

Building and Grounds Expectations for Wesley Campus Facilities

Developed by Bill Pike Thursday, March 26, 2015

Maintaining the building and grounds of a facility never stops. When I think we have everything in reasonable shape at Trinity, something goes wrong. Consistency and adequate funding are critical in the process. Listed below are a few items that I have found to be important for our church.

Safety

Safety involves everything related to your building and property, it should be at the front of every decision made related to the people who use and in some case live in your facilities. Even though it might be painful (they might create some more work for you), I have found it to be a good practice to become familiar with the local police and fire departments. Every jurisdiction is different, but I have used our community police officer and our fire marshal as resources in a number of ways. Each has offered suggestions that have been good for managing our building and property. We schedule an annual inspection with the fire marshal.

Vision

Your eyes are critical for surveying your building and property. I work really hard to avoid “tired eyes.” By this I mean, my eyes can grow too accustomed to seeing the same building and grounds every day. It is helpful to use the eyes of staff and board members to periodically assess the interior and exterior of the property. Scheduling a time to meet and walk the building and grounds is a way to use individual and collective vision for the good of the cause.

Maintenance Contracts

In our building, just about anything related to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) makes me perspire, increases my heart palpitations, and sets my stomach on fire. I have never met an inexpensive HVAC repair, the part might be inexpensive, but the labor is insane. If you can build a HVAC maintenance contract into your budget, it can be helpful. Sometimes a HVAC disaster can be avoided with routine maintenance.

Energy

Attempting to keep everyone’s human thermostat comfortable in a building is impossible, but carefully monitoring run times, thermostat settings, and common sense can help to reduce costs related to heating and cooling. The same can be said for lighting. Aside from security lighting gently reminding people to turn off the lights can have an impact too. Energy audits from local power companies can be of benefit, and sometimes energy companies have programs with rebates related to HVAC and lighting. Dominion Power has an extensive rebate program related to lighting that is worth investigating.

Front Door/Back Door

The back entrance to your building is just as important as the front entrance. I once worked with a superintendent who never came in through the front entrance. He wanted to see the whole place, not just the attention given to the front entrance.

The Clean Bullet Theory

Barney Fife, the bungling deputy on the Andy Griffith Show, had to keep his bullet in his shirt pocket because of his fidgety trigger finger. But Barney kept that bullet spotless, clean, and it was admired by anyone who viewed it. Same goes for your facilities, keeping them clean and neat both on the interior and exterior makes a difference.

It's simple, it's in the details

Doesn't matter if you are prepping for a week long mission trip or the first week students are on campus following summer break, the small details of the planning and logistics can make a difference in maintaining the property. When is the last time that corner was vacuumed, what's behind the propped open door, when is the last time the windows were clean, where do you keep your first aid kits, are your exit lights working properly? This type of questioning could run for pages, but it's in the details.

Checklist

I have a friend who has his pilot's license. I've had the privilege of flying with him on several occasions. When I fly with him, I have learned a great deal, but there is always one constant: the preflight checklist. My friend thoroughly goes through each step of the checklist. Developing a checklist of items to monitor related to your property can be helpful if you are willing to use it as a tool for maintaining and improving. A checklist can force you to more effectively take notice of the needs.

Sweat Equity/Resources

Some of the best projects we have completed at our facility have come from sweat equity within our congregation. A "tired eyed" restroom was recently improved with wall paper stripped out, walls repainted, curtains replaced, and art work added. Three couples completed this makeover in less than a week. The church purchased the paint, and the couples took care of the rest.

Bowels of the building

I've never been a building that had adequate storage. But, storage capacity in a building can be improved by having the courage to implement the dump truck theory. If it's collecting dust, is more than ten years old, musty, creatures have been gnawing on it, then whatever it is needs to be thrown away or recycled. If it is too good to throw away have a yard sale or donate to Good Will, Salvation Army, or a local nonprofit like Habitat for Humanity that might have a Resale Store.

Three Bids/Contract Reviewed

If a major purchase needs to be made or you are looking for a company to maintain the HVAC equipment, it is a good idea to get three quotes/bids. Getting quotes from local reputable companies is a good way to help the local economy, plus you might develop a strong working relationship with a company that could help you with fundraising, etc. If possible, before committing to a contract try to have an attorney review it.