

# Facilities Forum

A weekly newsletter for the UAF Facilities Services community



## January 10, 2024

Volume 1 Issue 1

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Good morning everyone, welcome to the first edition of the **Facilities Forum** newsletter.

I've been producing a weekly email newsletter for Facilities Services managers for the past four years, it was called the Virtual Cross Shop. That email replaced a weekly in-person meeting during the COVID-19 era. For 2024, we've decided to change the format around a little, and send it out to all FS employees every other week.

The intent is to share information, celebrate our accomplishments, and try to learn something new about our roles as higher education facilities professionals. Each week, I'll be asking for photos and stories from the FS community about our interesting and exciting work on the Troth Yeddha' campus and UAF's remote sites. If you have a story idea, or an interesting photo you would like to share with everyone, please send it my way!

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## The Week in Photos



Fireworks on New Year's Eve as seen from the ski trails. Photo courtesy of Carl Westphal.

Your photo could be featured here!

If you have a great UAF facilities related photo that you would like to share with everyone, please send it to Nathan at [njplatt@alaska.edu](mailto:njplatt@alaska.edu).



The FS Labor Shop did a great job replacing classroom furniture in Brooks 104A and 104B during the winter break. We've been upgrading general use classrooms all over campus, switching out the old "tablet arm chairs" that no one likes to these nice new single student desks.



The Physical Plant sign shop has been working on new signage for the Arctic Health cafe, which is going to reopen soon as "GRAVE", a sous vide concept kitchen. Look for additional details in a future edition of this newsletter.



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## Announcements

- The Physical Plant west parking lot (8F) will be cleared of snow tomorrow night (Thursday, January 11) beginning at 9:00am. Everyone is asked to please make sure all personal and work vehicles are removed from the lot at that time.
- Congratulations to Harmonie Peters, Facilities Services Fiscal Officer, for being named the January 2023 Employee of the Month. If you want to recognize a co-worker who is doing an exceptional job, please use the EOM nomination form [here!](#)
- **EARLY TIMESHEET DEADLINE THIS WEEK!** Please remember that, because Monday is a holiday (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in Celebration of Alaska Civil Rights), we have an early timesheet deadline. Please make sure you submit UAOnline timesheets before Friday, January 12 at 6:00pm. Approval deadline is Tuesday, January 16, before 7:00pm.

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## Brushing for Success: CTC/Hutchison Culinary Kitchen Winter Break Makeover

*By Jason Schoening, Electrical and Trades Maintenance Shop Service Manager*

In collaboration with the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, Hutchison High School, and the CTC Culinary Arts program, our FS paint crew is embarking on a three-week project to rejuvenate the kitchen walls in their fully operational instructional kitchen. This strategic project is scheduled over the winter break to minimize disruptions, ensuring the teaching kitchen is fully ready for students when they return early next year.

