Benefits Open Enrollment Underway

Open enrollment for benefits runs October 25 through November 19, 2010, giving UGA employees four weeks to make benefit choices for 2011. Some of the changes for 2011 and special features of open enrollment are noted below.

- Medicare now requires Social Security numbers for covered dependents age 45 and older. If you are covering dependents age 45 and over, you must log in to HRconnection and add the SSNs for such dependents. Any dependent over the age of 45 will be dropped from the plan if no SSN has been collected during open enrollment.

- Even if you wish to make no changes in your coverage for 2011, all active employees must log in to HRconnection and confirm your desired benefits for next year.

- Due to healthcare reform, parents may provide health coverage for their children until age 26, regardless of the children’s student or marital status. Employees may enroll such children during open enrollment, with coverage effective January 1, 2011.

- The “seed” money for HSA PPO participants who have health savings accounts for 2011 will be a total of $375 for individual coverage and a total of $750 for more than individual coverage, paid in January and July installments.

- The Board of Regents has added a $50 per month surcharge for employees who use tobacco products. This surcharge can be removed when an individual becomes smoke free and indicates such in HRconnection (active employees) or submits the Tobacco Use Affidavit (retirees only).

- A special enrollment will be held this year for long term disability insurance, with no statement of health required.

- The University System dental plan is open for enrollment this year, even if you have declined coverage in the past.

All open enrollment details can be found on the UGA Human Resources Web site.
We’re Nearly Halfway There – Let’s Celebrate!

Supporters of UGA’s Campaign for Charities, mark your calendars for a fun-filled event featuring Coach Mark Richt, Uga VIII, the UGA cheerleaders and Hairy Dawg.

On Friday, November 5, as a way of saying “thank you” to all those who have made early gifts to the campaign, you’re invited to a midpoint rally on Reed Plaza from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m. The celebration will take place on the Sanford Drive side of Reed Plaza, just behind Memorial Hall, and will be held rain or shine.

Donors will enjoy light refreshments while meeting and greeting the special guests, including Uga VIII, newly collared at Homecoming. In addition, several agencies that are assisted by the contributions of our faculty and staff during the annual campaign will be on hand to discuss the vital work of their organizations in the local community.

The University of Georgia’s Campaign for Charities kicked off on October 7 with goals to reach $435,000 in contributions and to have 25 percent of the faculty and staff participating.

The campaign runs through December 17.

UGA Self-Audit Inspections Completed

The much anticipated EPA self-audit inspections of University facilities and operations were completed during the week of September 20 – 24, 2010.

A team of 16 auditors inspected approximately 160 buildings, 1,700 research and teaching laboratories, and numerous other facilities including art studios, athletic facilities, construction sites, greenhouses, dining halls, residence halls and Physical Plant operations.

“The self-audit went very well,” said Associate Vice President for Environmental Safety John McCollum. “The audit team had no findings of harm to human health or the environment to report in the audit closeout meeting, which is very positive and significant.”

McCollum says the overall success of the self-audit process was due to the hard work and preparation of the campus community. “The team was very complimentary of the regulatory awareness they encountered throughout campus as well as the helpful, courteous and cooperative reception extended to them by researchers, faculty, staff and students.”

Through an agreement with the EPA, the Board of Regents is conducting self-audits of all USG institutions. The Board of Regents will submit a report of the findings from the UGA self-audit to the EPA by April 2011.
UBI, Part II

The Controller’s Office will hold a second training session on Unrelated Business Income (UBI) in December.

The session, to be held on Wednesday, Dec. 8 from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. in Masters Hall at the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, is a follow-up to last year’s UBI training. It will focus on the types of activities deemed unrelated by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and lessons learned thus far during the University’s examination. A question and answer session will be held at the end of the training to allow attendees to ask specific questions about activities taking place in their units.

All division financial directors and departmental accountants are encouraged to attend.

