



ILAPPA and Chief Engineers & Facilities Managers Conference Is a Success

Approximately 200 people came out for the ILAPPA and Chief Engineers & Facilities Managers Conference in April, and another 40 attended the Supervisor Toolkit Training before the conference began, said Andy Robinson, management engineer at F&S and one of the organizers. The training offered two-and-a-half days



specifically designed to help supervisors and facilities management professionals “realize both personal and professional growth” in a fun, engaging way. At the end of the training on Wednesday morning, a certificate was presented to those who completed the course.

Immediately following lunch, the full conference kicked off, with Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of F&S Morgan White and ILAPPA President Mark Owens presiding. White’s welcome speech gave an overview of the Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP), which had been signed earlier that morning (Earth Day) by Chancellor Charles Isbell, Jr. Next, attendees heard a keynote address from Ruthann Manlet, associate director of the Health Science District in Facilities Management at the University of Minnesota. She spoke about her more than four decades’ experience at that university and also as a trainer with APPA, where she helps train future supervisors.



Myriad breakout sessions were available, and Jon Hasselbring, F&S’ director of project delivery, and Steve Paul, from Core Construction, spoke on Construction Delivery Methods in one of them. They examined ways to minimize day-to-day disruptions through scheduling and how to use various approaches to ensure other project strategies, such as quality, budgeting, and stakeholder satisfaction. Other speakers discussed energy solutions at the Illini Union and presented a University of Illinois

Chicago Building Checklist. The first-day talks were followed by the opportunity to tour the Campus Instructional Facility, the Natural History Building, or the Main Quad. That evening there was a reception featuring the CU Jazz Fest Quartet.



On Thursday, Hasselbring represented Illinois on a slide show panel with participants from Northern and Southern Illinois Universities (NIU/SIU) to showcase new construction and major renovations on the three campuses before the second-day programming got underway. Paul Foote, energy efficiency and conservation specialist with F&S, moderated a panel on energy with two F&S associate directors of Utilities, Nathan Reifsteck (Energy Conservation & Retrocommissioning) and Sylvia McIvor (Strategic Energy Management). They discussed retrocommissioning and energy performance contracting as methods to manage high energy use in complex facilities, such as laboratories.

There were ten breakout sessions in total, with additional talks covering Energy Performance Contracting at NIU; Evaluating Pedestrian Safety: Pilot Projects, Partnerships, and Pathways



Forward; Illinois State University’s Circular Move Out Program; and more. Additional speakers were from the University of Chicago, Western Illinois University, the University of Nebraska, the town of Normal, and across industry. The latter was also well represented in the

vendor room, with 30 different vendors in attendance and willing to chat about how they could help universities with their facilities management needs.

One other speaker of note, Dr. Tim Grunloh, a principal research scientist in the department of Nuclear, Plasma, and Radiological Engineering at the U. of I., discussed the effort to bring “an advanced nuclear reactor” (i.e., a microreactor) to the university. “This new facility will be dedicated to driving innovation in operations, deployments, and integration that will enable a new generation of reactors to maintain the best-in-class reliability and safety characteristics of the current fleet with a paradigm shifting increase in flexibility of tomorrow’s fleet. The project recently

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achieved a major milestone with the submission of a Construction Permit Application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.”

The ILAPPA Conference introduces innovations and best practices. “It’s always an honor to host the conference here at Illinois,” Morgan White said, “as it allows us to showcase our work and to network with and learn from our peers!” While the Illinois Chief Engineers & Facilities Managers Conference has been hosted in

Champaign-Urbana each year, the ILAPPA Conference typically rotates between various college campuses in Illinois. That the two could be combined this year on the Urbana campus was an excellent opportunity for participants to expand their knowledge and make connections with colleagues across institutions, broadening the reach of both events. For more information, visit <https://www.appa.org>.

Noontime Knowledge Recaps

Jane Addams, *Together We Rise*



In the late 1800s, the 19th Ward of Chicago, an area then bounded by Van Buren, Throop, 12th Street, and the South Branch of the Chicago River, was one of the poorest areas in the city. Many of the people living there were recent immigrants. They, and their children, often lived in inadequate housing and worked in nearby factories or in the meat-

packing industries. It was in this area that Jane Addams would create Hull House in 1889.