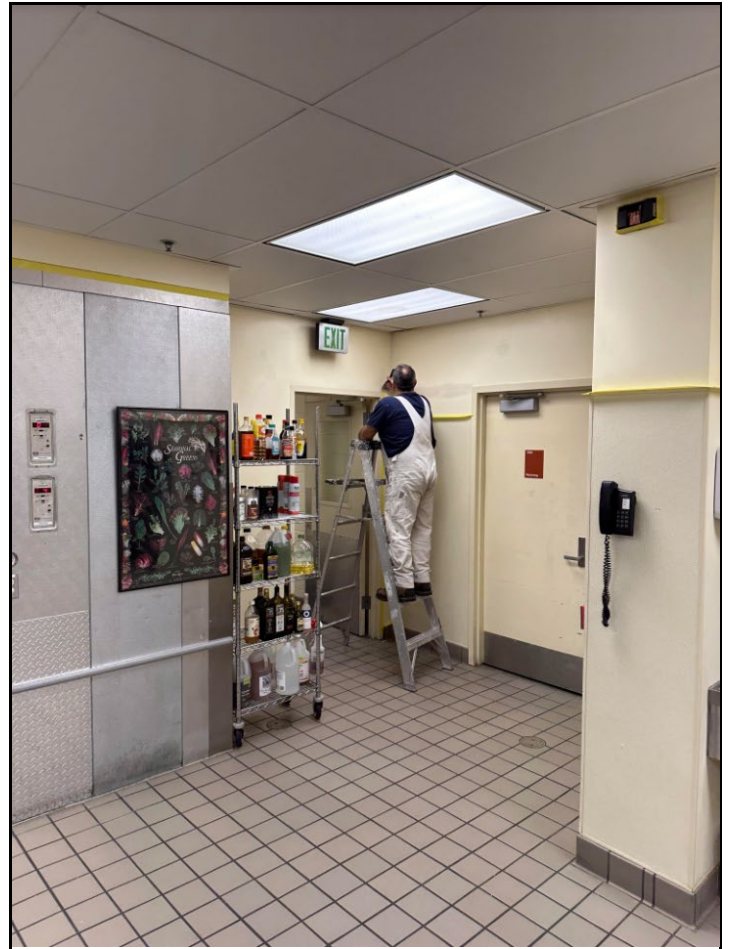


The paint crew encounters a distinctive challenge as they maneuver around an array of specialized culinary equipment, requiring meticulous planning, precision, and cleanliness.



The revitalized kitchen will not only present a fresh and inviting ambiance but also contribute to a bright, clean, and inspiring learning environment for culinary students. As the paint crew diligently works to transform the walls, the CTC Culinary Arts program and the Hutchison High community eagerly anticipate the unveiling of the refurbished teaching kitchen.

To guarantee a seamless process, the team is dedicated to thorough prep work, safeguarding appliances and workstations to prevent any damage to equipment or supplies during the painting process. Additionally, we are installing fiberglass-reinforced panels (FRP) in the mop room to shield the walls from water and chemical damage. Although the kitchen presents several unique challenges, we have full confidence in achieving outstanding and timely results. Given the time constraints, the crew is operating with heightened efficiency, making this project the utmost priority during the winter break. Our goal is to have the space returned to the users by January 10, so they have time to reassemble the kitchen before classes start on the 15th.



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## Nathan's Facilities Services Predictions for 2024

Every year, I make **ten predictions** about what might happen in and around UAF Facilities in the year ahead. It's fun to look back at the end of the year to see how right or wrong my guesses are. Here they are, in no particular order.

10. After much back and forth between the University, the Alaska State Legislature, and the Governor's office, the FY25 budget for UA will look much better than we initially thought. I predict we will receive substantial funding beyond the \$6.1 million already offered in the Governor's budget proposal for compensation increases, as well as some additional funding (as much as \$10 million) toward our deferred maintenance priorities.

9. The West Ridge Cafe (in the Arctic Health Research Building) will open in late January or early February, featuring a new name and exciting menu. Although only intended to be in operation for a little while until the Campus Cache reopens, I predict it will be busy enough that Chartwells will keep it operational next academic year. It will become a popular coffee break spot for Facilities Services employees working on West Ridge.

8. The Bartlett and Moore Hall restroom renovation project will conclude smoothly, and on time. The towers will reopen for students in late August as planned. This will prompt discussions about what to do with the lower campus residence halls, and I predict at least one of them (probably Stevens) will be closed for the 24-25 academic year while Residence Life and campus leadership decide whether to start tearing them down.

7. We will discover a new sinkhole (also called a [Thermokarst](#)) on West Ridge following a heavy rainstorm in June. This new sinkhole will be unusually large, and will potentially impact a parking lot, but will be an exciting opportunity for the engineering departments to study this climate-change related phenomenon.

Progress will be made in raising funds and support for the Troth Yeddha' building, and although construction won't start during the 2024-2025 academic year, I predict that, by December, we will have scheduled a groundbreaking ceremony for some time in the summer of 2025.

5. The new Student Success Center at the Library will open to great fanfare and lots of excitement in late summer of 2024. It will immediately become an important resource for students, and will have a positive impact on academic success and degree completion rates.

4. We will award a new custodial contract in late January or early February. I won't predict who the vendor(s) will be, but I predict there will be a steep learning curve for everyone involved, particularly since UAA and UAF partnered on the contract, so one contractor may get both schedules on the contract. I predict that the most successful part of the new contract will be a renewed focus on cleaning residence hall rooms during the summer break, and residential students will appreciate the additional efforts put into making their spaces safe, clean, and well-maintained.

3. We will successfully fill many key positions within Facilities Services in 2024, and at the end of the year we'll be a stronger team with fewer vacant positions.

2. A site for the on-campus Hotel that the Chancellor announced at last year's convocation speech will be finalized, and efforts will begin to pursue a public-private partnership (P3) with a local developer to begin plans. Although I don't have a specific prediction for the location of the new hotel, I do predict that it will NOT be built where the sledding hill is now.

