest accomplishments come when we practice teamwork and are willing to learn from each other. And the more we depend upon each other, the more capable we become.

There is immense power when a group of people with similar interests gets together to work toward the same goals.

- Idowu Koyenikan