Helpful Tips for UGAmart

The Procurement Office offers these helpful hints to make your UGAmart shopping experience faster and easier:

- Use the Comments tab to communicate information and add attachments after the purchase request has been submitted for processing. Be sure to select or add the end-user’s name to the comment so they will receive an email notification that the comment has been added.
- Urgent Priority purchase requests require an Emergency Purchase Justification Letter and a Requested Delivery date. Leave the Priority field as Normal and add only the Requested Delivery date if you have a desired delivery time but do not have a purchase that rises to the level of an emergency.
- Don’t forget that Urgent Priority automatically routes the purchase request to the Procurement Office for review. Not all purchase requests require Procurement review. Any request that totals less than $5,000 and contains only contract items automatically bypasses the Procurement office. Unnecessary use of the Urgent Priority field adds additional processing time to your request.
- Search for items to verify that they (or a substitute) are not on contract before using the Non-Catalog Item Form to submit your purchase request.
- Be sure to verify that the Ship To address is correct before submitting your request. Some end-users have set a default Ship To that allows for quick entering of purchase requests. However, sometimes the default Ship To should be changed based on the guidelines put forth by Central Receiving. See these guidelines for when to use Central Receiving and when items can be shipped direct.

Dependent Audit Results

The University System of Georgia has announced the results of its audit of dependents on the USG medical plan. The audit was conducted to ensure fairness and control health care costs.

Final results from the Board of Regents:

- 3,349 ineligible dependents removed from USG health plans
- $6,698,000 estimated cost avoidance (actual amount will vary depending on claims experience and impact of federal healthcare legislation)
- Claims paid on behalf of ineligible dependents to be collected back from providers by the insurance company

In the future, stricter controls will be implemented to strengthen assurance that only eligible dependents are maintained on the plans, including:

- New employees – must provide evidence (birth certificate, marriage certificate, etc.) for all dependents
- New dependents – must provide evidence to add dependents
- Ongoing verification – annual attestation of eligibility and periodic reviews/audits
Young Dawgs Program Receives National Innovation Award

Campus constituents have long known that the Young Dawgs program is a winner, and now human resources professionals around the country know, too.

In September, representatives from UGA’s HR division picked up a 2010 SunGard Higher Education Innovation Award from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR). The program is also featured prominently in the fall issue of CUPA-HR’s magazine, The Higher Education Workplace.

The Young Dawgs program, introduced in 2008 as a workforce readiness initiative, has placed more than 250 high school students in internships across the University. The program has evolved into a partnership with UGA faculty, primarily to foster interest in math, science and other professional career areas.

To qualify as a Young Dawg, students must have a 3.5 GPA and a serious interest in a particular field of study. If you know of a faculty member who would like to host a Young Dawg in the future, please contact Jim Geiser in HR at jgeiser@uga.edu or 706-542-7341.

Holiday Payroll Cut-offs

As is customary, the deadlines for processing payroll vouchers are earlier than normal in November and December in order to ensure that paychecks will be ready before the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The deadlines for payrolls falling during these time periods are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Type</th>
<th>Pay Date</th>
<th>Pay Period</th>
<th>Vouchers Due to Payroll</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>12/15/2010</td>
<td>12/1-12/15/2010</td>
<td>12/7/2010</td>
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<td>1/7/2011</td>
<td>12/16-12/29/2010</td>
<td>12/21/2010</td>
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With cooler temperatures comes the reminder (believe it or not!) that the end of 2010 is approaching.

This year, as has become standard practice, the Physical Plant will enact a plan to reduce energy usage over the holiday period. The plan will involve adjusting space temperatures substantially, reducing lighting levels, and asking occupants to turn off and unplug unneeded appliances and equipment.

If you have suggestions of ways to enhance this program further, please email energy@uga.edu.
UGA Honored for Customer Service

The University of Georgia has again won accolades for its outstanding customer service—this time the honors belong to the Bursar’s Office and University Police. Both units earned silver awards in the recent Chancellor’s Customer Service Awards program.

