

NEWS

The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas
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*****Irving resident assumes big responsibility

DALLAS--If you think you've got problems, talk to the newly appointed director of Physical Plant at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Dallas. Allen McCoy is his name, and problems are his game. Nothing really insurmountable...all in a day's work.

As the largest single department on campus--with more than 325 employees--Physical Plant sees to the needs of every other department in one way or another. Sometimes that means a lot of problems, and a lot of good problem-solving. But McCoy is up to the job.

An engineering graduate of Texas A&M, he came to the health science center eight years ago as an electrical engineer. That lasted for only eight months...until he was asked to be associate director of the department.

"Things were a little different then," says McCoy. "We had about 500,000 square feet of floor space at the time. Now we're up to almost two million square feet."

That's two million square feet of offices, labs, lunchrooms, bathrooms and classrooms. It's roofs and elevators, hallways, storage areas and basements. And McCoy's domain includes miles and miles of hot water pipes, cold water pipes, steam pipes, electrical conduits and plumbing. Add a few hundred thousand light bulbs here and there, acres and acres of grounds to keep looking sharp, thousands of trash cans to empty, floors and more floors to vacuum and wax and a million things to fix when they break...and you've got Physical Plant.

Physical Plant's other big responsibility, which may not be apparent to the newcomer, is directing the ever-changing shape of this institution. Renovation is probably the department's biggest activity, outside of daily maintenance.

McCoy explains that with every major department change or appointment, offices have to be shifted. And when departments begin to grow, and then outgrow their surroundings, new space must be provided. It may seem like a pain in the aspirin bottle if you're the one doing the moving, but this kind of change is what keeps a good institution growing.

An inexperienced manager might throw up his hands with every request for new construction, but McCoy is used to it and considers every change and renovation a challenge. Besides, when he's bent over a hot blueprint all day, he's right at home.

"Coordination is the key to doing this job," he admits. "No one person can know everything about all we do in Physical Plant, and I don't pretend to know it all. That's why there are skilled people working here, all the way down the line."

But it takes coordination to run things right, and that's what he does best. McCoy is also a bit modest. Along with good coordination he sprinkles in a good amount of diplomacy. "Some people want their air conditioning adjusted right NOW!)

--more--

first add McCoy

One thing is certain; although McCoy doesn't say why, the turnover in Physical Plant is down since he took the job. He says he cares about every person on the Physical Plant staff roster.

And McCoy's goals for Physical Plant...he wants to continue to improve service to all departments--from changing light bulbs to creating new walls, windows and offices.

"The administration has been very supportive of this department," says the new director, "and I feel the support should always be justified."

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