

Physical Plant rarely recognized

Facility offers students a wide variety of services

By Tracy Smith
THE BATTALION

The Texas A&M Physical Plant may be the least known organization on campus, despite employing over 1,100 people.

L. R. Johnson, associate director of Physical Plant administration, said being recognized by the University is not essential to the work it does.

"We know that a good job may not mean a lot of recognition because we are the behind-the-scenes people for the University," he said. "In many cases we judge how well we do our job, not by how many people respond, but by how many people don't."

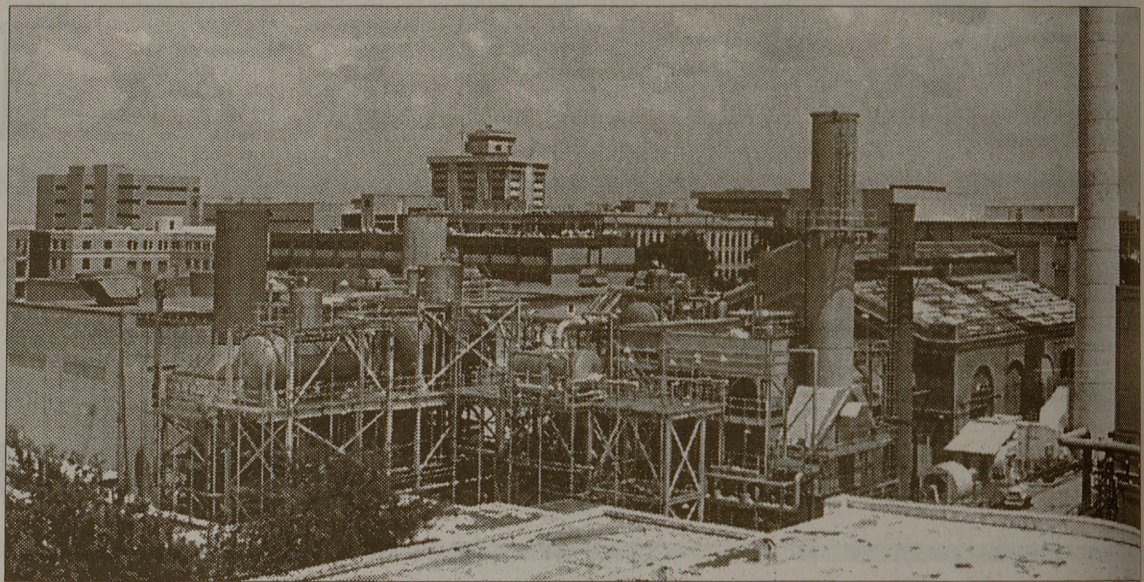
But the Physical Plant, whose work is visible anywhere on the campus, plays an important role to the survival of Texas A&M.

The plant is responsible for any landscaping seen on campus, most of the cleaning that needs to be done and all utilities such as air-conditioning, water and phone services.

It also handles any renovations needed around campus and is involved in numerous projects designed to improve A&M.

"Many people take for granted that the campus will always be clean and fully-functional for both the students and faculty," Johnson said. "The Physical Plant works hard each day to make this possible."

Ginger Melton, special events and moving coordinator, said she considers the Physical Plant to be a vital part of the campus, whether people realize it or not.



Stew Milne/The Battalion

A&M's Physical Plant oversees the workings of the above power plant, located beside the Northside parking garage. Power generators produce much needed electricity throughout campus.

"My job involves any setting up done for special events on campus," she said. "Whenever you go to Aggie Muster or graduation, it's my job to make it look representative of the occasion."

"People may not think about what goes into the physical setup of such an event," she said. "Organization and teamwork is important in a job like this when we have to take something apart as quickly as we put it together because many events coincide."

"In G. Rollie White Coliseum, we may have a basketball game right after a formal ceremony, so it is important that we get things cleaned up as quickly as possible," she said.

Many duties of the Physical Plant are utilized by students on a daily basis.

Organized by the Physical

Plant, the student locator and directory assistance services are available 24-hours. Operated by a staff of 14, the two receive over 4000 calls a day.

Janice Atherton, a staff assistant in the works control department of the Physical Plant, said students need to become more aware of what the Physical Plant does for the students.

"Most of the campus has access to phone services, and yet not everyone knows that the Physical Plant is responsible," Atherton said.

The custodial services, consisting of 460 people, also play an important role on the campus, but many times are invisible to students.

Johnson said they are responsible for cleaning 11,000,000 square feet of A&M, including the

Texas A&M Riverside campus.

Fred Harrison, a Physical Plant employee for 15 years and custodial supervisor, said he feels many might not notice the results from the custodial work, but the staff is always there to help.

"It is hard to show what we do every day because we do so much," he said. "It's funny to think how quickly people would notice if we stopped cleaning though."

Johnson said he feels the Physical Plant plays a critical part at Texas A&M and hopes the organization can continue to improve services.

"Like an organization, we have our problems," he said. "But by working as a team, with our main goal to better Texas A&M, anything is possible."

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#1 12:00 2:10 4:30 7:00 9:15 (11:20)
#2 11:00 1:00 3:10 5:20 7:35 9:50 (12:00)
*SPEED (R) <ON 2 SCREENS>
#1 11:20 1:50 4:25 7:15 10:05 (12:35)
#2 12:00 2:30 5:10 8:00 10:35
*CITY SLICKERS II (PG-13) <ON 2 SCREENS>
#1 11:15 (1:40) 4:10 <7:00> 9:40 (12:15)
#2 11:40 2:15 4:45 7:40 10:15
GETTING EVEN WITH DAD (PG) 11:20 (1:45) 4:25 7:20 9:50 (12:15)
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By Sara Israwi
THE BATTALION
The Underground Food Court on Northside, scheduled to open this fall, may not be completely finished, Food Service officials said.
Alonti Deli, Chick-Fil-A, Taco Bueno and Whataburger will be the food vendors in the new facility. Colombo Yogurt, which is already on campus, will also be included.
Ronald Beard, dining center manager, said the students are the foremost concern of the food court administration.
"Overall, my opinion of the food court is it is motivated toward the students needs," he said. "I feel very strongly about it, naturally, and I am anxious to get it constructed and open."
He said the food court is scheduled to open in the fall, but may not be complete.
Richard Floyd, associate vice president for

"We ought to keep in focus that this was a project that was brought to us by our students."
— Richard Floyd, associate vice president for finance & administration
Beard anticipates the food court will be profitable for A&M, but is not sure how it would affect the business on Northgate.
Danny Dodd was the owner of Spanky's, a Northgate restaurant, for nearly three years before it closed in the spring.
Dodd said in a recent letter to The Battalion that he would be closing the restaurant's doors because of the franchises that are opening on campus.
"I do not feel that I can survive as a small businessman against big companies that can undercut me and out-coupon me," he said.
He said in the letter that it is hard to tell what kind of impact the new food court will have on privately-owned businesses on Northgate.
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