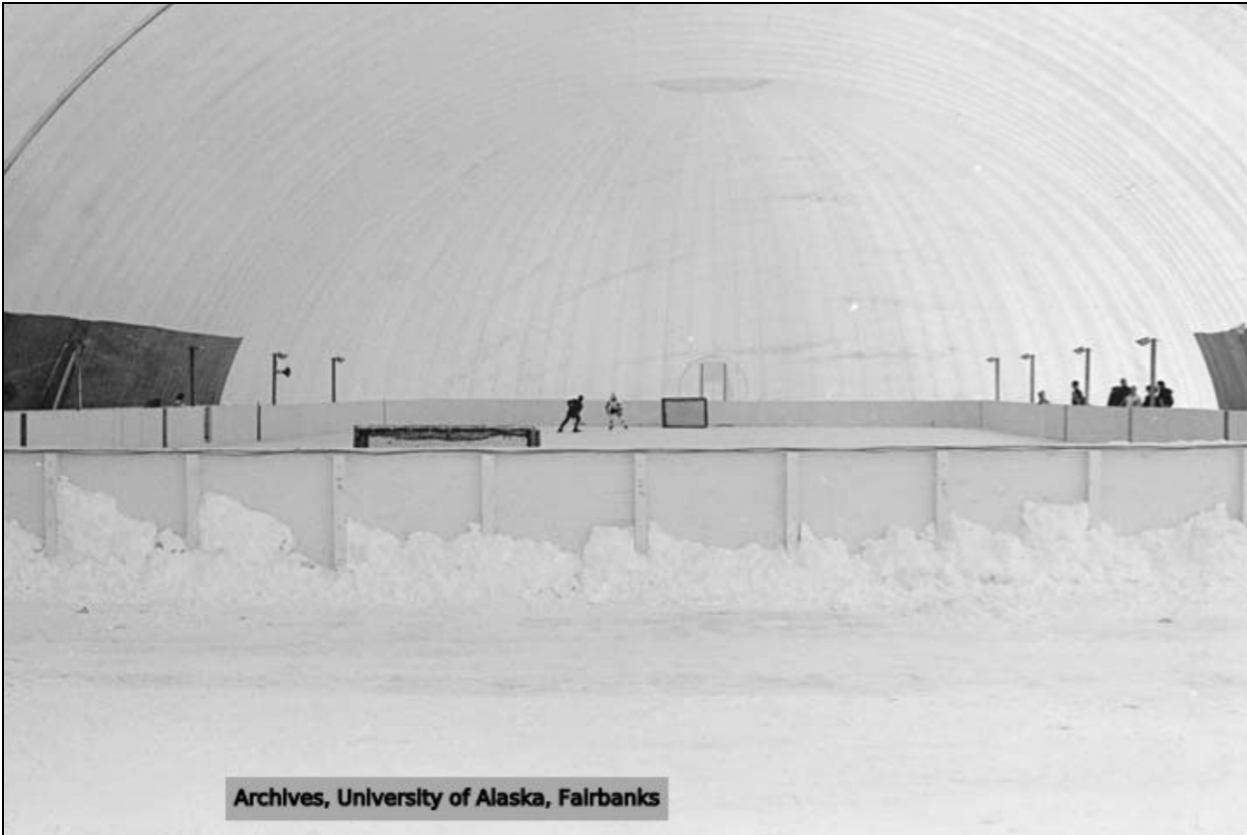
I'm going to recycle this prediction from last year, since it hasn't come true yet. I predict UAF will get our first on-campus drive through coffee stand in 2024!

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## Open Facilities Services Positions

- [Project Manager](#)
  - [Housing Maintenance Technician](#)
  - [Warehouser - Central Receiving](#)
  - [Contract Manager](#)
  - [Facilities Mechanical Engineer](#)
  - [Pool Technician](#)
  - [Warehouser](#)
  - [Preventative Maintenance Assistant Manager](#)
  - [Alarms Technician](#)
  - [Labor Crew](#)
  - [Procurement Technician](#)
  - [HVAC Technician](#)
  - [Boiler Specialist](#)
  - [Electrical Assistant/Relamper](#)
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## UAF Historical Photo of the Week



This is an interesting picture from the Alaska Digital Archives, dated somewhere between 1966 and 1969. The caption says: “This photo is of the ‘Beluga,’ an inflatable nylon dome built on the UAF campus that was used for hockey in the winter and tennis in the summer.” I tried to find a picture of the tennis courts, but had no luck.

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That's all I have for today. I hope everyone has a safe and productive week. Thanks for all you do for UAF Facilities!

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