“I am continually impressed by the initiative and teamwork of our staff members who work to improve our processes and enhance the quality of service we provide to the campus community,” said Senior Vice President Tim Burgess, who serves as UGA’s customer service champion.

The Bursar’s Office was praised for being the first in the country to introduce Secure Vault Payment (SVP), a means by which students and parents make payments directly to UGA from their bank accounts with no personal banking information divulged and no fees charged. The cost to UGA is minimal, and the University is assured that adequate funds are available for payment.

The Police Department was lauded for its overall culture of customer service, known as “Help is on the Way.” Through all of its efforts to keep the campus safe and secure—be they educational or enforcement in nature—officers strive to provide courteous, helpful and responsive service that exceeds expectations.

For more details on UGA’s awards, see this press release.
Kronos Update

Progress continues on the Kronos MyTime project.

September 30, 2010 was the deadline for salaried employees to be paid through the MyTime system. Most UGA units met this deadline, and only two needed an extension due to the size and complexity of their organizations. The MyTime project team is actively working with these units.

The deadline for all UGA hourly employees to be paid through the MyTime system is Spring 2011. The specific date will be announced in the coming months.

Reminder: W-2s Are Now on the Self-Service Web Site

Last year more than 8,000 employees chose to obtain their W-2s in an electronic format and were able to get them about a week before printed W-2s were distributed. Electronic W-2s are not required, but there are multiple benefits of opting in to electronic distribution:

- receipt of your W-2 up to a week before the distribution of paper forms;
- less risk of your W-2 being lost or stolen, reducing your exposure to identity theft;
- a green alternative to printing thousands of W-2s, which helps to promote a culture of sustainability; and
- time and money savings to UGA because fewer W-2s will be printed, sorted and distributed.

To opt in to the electronic W-2 distribution feature, follow these four simple steps:

1. Log in to the Self-Service Web site.
2. Select the “My Paychecks & W-2s” link (left side of screen).
3. Answer your secret question.
4. Select the “My W-2s” link, located under the “My Paychecks” link, and follow instructions to opt in at the bottom of the “My W-2s” page.

“This is a great feature,” said Associate Controller Bob McGee. “However, in order to obtain your W-2 faster and create cost savings for the University, you must opt in so your future W-2s will not be printed. If you opted in for 2009 W-2s, you don’t have to do so again; one registration is enough.”

To check to see if you have already opted in, follow the instructions for opting in above. If you have opted in you will see this message: “Your current status is: Opted in on xx/xx/xxxx,” under the Electronic W-2 Distribution Information near the bottom of the page.

If you have any questions, please contact the Payroll Office at 542-3431 or payroll@uga.edu.

Independent Contractor or Employee?

Regulatory requirements imposed by outside entities constantly affect the way business is conducted at the University of Georgia. Recently Internal Revenue Service (IRS) auditors have placed a high priority on ensuring that employers correctly classify payments to individuals providing services.

These individuals may be classified as employees or as independent contractors for payment purposes, and the choice has significant tax implications. Individuals classified as employees are paid through payroll, and taxes are withheld from the payment. Individuals classified as independent contractors are paid by check request, and taxes are generally not withheld from the payment. The IRS has determined that its collection efforts are much more successful with individuals paid as employees than as independent contractors. (continued on page 7)
Independent Contractor or Employee? (continued from pg. 6)

The IRS audits employers to determine whether individuals have been classified in accordance with tax requirements. Employers are advised to review at least three aspects of an engagement with service providers:

- **Financial Control** - Are the business aspects of the worker’s job controlled by the payer? Who provides tools and supplies?
- **Behavioral Control** - Does the company control or have the right to control what the worker does and how the worker does his or her job?
- **Relationship** - Will the relationship continue, and is the work performed a key aspect of the business?

