



# DISPATCH

2025 • Volume 23 • Issue 3



Girl Scouts visit F&S. See more in the F&S Roundup

## Larson and Moen Are Recipients of 2025 CSEA Honors

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign recently announced the winners of the 2025 Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards. This year, two F&S team members were recognized by the program: Mike Larson, associate director of utilities production, and Greg Moen, supervisor of building craftsmen. Chancellor Jones presented their awards at a reception this month.

Kudos to both Larson and Moen! F&S team members can be proud of their accomplishments and appreciative that campus has recognized them for their work. If you see them in the hallways or on campus, please take a moment to add your congratulations!

### Mike Larson



Larson was nominated by Rob Roman, director of Utilities & Energy Services. He told an anecdote about a severe snowstorm that was instructive of Larson's work ethic. "Many employees were unable to report to work, and there were significant issues with key

power plant equipment. Mike stayed well into the night working to get the equipment repaired and back in service, which included shoveling extremely dirty coal residue in one of the dirtiest areas of the plant. This did not faze Mike at all. He simply kept moving forward and helping with the work that needed to be done to ensure the campus heat and power would not be interrupted."

Setting people up for success is another of Larson's skills. "Mike has initiated a training program that is world class and has developed employees internally for more complex duties that resulted in promotional opportunities for the entire staff," Roman said. Additionally, "Mike and his team have developed a comprehensive on-boarding program that includes introductions and training to help the team member be successful in their new position quickly."

Roman credits Larson with many other achievements: "Mike is a leader in the areas of carbon reduction, finding every possible opportunity to improve on the carbon footprint of the campus." Further, "Mike was instrumental in the efforts that resulted in the university receiving the highest award for district energy operations, both commercial and institutional. In June of 2024, we were awarded the International District Energy Association System of the Year Award. This award 'recognizes an exemplary district energy system providing high-level performance and service that further the goals of the district energy industry.'" Roman

concluded, "We are all lucky to have Mike leading this team, to be able to work alongside him, and to be able to learn from him."

### Greg Moen



Moen (left) was nominated by Steve Bainbridge, director of Building Maintenance & Grounds. He wrote that Moen excels at "relationship building, which translates to him being a premier customer service provider. This is evidenced by the fact that, even long

after [F&S' multi-craftspeople team approach in] zones dissolved, [replaced by a centralized maintenance concept], Greg's [former] zone customers regularly call on him because they know he is responsive. He willingly takes these calls and solves problems that are beyond his scope because he believes in providing outstanding customer service and maintaining positive relationships." Bainbridge also noted, "Greg's overall work performance is exceptional, and I am not sure I have witnessed anyone who is as big a team player as he is."

Another area where Moen shines is in mentoring and recognizing others. He previously nominated four people for the CSEA (formerly the Chancellor's Distinguished Staff Award), and they all won. He has also taken the time to mentor colleagues who were pursuing a change to the supervisory track. Bainbridge explained Moen offered this help and encouragement willingly, adding "I personally know of at least a half dozen people Greg has mentored in this way."

Bainbridge's nomination delineated many of Moen's other accomplishments—from working with area high schools and middle schools to engage young people in the crafts & trades to improving the university's carbon footprint through a pilot program "to retrofit several spaces from T8 fluorescent to LED lighting." Moen, Bainbridge said, "consistently looks for ways to improve operations, and he is willing to think outside the box when appropriate." He concluded, "Greg's dedication to F&S and the university is amazing. I know he is not the only person who has such dedication, but I truly appreciate the work he puts in to spread that word to others."