Laura Jane Addams (1860–1935) was born to well-to-do parents. Her father, an Illinois state senator, encouraged Addams’ pursuit of education. When he died suddenly, she and her siblings each inherited ~\$50,000 (approximately \$1.9 million today). In 1887, Addams traveled to Europe. While there, she visited Toynbee Hall, in London. It was the world’s first settlement house, a home in the middle of a poor, immigrant neighborhood, where volunteers (usually educated, socially minded reformers) lived and worked to offer education, healthcare, childcare, and other support to the community. Addams returned to Illinois and bought a run-down mansion in the 19th Ward called Hull House after the man who had built it. It became the first settlement house in the United States—and a model for the hundreds that followed.

Addams had excellent powers of observation, and she set out to improve conditions when she noticed them. She noted that women were often forced to leave small children at home when

they worked in the factories, so she started a daycare. She observed young girls working 10- to 12-hour days in sweatshops, so she set out to change labor laws. Addams lobbied the Illinois legislature and got them to prohibit children under the age of 14 from working and to mandate that women and older children could only work an 8-hour day. She saw people were hungry, so Hull House added a kitchen. Once children were free from work, they needed a place to play, so she built the first playground in Chicago.

Hull House staff became proponents of legal reform. They witnessed kids as young as 10 being charged and jailed as adults for petty crimes. Addams and her colleagues argued for, and got, a juvenile court system established. Women at the settlement house became the de facto case workers. They also became early proponents of public health. Hull House volunteers figured out lead poisoning was harming the people who lived in the community and saw one of the first Workers’ Compensation laws passed in the United States. When they realized filthy conditions were killing children, they harried the city’s sanitation workers into removing waste from Ward 19’s streets. Addams was so good at cleaning up her community, the mayor even appointed her as a garbage inspector.

The video, *Together We Rise*, shown by the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the March Noontime Knowledge on Women’s History included a lot more fascinating information about Jane Addams, her settlement house, and how she won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. It’s worth viewing in its entirety. Watch it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Vv441e4nk>.

Equitable Access to Open Space



F&S’ Bridgette Moen, landscape architect, was the guest speaker at the April Noontime Knowledge in honor of Earth Month. Her well-attended talk, “Equitable Access to Open Space,” delved into the importance of natural areas and open space, recommendations for access, community successes, and how to get involved. Moen made the case for having and utilizing parks and other open spaces

because of their many well-researched benefits, including reduced obesity rates, decreased risk of hypertension, and improved mental health. Examples of the latter included lower stress levels, reduced anxiety and depression symptoms, and a better ability to focus after spending time in nature.

Although research tells us that everyone benefits from the reset offered by natural and open spaces, not everyone has access to these areas. Barriers include distance to them (e.g., too far to walk, no car to drive, etc.), lack of time, safety concerns, and accessibility issues. To improve access, the National Recreation and Park Association recommends 9.2 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents in a community with 100K–250K residents. Champaign-Urbana (CU), with a combined 2025 estimated population of 130,800, actually outperforms this metric, with an amazing 13.2 acres per 1,000 residents.

The parks are relatively well distributed throughout the cities, although there is some room for improvement. Most people live less than a 10-minute walk or half a mile from at least one park, Moen said. However, some neighbors would have to cross a hazard (such as a highway) to reach a park, making access impracticable, and a few areas are not near a neighborhood park.

Unlike parks, there is no exact standard for natural areas (such as forest preserves). In 2020, a global 30×30 policy was adopted in many places. The idea was to conserve 30 percent of the Earth's lands and oceans by 2030. While the United States committed to the framework at the time, Moen said not a lot of progress has been made toward the goal here to date, and results vary elsewhere around the globe. In Champaign County, less than 1 percent of county land is dedicated as public natural areas. While these areas are highly rated by residents, Moen noted that expanding them can be cost prohibitive. Land prices are high in Central Illinois because much of it is farmland. Adding hundreds of acres is a stretch for the Champaign County Forest Preserve District (CCFPD), although it is its own taxing body.

