

MFR Milestones

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Facilities Management Manages for Results



Tom Celaya, Facilities Management Director

"Managing for Results came at the perfect time for our department," Tom Celaya said. "I was newly selected to lead the unit and the budgets were getting tighter and tighter. It made sense to implement this management tool now."

Wow! It is not often that you hear someone embrace change so enthusiastically. Tom and his data analysis guru, Adam Tripp, recently recapped some of their successes with MFR. Tom also spoke of hitting a few speed bumps along the way.

"If I knew then what I know now, some of the measurements would be different," Tom added.

He cited the example of wanting to benchmark their custodial services budget against a national standard. Tom figured it would be fairly easy to find a national average cost per square foot for custodial services. The information simply wasn't out there, meaning that measurement will need to be modified for the next plan.

Facilities recently introduced the Maintenance Connection service, which allows employees to enter a request for service into an online tracking system. The system pairs perfectly with MFR, Tom said. They have also implemented a preventive maintenance program to service the buildings and mechanical systems so they don't break down.

"Before, we were pretty much reactive. We were the folks going out to fix broken stuff. What we can now do is set, track and service equipment at regular intervals to prevent failures and breakdowns," Tom explained. "It may seem like a no brainer but you have to have the staffing and time to get out in front, set the schedules and follow up on things."

Facilities staff used to get called for all manner of jobs, from setting up for special events to assembling furniture or even hanging pictures. Now they have a three-tiered system.

The first tier are the emergencies that have to be addressed immediately such as a failed A/C unit, roof leak or electrical problem. The second tier consists of tasks that still need to be performed by the Facilities staff due to their expertise or the type of work that is required, but they're lower priority, non-emergency tasks. The lowest-priority category is what they term Special Needs. Those are tasks that are neither critical, nor necessary for Facilities personnel to perform.

"That's the nice-to-do-if-we-have-time stuff," Adam said.

Setting and agreeing upon the priorities is regular practice now, allowing more staff time to focus on the preventive maintenance program.

With a department of 72 employees and only two administrative positions, shifting into data-tracking mode has been a

significant hurdle to overcome.

"The majority of my staff is still in the learning mode. Some of us are more computer savvy than others so we're helping people become more familiar with the tracking systems. At the same time, we're asking them to collect and enter data," Tom said. "I'm fortunate to have a really good crew with a mix of skills."

Tom also gave an exciting look into the future of the Facilities Management workload. Soon, they will be participating in an energy audit. At the end of the audit, they will create a prioritized list of energy-saving projects at County buildings.

"With new technologies, we can keep buildings powered and cooled for a lower cost. APS Energy Services provides the audit services and then we can review what sorts of retrofits and changes we can make to reduce the demand for energy in our facilities," Tom said. "There are tax credits available from the state and federal government as well as direct rebates from a lot of manufacturers and the utilities. This is the perfect time to look at efficiency."

Tom mentioned that the combination of more building space as the County grows drives up utility costs and places increased demands on his staff. His staff is looking for ways to use less energy to power more space, resulting in cost savings to the County.

"This isn't new thinking around here. My predecessor was 'going green' before it was even a trend. We just want to keep the momentum going and demonstrate real savings and real results," Tom said.

He concluded that results are what matters most when you're talking about Facilities Management. "It's all about keeping the staff in a safe, comfortable environment so they can effectively serve the people of Pinal County."