Check out the CSEA Award Website:  
<https://go.fs.illinois.edu/CSEA25>



# Noontime Knowledge Recap

## Flying Dreams: Women Airforce Pilots of WWII



By the time World War II began, women had been in aviation for decades. Thérèse Peltier (1873–1926, pictured left) was the first to pilot an aircraft in 1908. Bessica Raiche (1875–1931) was the first American woman to solo in 1910. Frenchwoman Elise Deroche (1882–1919) was the first to earn a pilot's license (1910), and Amelia Earhart (1897–1937) was the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean (1928). In fact, by 1935, there were between 700 and 800 licensed female pilots in the United States. Women in aviation broke records and earned accolades for their flights. What they couldn't do was serve as a pilot

for the military. That was about to change.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee showed “Flying Dreams: Women Airforce Pilots of WWII” for its Noontime Knowledge in honor of Women's History Month. The video details the story of WASPs (Women Airforce Service Pilots)—the civilian female pilots who were recruited to transport military aircraft, tow targets for live anti-aircraft practice, test new planes, and more. The WASP organization was formed in 1943 when two organizations, Women's Flying Training Detachment (WFTD) and the Women's Auxiliary Ferry Squadron (WAFS)—both formed in 1942—were combined.

Prior to the war, two pilots, Nancy Harkness Love (1914–76) and Jacqueline Cochran (1906–80), each independently proposed using women pilots in the military. Each ended up in charge of one of the predecessor organizations (Love at WAFS and Cochran at WFTD), and when they were combined into the WASPs, by General Henry “Hap” Arnold (1886–1950), they led the organization together, with Cochran as director and Love as the head of the ferrying division. They recruited female pilots and more than 25,000 applied. Only 1,830 were accepted, and of those, 1,074 completed the training.

The women were considered civilians and not part of the official military, although they did the same jobs and completed the same training as their male military counterparts. During their training, they worked from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. with four hours of ground school, four hours on the flight line, an hour of marching, and an hour of exercise each day. But the women were grateful for the opportunity. One pilot, Shirley Chase Kruse (1922–2024) noted, “We were all there for one purpose and that was the love of flying.”

Once training was complete, the women were used to replace male pilots who were fighting overseas. They were tasked with ferrying any airplane rolling off an assembly line and delivering it where it was needed. They flew all models from small fighters to the B-29 Super Fortress (the plane that would eventually be used to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki). In fact, the women ferried more than 12,000 planes between 1942 and 1944, about half of all the aircraft manufactured in the war. They flew a combined 60 million miles, and when compared job to job with the men, it was the women who had the better safety record.

Still, the job was dangerous. First killed in the line of duty was Cornelia Fort (1919–43) when a male pilot's plane collided midair with hers. This was doubly tragic because Fort had been a civilian flight instructor who had successfully dodged a near-miss mid-air collision on December 7, 1941. She had taken a student up over Honolulu, when she realized the incoming planes were Japanese. Once on the ground, she and the student survived a strafing attack before they were able to get to safety. Unfazed, Fort was the second woman to sign up to be a WASP, although it eventually cost her life. In all, 38 WASPs gave their lives in duty to their country during WWII.

The women, with the support of General Arnold, lobbied for official recognition with full military status, but they faced a backlash from male pilots. As the war was winding down, fewer combat pilots were needed, so not as many male flight instructors were needed. They saw what the women were doing stateside and decided they'd like those jobs. The WASP program was deactivated at the end of 1944, and the women were released without military status or benefits because the bill that would have granted them was defeated by 19 votes.

After the war, the female pilots struggled. The major airlines refused to hire female pilots, so it was hard to find work. Because they were denied military status, the women were not eligible for the GI Bill, so they didn't receive the college or medical benefits that their male colleagues received. The women continued to lobby for these benefits, with one pilot recalling, “Politicians can say ‘no’ in the politest ways.” But Arnold continued to support them, and when he passed away, his son, Bruce, picked up their cause. The women provided documentation that their service really had been military service, and they conducted a grassroots campaign to be recognized. They were finally granted veteran status in 1977. In 2009, the women (or the families of deceased WASPs) were awarded the Congressional Gold medal for their service to the country.

You can view the film about the WASPs here:



Or go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJnUfz7Ebro>.