The University uses the **Independent Contractor or Employee Checklist** form when evaluating payments to individuals. This form is based on questions used by the IRS when evaluating whether it considers a person’s service to be performed as an employee or independent contractor. The form is included on the University’s administrative forms site and can be used to evaluate service purchases.

Physical Plant Represented in F&A Fellows Program

Two employees from the Physical Plant are now midway through their first rotations as participants in the 2010-11 Finance and Administration Fellows Program.

The F&A Fellows Program, now in its sixth year, is designed to identify employees with high potential for advancement and provide them with the unique opportunity to rotate through two different F&A divisions over a six-month period (spending three months in each one).

The 2010-11 Fellows and their placements are: Patrick Nolan, a carpenter with the University for nearly three years; and Esther Sherman, an architect in the engineering department who has been with UGA for 16 years. Nolan is spending the fall with Environmental Safety and will be placed in the Office of University Architects for Facilities Planning in the spring, while Sherman is working this fall in the Controller’s Office and will rotate to the Office of Real Estate and Space Management in the spring.

“This program has clearly been a great success for us,” said Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration Tim Burgess. “Over the last five years, we have developed a cadre of employees who have shown that they have the skills, abilities and commitment to advance in the organization. I am confident that Esther and Patrick will also make the most of this opportunity.”

During the six-month rotation, participants broaden their knowledge of the myriad functions of Finance and Administration; build their individual knowledge, skills and abilities; and forge connections for potential career growth and advancement. In addition, a few days are set aside for shadowing opportunities in other F&A and University-wide departments.
Insuring Your Volunteers

The University of Georgia is self-insured through the Department of Administrative Services Risk Management for liability insurance. This coverage extends to UGA volunteers who are part of a structured program that is organized, controlled and directed by a University of Georgia department for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the University.

“The liability coverage is for injuries and/or property damage a volunteer may cause others while acting in the course of their official volunteer duties,” said Administrative Services Division Assistant Director Kathy McCarty. “Liability coverage does not apply when a volunteer deviates from the course of their volunteer duties.”

Volunteers are not entitled to any employee benefits, and UGA does not provide a volunteer with accident or medical insurance. Therefore, UGA is not responsible for any accident or medical expense that is incurred by a volunteer. Additionally, volunteers are not covered by workers’ compensation laws in connection with their volunteer affiliation. If their volunteer duties require utilization of their personal vehicles, UGA does not provide comprehensive or collision insurance for their personal vehicle.

Departments wishing to utilize a volunteer for the purpose of carrying out the functions of their department must briefly describe what benefit the University derives from their volunteer program and complete a volunteer agreement form. The volunteer agreement will establish the guidelines and description of duties for the structured volunteer program. Click here to find out more about volunteers and other Risk Management programs.

HIRE Act Participation

On March 18, President Obama signed the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment (HIRE) Act. This Act creates a limited social security tax "holiday" for the employer share of social security tax on wages paid to a previously unemployed new hire. The social security tax “holiday” does not apply to the employee share of the tax, which still must be withheld and deposited by the employer. The aim of the Act is to free up funds for employers to hire individuals who have been out of work to fill new positions and further stimulate the recovering economy.

The HIRE Act provides relief from the employer share of social security tax on wages paid by a “qualified employer” to a “qualified individual” from March 19 through December 31, 2010. The University is a qualified employer, and most employees who begin employment with UGA between February 3, 2010 and January 1, 2011 and who have not been employed for more than 40 hours during the 60-day period ending on the day the individual begins work are “qualified employees.”

The Payroll Department has been working with Human Resources to identify qualified employees and ensure that the University takes advantage of the tax credit. Early indications are that the University will save a significant amount of money as a result of these efforts.
New Vendor Database Developed

Accounts Payable, Procurement and EITS have developed a vendor database in order to meet the needs of the UGAmart procure-to-pay system and to assist in compliance with new federal reporting requirements. The database also will provide much more detailed information that can be used to increase the accuracy of payments and further improve the business processes of the University.

Every vendor used by the University must provide information to be included in the database.