Moen went on to explain taxing districts, stating that the CCFPD and both Champaign and Urbana Park Districts are taxing districts. In Illinois, there are an estimated 7,000 special districts that cover everything from parks to schools to sanitation. A district is defined as an independent local unit of government with a specific mission. In the case of a park district or a forest preserve district, it is charged with care of the park system or the natural area, and it assesses taxes for that purpose. If you pay property taxes in CU, you will see these line items on your tax bill.

Why is that important? Moen pointed out that other local towns, such as Savoy or St. Joseph, also have parks, but not a park

district. She said that funding for those local parks is subject to the vagaries of the town's ability to finance them in any given year and the worth the current governing board places on them. While it is nominally just a different way to fund parks and recreational areas, in an economic downturn, town or county government could end or limit the amount of money put toward parks. Because the funding of a park district or forest preserve district is kept separate from the city or town's funding, it is more protected and cannot be allocated to other priorities.



If you enjoy your local parks and natural spaces, Moen says getting involved is as easy as visiting your favorites' websites. They often list volunteer opportunities, such as cleanup days or help running events. Sometimes they even need specialized help, such as making costumes for youth productions.

Board meetings are listed, and public comments are taken there or through emails. People are also needed to run for board positions or to serve on committees. However you choose to participate, Moen encourages everyone to get out and enjoy time in your local parks and natural areas! You can watch Moen's talk at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc3Z3pbxYel>.

F&S at Work

Boneyard Creek Community Day

The stats are in for the 2026 cleanup of Boneyard Creek, and by all measures it was an impactful day!

- 11 sponsors, including F&S!
- 22 F&S employees and their family members volunteered.
- 48 Greek Green Chapter Challenge Volunteers participated. This was organized by F&S Intern Quinn Connolly.
- 110+ volunteers came through the F&S Tent at Scott Park.
- 347 people volunteered in total.
- 18 out of 23 campus quadrants were cleaned. (This is approximately 400 acres when including building footprints.)
- 1,710 feet of shoreline were cleaned in the campus portion of the Boneyard Creek—3 miles worth of shoreline in total.
- 1,000 acres in total were cleaned.
- 70 cubic yards of trash were collected in total.



Compliance Professional, Environmental Compliance, Betsy Jo Richardson was the team lead at F&S and provided the numbers. She noted that among the items found were "a large tire, nice tennis shoes, and a Styrofoam tombstone Halloween decoration."

Many thanks to everyone who participated!

Girl Power: Girl Scouts Visit Abbott

Ashlynn Stillwell, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering, says that research shows girls start to lose interest in math and science starting around second grade, as they begin to "perceive these activities as 'boy' activities." One of the ways that Stillwell aims to change that impression is by bringing kids from the Girl Scouts of Central Illinois to tour F&S' Abbott Power Plant. While they are there, you can see "light bulbs start to come on in a



figurative and literal sense," Stillwell said.

Each spring since 2015, Abbott has collaborated with Stillwell to offer hands-on demonstrations in water, energy, electricity, chemistry, and physics, along with a tour of the facility. "I really get energized [hosting

the Scouts]," Mike Larson, interim director of Utilities & Energy Services, said. It lets girls know opportunities exist, and careers in science and industry are for everyone, Larson added.

The kids like it too. You can see their excitement in a short video created by Steve Breitwieser, manager, communications and external relations, at F&S. The Girl Scouts' engagement and the chance to sow lifelong interest is the reason the program returns to Abbott each year.

View the Girl Power video on F&S' YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lzsXsoZrK-U>. Want to take a tour of Abbott Power Plant? Tours are open to the greater campus community! Request one at <https://forms.illinois.edu/sec/9137455>.

Lights, Camera, Action for Commencement

Getting the Illinois campus ready for graduation is a rite of passage and a significant F&S team effort that starts weeks in advance of Commencement Weekend. Tasks span many services, including cleaning buildings before and after, painting walls and other building maintenance, repairing walkways, optimizing building temperature conditions, changing light fixtures, providing transportation, moving paraphernalia like gonfalons to the appropriate graduation site, managing construction aspects, event support, or a myriad other duties. And now you can add another effort and achievement to that extensive list: university feature video participant.