*Fifinella, a flying female gremlin, was designed by the Walt Disney Company for a movie that they didn't end up making. The WASPs asked if they could use her as a mascot, and Disney granted them permission. Fifi appeared on a patch worn on jackets and was sometimes painted on planes.*





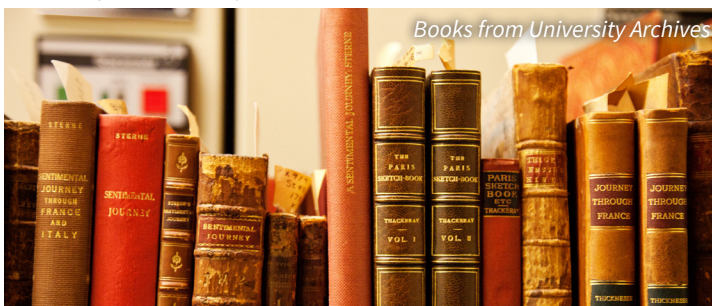
# F&S Roundup

- Transportation Demand Management (TDM) recently conducted a very successful **Transportation Survey**, with more than 800 responses. People across campus weighed in on, among other things, the modes of transportation that respondents prefer, commute times, safety perceptions, accessibility issues, ways to make walking and biking easier, and parking needs. Once the data is crunched, TDM can use it to promote new programs and encourage active modes of transportation.



Artist rendering of the new Illini Hall

- Construction for Phase III of the **Illini Hall Replacement/Altgeld Hall Renovation** is expected to begin soon, with site preparation beginning at Illini Hall and an increase in construction activity. The new facility is slated to open in the fall of 2027.
- The **Doris Kelley Christopher Illinois Extension Center** construction contract received formal approval from the University of Illinois Board of Trustees (BOT) to begin construction. It will be the home of Illinois Extension, the flagship outreach effort of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and be located on the grounds of the 160-acre Arboretum.
- The BOT also approved the budget and construction contract for the **University Library's Archives and Special Collections building project**. This project approval officially launches the plan to transform the former Undergraduate Library into the new home for the University Archives, the Illinois History and Lincoln Collections, and the Rare Book & Manuscript Library. Construction is expected to be completed in early 2027.



Books from University Archives

- Many thanks to all the F&S Team members who support the **Illinois Marathon** (April 24 to 26). Laborers, transportation, operating engineers, high voltage electricians, plumbers, and building service workers (public functions) all help support operations by filling potholes ahead of the race weekend, providing barricades for streets, performing electrical checks, and offering support as needed during the event.
- F&S hosted a virtual forum about the **Rainwater Management Program**. The presentation by two engineers at Farnsworth Group discussed the goals, including

redefining stormwater as rainwater, an asset, not a waste product, and addressing flooding and ponding issues on campus. They discussed various green infrastructures that can be added, funding sources, and the additional benefits of making these changes, including reducing urban temperature, creating habitats for small birds and mammals, and adding beauty to campus. Once approved, the RMP summary will be available on the F&S website.



Campus Rainfall, Photo credit: Fred Zwicky

- Greg Moen and CU One-to-One Mentoring Coordinator Lauren Smith organized a **Mentoring Field Trip** for 20 mentor-mentee pairs in March. The group stopped by several shops to learn from an expert about the F&S Crafts & Trades, speaking with locksmiths (Kelly Hutcherson), operating engineers (Shawn Hadler), grounds (Isaac Williams, foreperson), machinists (Stuart De Haro, foreperson), and mill workers (Andy Burnett, foreperson). Stuart and Andy even provided shop-made souvenirs for the group, Illini coasters and a Block-I refrigerator magnet, respectively. CU One-to-One provided pizza and drinks at the end of the tour for kids and adults alike.



C-U One-to-One tour group

- Local **Girl Scouts** made a visit to Abbott Power Plant and learned from team members there, as well as operating engineers and ironworkers. This is a fun annual event that introduces the girls to the principles of making steam and electricity to heat and power the campus. The girls also participated in hands-on demonstrations.



