

Facilities Services Newsletter

March 2009



Operational Changes = Budget Savings

172 Suggestions for cutting costs from the Facilities Services operating budget were generated by our staff. Many have been approved and are supported by Presidents' Staff. The entire list is still under review as managers complete estimates for potential cost savings. Some changes already in effect:

- We no longer receive personal deliveries at our Receiving Office
- Purchase of Christmas trees & wreaths was eliminated
- Campus compost pick-ups have decreased from 7 to 6 days per week
- Our project budget for summer '09 has been significantly reduced. With the exception of a water main replacement and drainage improvements on the main campus quad (a capital project), we anticipate only exterior painting, roofing, and routine and customary maintenance.

Will our level of service be affected? Yes. Service requests are being evaluated more closely. Requests for anything other than essential maintenance are being reviewed by Facilities managers. Combined with the anticipated decrease in staffing level through the Early Retirement Program, it is inevitable that our response time will be slower than the campus community has become accustomed to. *However* – through feedback from campus visitors, colleagues from peer institutions, and an evaluation by independent advisory firm Sight Lines, we have learned that our level of service has a reputation for being above average! With that in mind, we ask your for patience, and strongly recommend providing as much advance warning as possible for any anticipated need for our services. Please bear with us while we adjust our service level.

Biomass in Action

Preliminary data* indicates the Biomass plant saved the College about \$25,000 in energy costs for the month of February – the plant's first full month of operation. The gassifier operated for 28 consecutive days with roughly 9 hours of short duration downtimes throughout the month, producing nearly 6 millions pounds of steam, or 24% of our total campus steam consumption. We received 36 deliveries of wood chips, 32 of which were locally produced in Bristol, Vermont. 911 Tons of chips displaced 47,000 gallons of #6 fuel oil, reducing our carbon footprint by 531 MTCDE (metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents).

The discharge plume from the main stack at the heating plant may at times look different than it has in the past. There are several biomass plant operating parameters that contribute to this. Our wood chip fuel supply has a 40% - 50% moisture content. Gasification and combustion of this wood chip fuel results in discharging chip moisture through the main stack in the form of water vapor. As we work through the commissioning and startup of the biomass plant there are certain conditions that cause the combustion of the wood gas to stop. We call these conditions "burner flame outs." During these conditions the gassifier continues to produce gas (smoke) that is discharged through the main stack until the burner is relit.

**Pending final billing for oil and chip cost data*



**Students test sample chairs
at Atwater Dining Hall.**

We ❤️ Proctor Too!

Thanks to the 326 students who took time out of their lunch hour to sit in, slouch on, tilt back in, and otherwise examine (you left no stone unturned) our three finalists for the eminent position of Proctor Dining Room Chair. The level of interest and excitement was palpable!

We too love Proctor, and plan to create a space where students are just as comfortable as in “the old Proctor.” The renovated Proctor will combine the old with the new, retaining an esthetic befitting its 1970’s vintage.

The Old: The shape and dimension of the main dining area and mezzanine are the same. The “old Crest Room” a.k.a. “The French Quarter” will once again have booths. And for diehard fans of Old Proctor, some of the original tables and seating will be added to the Redfield Room, which will be dedicated to student dining.

The New: The servery has been totally revamped, with a new layout and colorful accent tile on the wall and serving line. There will be new carpet and lighting throughout, and new furnishings in all areas except Redfield. The main dining room will have tables like Atwater and Ross; and the winner of our opinion poll – the Sita chair! Woodstove Lounge will house some lounge seating beside a gas fireplace, as well as tables and upholstered seating for dining, study, or just hanging with friends.

Proctor is scheduled to reopen for Reunion weekend in June.

Eulogy for a Tree

By Tim Parsons

Middlebury is losing another grand tree, one of the last we hope to remove for quite some time.

The tree is a Burr Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, native to the clayplain forests of the Champlain Valley. It is located behind Kenyon Arena, in the lower parking lot where buses park. At one time nearly as large as its magnificent sister oak by the Mahaney Center for the Arts, it has been declining for many, many years. Its location suggests it may have been a border tree. Often large trees such as these were used as boundary trees, marking corners of fields or properties. Indeed, one can almost picture a straight line between this oak, the CFA oak, and a third oak (this one a red oak) in an undisclosed location nearby. (Landscape Services trivia question: Free smoothie from the Grille for the first person to identify the location of this red oak, Midd’s largest.)



The oak at Kenyon Arena.