“The new system includes additional data not found in the old system,” said Assistant Procurement Officer Chad Cox, “and extra efforts are being made to ensure the accuracy of the data being put into the system. That’s why we couldn’t simply dump data from the old system into the new one.”

To begin populating the database, Controller’s Division staff contacted more than 1,000 vendors representing more than 85% of University spend to obtain completed Vendor Profile Forms (which include the information needed to process payments). After this initial effort, University departments have been asked to help in obtaining the forms from additional vendors that they wish to use.

“We need the departments’ help because there are thousands of vendors that are utilized only occasionally by the University,” explained Associate Controller Bob McGee. “When a vendor is needed by a purchasing department and it is not in UGAmart, the department is allowed to use the old purchasing system to initiate the purchase. However, we ask the department to request that the vendor access and prepare the Vendor Profile Form so that they will be added to the new system for future use. This effort has been very time-consuming for everyone concerned, but it has been successful.”

To date more than 3,500 vendors have been added to the new system, and that number is growing daily. Vendor Profile Forms are posted on the administrative forms site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY 2012 Budget Development Schedule - Tentative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>October – December:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- FY 2012 Mandatory Fee Schedule preparation and submission</td>
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<tr>
<td>- FY 2012 Professional Program Tuition Differential increase preparation and submission</td>
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<tr>
<td>- FY 2012 revenue projections preparation and submission</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>December:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Planning information provided to senior administration in preparation for budget conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Guidelines and instructions to deans and vice presidents</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January – March:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Budget conferences with deans and vice presidents for FY 2012 budget development</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>April – May:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Actual creation of the FY 2012 Original Budget through the budget development process</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>May:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Submission of final FY 2012 Original Budget to the Board of Regents for approval</td>
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Ethics Training Update

Human Resources has sent student workers (only individuals with student employee job class codes in HR personnel data as of October 7) an email requesting their completion of the USG Ethics Policy online course. A list of these students was also sent to each VP or dean’s office. The deadline for these students to comply is Friday, October 29, 2010. As of October 21, 44% of the 5,500+ student workers have completed the training.

During the first week of November, an email will be distributed to all benefit-eligible employees who were hired, changed status or otherwise were not captured in the first round of ethics training that ended in September. Only those employees on the targeted list will be required to complete the training.

A process is being created that will capture new hires, and more details on that process will follow. Any unit uncertain of who is required to complete the training can contact Training and Development at 706-542-7062 or training@uga.edu for assistance.

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Menus Go Green

The daily printed menu posted at the entrance of each dining commons summarizing the many offerings available that day is being replaced with a digital display.

In addition to reducing paper usage, the digital medium will allow for a more complete and timely listing of the menu being served. The programming of the displays also will include upcoming special event announcements, messages to encourage healthy dining choices and messages to encourage activities that assist sustainability efforts.

The change will be in place when meal plan services resume January 4, 2011.

Recycling Made Easy at UGA

(A message from Kevin Kirsche, director of UGA’s Office of Sustainability)

When we talk about sustainability, many people immediately think of recycling. While recycling is the last of the three R’s of waste management (Reduce, Reuse, . . .), it is a foundational step in the right direction.

The University of Georgia produces a lot of waste. In fact, over the course of one month UGA produces enough trash to line up a row of dumpsters, end to end, from the Arch to the Ramsey Center. We all use things that end up in the landfill. Many of those things are used only once and for a short period of time before they are “trashed.” There are alternatives, however, and the University and local community benefit when we reduce our waste and minimize the materials we put in the landfill.

In FY 2010, 43% of campus wastes were recycled, representing a 13% increase from 2009. In general, the trend is improving. Most people know UGA recycles all the standard items—like cardboard, bottles, cans and paper—but we also recycle many items you may not usually think of, such as used oil, tires, batteries, antifreeze, fluorescent light bulbs, CDs, electronics, landscape and food wastes, and construction debris. If you need another office paper or bottles and cans recycling bin (or perhaps the one you have needs to be emptied), simply email your requests to recycle@uga.edu. If you’re in a unique situation, such as purging no-longer-needed laboratory glass or shredding large amounts of paper, you can also email recycle@uga.edu and the Physical Plant will help find a reuse or recycling solution.