Girl Scouts try out hands-on demonstrations

# Athletico Success

Having Industrial Wellness Specialists (IWSs) available at F&S has been a huge hit, with approximately 130 team member visits between late January (when the program began) and the end of March. Sixty-seven percent of these visits were for tightness in the neck and upper back (scapular) areas, with most of these being chronic in nature. Another 13 percent were for low back tightness. Other areas treated included legs, arms/hands, and soft tissue injuries from sports and exercise. With more than 80 responses to a post-treatment questionnaire, these questions have received 100 percent positive response:

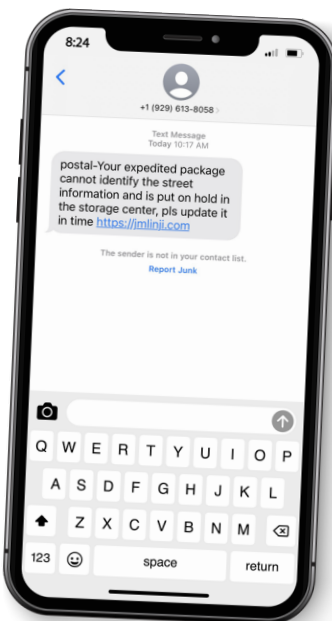
- Did the intervention provided by the Industrial Wellness Specialist meet your expectations?
- Did you experience any symptom relief as a result of the intervention?
- Would you recommend this service to a co-worker?

Check out the Ongoing Events section of the E-Update on Fridays to find out when and where the IWSs will be next, then drop by the free program to address your own aches, pains, and stiffness. As always, if you have an injury, please report it to your supervisor, fill out a First Report of Injury form, and if you feel it is necessary, seek prompt medical care. Questions may be addressed to Occupational Safety and Health Coordinator Ben Kuhlman [kuhlmanb@illinois.edu](mailto:kuhlmanb@illinois.edu).



## Spotlight on Safety: Smishing and Phishing Scams

If you have a cell phone, you've probably noticed an uptick in smishing scams—a text message that pretends to be from a trusted source. (The term is a combination of SMS [short message service] and phishing.) Perhaps you've gotten the one that says you owe money for unpaid tolls, or that you've had unauthorized transactions at your bank or on your credit card, or the one that says you owe more money on your taxes, or a notice that someone tried to deliver a package, but now they need more information. They may try a positive message, too, suggesting you've won a prize or are owed money. These are just a few of the dozens of ways scammers will try to part you from your money or information.



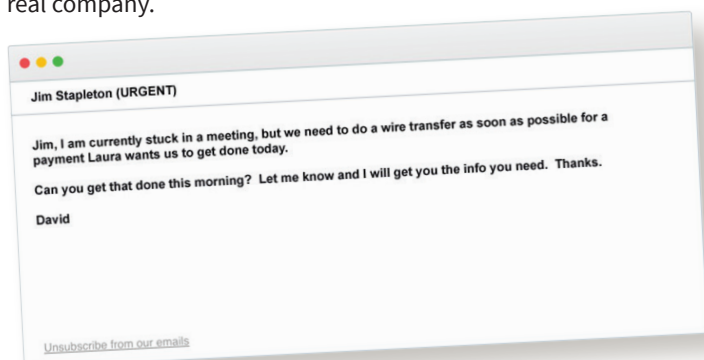
Like phishing scams, which use fake emails, the smishing messages create urgency to try to get you to click on a link or share personal information. Both types of scams may mimic the language of the real company.

As with phishing scams, ***you should be leery of unknown senders, urgent language, suspicious links, requests for personal information, and spelling or grammar mistakes.*** Whether on your work computer or your personal cell phone, you should not click the link(s), nor should you reply.

What else should you do? Best practices include

- Ignoring suspicious messages
- Confirming the message's validity by using the company's verified contact information to communicate with them directly
- Enabling two-factor authentication
- Blocking and reporting scam phone numbers and emails
- Keeping devices secure by installing the latest updates

At work, be particularly suspicious of an email from an unknown person that appears to alert you that a document on a file-sharing site, such as Box or Google Drive, has been shared with you. Team members are encouraged to report messages received on work devices to [report-spam@illinois.edu](mailto:report-spam@illinois.edu). Learn more at <https://www.cybersecurity.illinois.edu/be-aware-of-threats/>.



### Upcoming Calendar Dates

April 20—Easter	April 25—Arbor Day
April 22—Earth Day	May 8—Reading Day
April 22—Bike for Earth Day	May 9 to 15—Finals
April 24 to 26—Illinois Marathon	

Send your stories and photos to  
**[fscustomerrelations@illinois.edu](mailto:fscustomerrelations@illinois.edu)**