This semester, in addition to performing his normal responsibilities to spruce up the campus, Grounds Worker Adrian Flowers volunteered for a starring role in the university's annual end-of-the-

semester production. The video starts with Chancellor Isbell, asking a connected, smart speaker—conveniently named “Alma”—to play “Hail to the Orange.” Flowers joined the ensemble cast of students and leadership in the piece entitled “Illini Pride in Every Voice.” He shines singing the words “Ever so true,” while mowing a portion of the Bardeen Quad.

Flowers said when he was asked if he would be interested in being involved in the video project, “I immediately responded yes!” He was excited to represent Grounds and showcase their efforts in the production. He explained, “Our crew plays a huge part of preparing for the Commencement exercises. We work so hard behind the scenes to make sure every piece of grass is cut, that mulch is the same color, and plants are watered and vibrant for the thousands of visitors we have visiting the campus!” In fact, each of the 939 acres maintained by the Grounds crew is thoughtfully considered and landscaped accordingly. The result is a clean, vibrant campus that is ready to welcome thousands of visitors from around the world and serve as a magnificent backdrop for endless photos.

Many thanks to Flowers for his involvement in the piece. His participation, along with other members of the campus community—from the Marching Illini and Orange Krush to instructors and football fans—highlights how essential F&S’ support is to campus. Countless kudos to him and all F&S team members who provided vital Commencement assistance, responded to last-minute unit requests, and helped make this year’s weekend memorable for so many.

If you missed it, you can watch the video on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CdEZRhqiA5I>.

If you want to know more about the Grounds department, visit <https://fs.illinois.edu/Providers/grounds/>.

Repurpose and Recycle

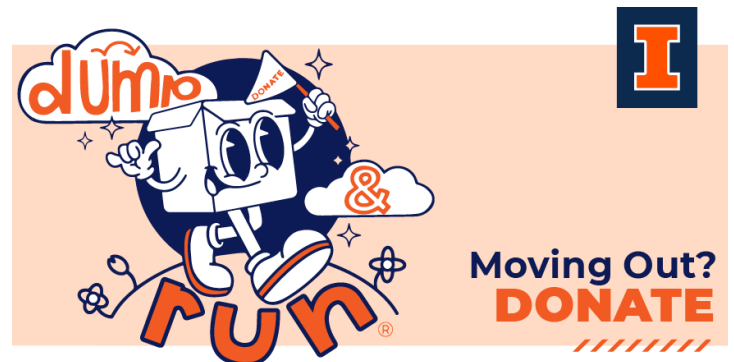
When is the most trash disposed of on the Urbana campus?

- a. When students return to campus
- b. During Homecoming Week
- c. During Moms Weekend
- d. During Move Out

Give yourself a pat on the back if you guessed Move Out. Betsy Ruckman, the new zero waste coordinator at F&S, knows this well. Her job is to keep as much as possible out of the landfill, and she hit the ground running with this year’s Dump & Run®. On her very first day of work, with the help of University Housing, F&S drivers, Grounds team members, and other workers and volunteers, Ruckman organized and monitored eight 20’ x 8’ mobile storage units that were placed near campus residence halls for six days during Move Out.

Students could place their gently used, but unwanted, items in the units. Items collected included furniture, housewares, small appliances, clothing, and more. All in all, Ruckman said, approximately 70 pallets of students’ unwanted things were collected. That’s more than 15,000 pounds worth of stuff that was kept out of the landfill! Even better, those items were donated to Goodwill and will be able to find new life in someone else’s home or residence hall. Repurposing is always a great choice!

If you would like to repurpose some of your own unneeded items, consider donating to the fall Dump & Run. Collection dates begin August 3 and continue through August 15. If you need gently used items, come out for the Big Sale, August 22 and 23. Learn more at <https://www.universityymca.org/what-we-offer/programs/dump-run>.



Dump & Run is a registered trademark of the University YMCA.

Send your stories and photos to
fscustomerrelations@illinois.edu