A benchmark of UGA’s 2020 Strategic Plan is to reduce the campus “footprint” and recycle 65% of the campus waste stream. This is achievable, but it will take concerted effort by many. Our goal is to help make it as easy (or easier) to recycle on campus than it is to throw something away.

Recently we launched a certified Sustainable UGA Office Program to help minimize consumption and waste in the office. If you’re planning an event, do your best to make it waste-free and don’t forget to request additional recycling bins. To help out, we’re developing a formalized Sustainable Events guide for campus to be released in the spring. A forthcoming certified Sustainable UGA Laboratory Program will provide tips and incentives to conserve resources in campus labs. In the meantime, continue to check out the “What You Can Do” section of the UGA Sustainability Web site for specific ways to conserve in each of these areas and more.

Thanks for your commitment to an increasingly Sustainable UGA. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rethink . . . and continue to send us your ideas!
PPD Invests in Its Future Leaders

The Physical Plant has initiated a “Basic Lead” training program this fall, designed to coach and mentor its next generation of leaders.

Employment projections show that 45% of the workforce are “boomers” (born in 1946 – 1964). The earliest boomers are turning age 65 this year, which means that over the next 18 years, PPD stands to lose a great deal of knowledge due to retirement.

“Basic Lead is designed to ‘strengthen the bench’ and prepare high potential contributors for the possibility of taking a position that includes leadership and management,” said PPD Senior HR Manager Reg Woods. “We are starting to feel the effect of baby boomers who are leaving the workforce. They are taking decades of knowledge and experience with them, and we need to counter that.”

Fifteen employees, nominated by their directors and managers as “high potentials,” have been selected for the program. Participants range from relatively new employees (with at least a year of experience) to veteran staff members. The cohort is taking seven courses with four subjects per course covering fundamental employment issues such as performance management, communication skills, handling conflict, legal aspects of supervision, substance abuse, discipline and team building.

“Much of the learning is done through role plays and scenarios depicting workplace challenges,” said Woods. “We’ve noticed that some of the more veteran employees are coaching and sharing their workplace experiences with their more novice counterparts. At the same time, the next generation offers new technology, communication and strategies. The class content retains the wisdom of our elders but also respects the innovation of our youth.”
Updates for Stegeman Coliseum

A major facelift is underway at Stegeman Coliseum, but this procedure is far more than cosmetic.

The focus of the project is to enhance fan amenities, including the creation of 10,000 s/f of expanded lobby space. This is being accomplished by fitting a curved curtain wall to the prominent overhangs on the northeast and southwest sides of the building. The glass curtain will enclose the space and provide guests with more room to congregate. The renovation also will provide fans with 30,000 s/f of renovated concourses, restrooms and concessions.

In addition, the project incorporates several fire safety upgrades, including a fire sprinkler system for the renovated areas. Once complete, the expansion will create a new aesthetic and personality for the coliseum while preserving the uniqueness of the original structure.

Built in 1964, Stegeman Coliseum offers seating for around 10,500 guests and is utilized by both the UGA basketball and gymnastics programs. It also hosts University classes, commencements, concerts and various other events. For more history of Stegeman Coliseum, check out this article from the Athens Banner-Herald.

Although this has been an extensive renovation project for the Office of the University Architects for Facilities Planning, the timeframe allowed for construction has been very narrow. Work could not begin until after spring graduation in May, and it is scheduled for completion in November.

UGA Installs Prototype Gray Water System in New Residence Hall

Increases in population, thermoelectric power generation and irrigation have resulted in increased demands for fresh water over the past several decades. Water resources are particularly under pressure in the Southeast, where the population has increased 2.5 fold and water consumption has risen 7.5 fold since 1950. Recently, diminishing water supplies have led to conservation efforts such as the University of Georgia’s "Every Drop Counts" program.