It is said that trees, oaks in particular, live for 100 years, rest for 100 years, and then die gracefully for 100 years. While this tree was definitely in its declining stage, the main cause of the more rapid death is due to problems with the roots. Indeed, 85-90% of all tree mortalities can be traced to problems with the roots. Think of trees as having a slow, patient intelligence - the roots are the brain of the tree. The construction activity around Kenyon years ago compacting the soil, the blacktop preventing air exchange, and the

grading of the land funneling moisture to the trunk are probable causes of today's problems, evidenced as the root disease called Armillaria. The disease has caused the death of branches that are now a potential safety hazard for passers-by.

Recent inspections have revealed most of the campus urban forest to be healthy and sound. Pruning, fertilization, and integrated pest management practices are aimed toward keeping our campus trees healthy, and increasing resiliency of the trees for future climate change. We welcome any questions, comments, or concerns you may have.

Facilities Web News

In our ongoing effort to better serve the campus community, we have made a few changes to our web site.

In October we launched a "news channel" where you can easily access our latest All-Campus notices on planned outages, road closures, fire alarm testing, and other facilities-related matters that may affect you. Just select "Facilities News" from the menu on our main page.

All of our online request forms have been updated and standardized. We offer forms for:

- *Service Requests*
- *Deliveries*
- *Copier/Fax Paper Orders*
- *Vehicle Rental*
- *Office Moves*

If you had any of our old forms bookmarked as favorites, your bookmarks will no longer be valid. You will find these forms at: <http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/fs/forms/>

We strongly encourage use of our online forms to expedite your request. Help us help you!

Projects:

The majority of our activities of late are primarily routine and customary maintenance, including a variety of roofing repairs, flooring replacements, and repairs to College rental properties.

Bread Loaf – We are in the planning phase for spring/summer work at Bread Loaf, including sprinkler system upgrades, roofing, porch repairs, and window replacements.

CFA – We are evaluating the benefits of some potential energy savings projects for the CFA, as well as planning some lighting improvements for the Theater Department.

Ridgeline – The pedestrian footbridge is reopened for use. It had been closed a few weeks for repair. Much of the steel was replaced due to corrosion.

The Rohatyn Center for International Affairs (RCFIA) at Robert A. Jones House – Cosmetic and media upgrades to the conference room were essentially completed for the start of spring term. The addition of darker "backdrop" shades to improve video images of the presentation area is expected in April.



Ridgeline footbridge undergoes repairs.

Stewart – Preliminary investigative work for fire alarm system upgrades and carbon monoxide detector installation begins next week. This work will be completed by end of May.

Warner – The 3rd floor north end is being converted to a tutoring area for the Math Department, including the addition of a bathroom and kitchenette.

Green Bits:

Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest Wins Efficiency Award

At the 11th annual Better Buildings by Design Conference sponsored by Efficiency Vermont in February, SAS Architects of Burlington won an award for Best Energy-Conscious Design in the category of small buildings (<20,000sf) for their design of the Franklin Environmental Center. The judging criteria consisted of:

- Demonstration of high performance in economics and energy savings – 40%
- Comprehensive and integrated design approach-20%
- Application of enhanced performance strategies-20%
- Clarity of the poster explaining economics and energy savings-20%

Hillcrest is also the 7th building in the country to meet the Green Building Standards required for a Platinum Rating in the U.S. Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.

Facilities Updates SPCC Plan

The College's Spill Prevention Control & Countermeasure (SPCC) plan is in the process of being updated to reflect changes on campus such as the addition of the Biomass plant, removal of older buried fuel tanks, and changes in operations. A requirement of the U.S. EPA, the plan addresses proper containment of all petroleum based products stored in containers that are 55 gallon or larger (like fuel, oil, paint, vegetable oil and hydraulic reservoirs in motorized equipment). There are individual SPCC plans for main campus, Bread Loaf, and the Snow Bowl.

College Achieves Record Diversion Rate of 61.2% for 2008

In 2008, the College's total waste (compost, recycling, and landfill) equaled 2,731,913 pounds - the lowest amount since 1998. Total waste has been declining since 2005, and our diversion rate is the best it has been since 2003. Waste going to the landfill hit a 10 year low, and composting has also steadily increased since its inception in 1993. Middlebury recycled 1,000,293 pounds of materials in 2008. Hats off to the campus community and the Facilities Waste Management Team for making it happen!

Pilot Program Expands Composting Efforts

A group of students in collaboration with Facilities Waste Management staff members have received a Sustainability Grant from the Environmental Council to expand the collection of compost on campus. Currently, composting is limited to the dining halls and the Grille and Juice Bar. They plan to place small compost collection containers in several more locations "to spread awareness of the College's excellent composting program and to introduce students to the benefits of composting." The group is in the process of identifying the most beneficial areas for this pilot, and will work with building occupants to agree on bin locations.