In conjunction with UGA’s conservation effort, an industrial gray water system is in use in the new UGA residence hall (noted as building 1516). Gray water systems capture used water from bathroom sinks and showers, treat it and recycle it for flushing toilets, resulting in dramatic savings in water usage. (Approximately 27% of all household water is used to flush toilets.) While residential gray water systems have been around for years, the system in building 1516 is the first industrial-scale gray water system to be employed in the Southeast. (continued on page 13)
UGA Installs Prototype Gray Water System in New Residence Hall (continued from page 12)

This prototype for industrial gray water systems of the future is being observed and studied by researchers from both UGA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). With their help, UGA is poised to lead industrial water conservation efforts for decades to come.

Click here to learn more and to review the “Georgia Gray Water Recycling Systems Guidelines.”

Holiday Crime Prevention Tips

With the arrival of the holiday season, many University employees will turn their thoughts to a much awaited vacation. We plan our trips, which items we will take and, of course, our visits with family and friends.

“Most of us simply do not give an enormous amount of thought to protecting our homes while we are away, but that’s when most burglaries occur,” explained Sergeant Peter Walls of the Crime Prevention Bureau.

The University of Georgia Police Department encourages all University employees to take measures to help reduce their risk of burglaries while traveling from home.

“Burglars typically look for telltale signs that the homeowner has left and will not return for a few days,” said Walls. “Some of the things they look for are lots of mail in the mailbox or newspapers which have accumulated on the front step.”

Other signs of a traveling homeowner are lights continuously left on, an unanswered telephone, or a message that tells the caller “we are out of town.” There are some simple precautions that homeowners can take prior to departure, such as:

- Arrange to have your mail and newspapers picked up daily.
- Turn down the ringer on your telephone.
- Use automatic timers to turn on lights, radio, etc.
- Make sure all doors and windows are locked.
- Ask a trusted friend or neighbor to watch over your property while you are away.
- Make sure all smoke and burglar alarms are functional and armed.
- Leave shades and blinds in a position that you would normally leave them.
- Avoid posting on social networking sites that you will be out of town.

By taking a few precautions, you can enjoy your holiday season and know that you have made it much more difficult for a potential burglar to identify your home as a vacant and easy target.
National Preparedness Month: Are You Ready?

It’s been a busy fall for the Office of Security and Emergency Preparedness (OSEP). In September, OSEP coordinated UGA’s National Preparedness Month activities and participated as a national coalition member for the sixth straight year. This year’s theme was “Are You Ready?,” a question proclaimed across campus in posters, banners, bus cards and table tent cards.

“National Preparedness Month provides us with the opportunity to inform the campus community about a question we should be asking ourselves year-round,” said OSEP Director Steve Harris. “Are we personally prepared to be ready in the event of an emergency?”

As part of the focus, OSEP hosted the UGA Emergency Information Fair on Tate Plaza, with safety equipment demonstrations, information booths and displays. The event featured a drawing for a home emergency kit. Based on the activity around the emergency vehicles, it was apparent that the vehicles and UGA bomb dog were popular attractions with students and staff.

In addition, a lecture, "Active Shooter: School Shootings to Terrorism," was held as part of the Academic-Professional Security Series. The series offers periodic programs in collaboration with the UGA Center for Trade and Security and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In October, members of the Campus Emergency Response Team (UGA CERT) participated in team building training at the UGA Rec Sports ropes course. Upcoming UGA CERT activities include participation in several training exercises, a first aid and CPR course, and National Weather Service Storm Spotter training. Click here for more information about UGA CERT and upcoming class opportunities.

OSEP encourages you to make an emergency kit and take steps throughout the year to be prepared. Visit the OSEP Web site for more information about campus and personal preparedness.