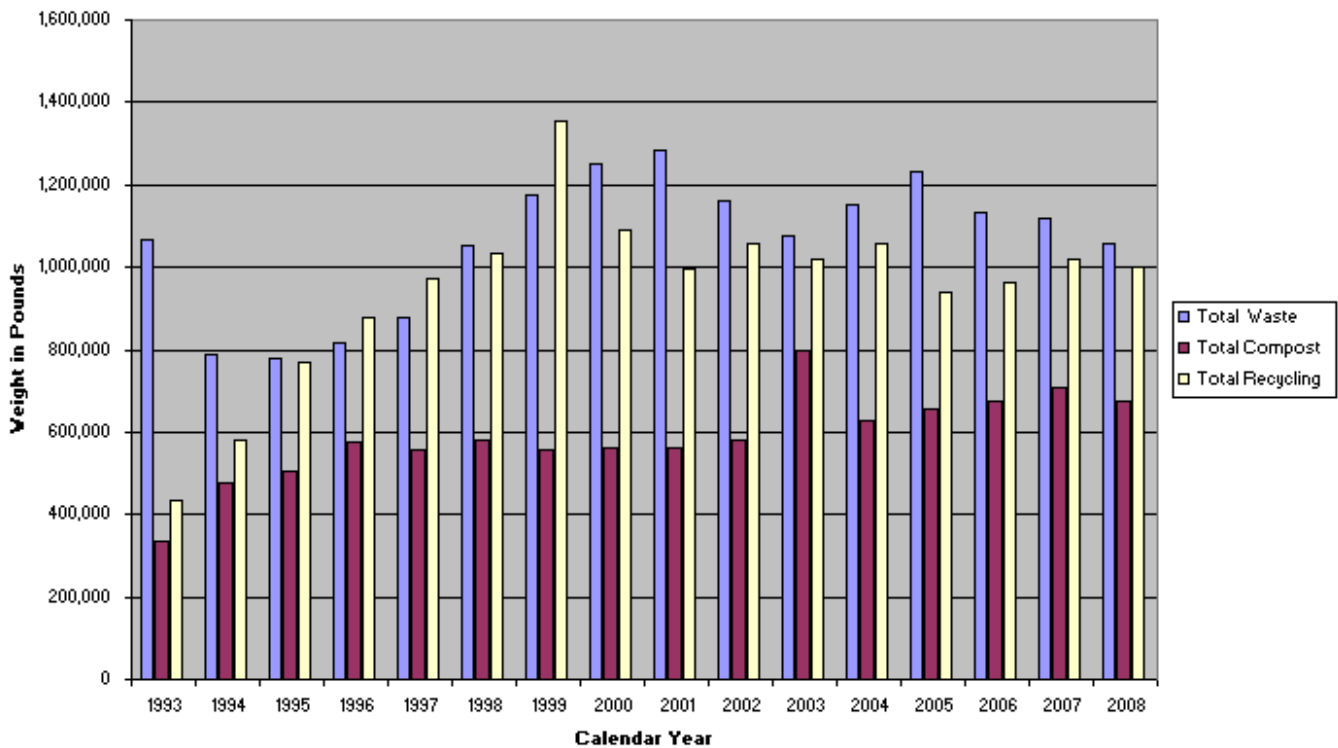
What to compost: All food scraps including lunch leftovers, banana & orange peels, apple cores, coffee grounds, napkins, etc.

How it works: The custodial staff will empty these bins three times per week when they empty recycling bins. The bag of compost will be put out for pick-up by the recycling truck, and then added to the compost collected at the recycling center.

For more information on our composting program visit:

<http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/recycle/compost.htm>

**Middlebury College
Waste and Recycling
16 year comparison**



Trivia*:

Our last question: How many tons of wood chips were on the first tractor trailer that fed our new Biomass plant?

Joint winners are Brainerd Commons student Bente Madson and Assistant Professor of Anthropology Michael Sheridan, who both guessed 25 tons. Our first load was actually 26.95 tons, but what's a couple of tons among friends?

Missed the latest question? Then you haven't read the eulogy!



Sita!
The chair selected for Proctor Dining Hall.

*Trivia contest winners receive a \$5.00 gift certificate to the College Store. Facilities Services staff members are ineligible to participate in the trivia contest.

Questions about the information provided, and trivia submissions may be directed to hoyenski@middlebury.edu.

Read past issues of the Facilities Services newsletter at:
<http://www.middlebury.edu/administration/fs/about/newsletters.htm>