

TAP INTO UMS

March 2020



COVER STORY *p. 1*

ON THE SAFE SIDE *p. 7-8*

Ergonomics: At the Office & in the Field

UMS UPDATES *p. 2*

Announcements
March Calendar
Benefits Open Enrollment

NEWS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS *p. 8-10*

Featured Project
Staff Shout Out!
Employee Milestones

MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT *p. 3-6*

The Latest Community Activity
Wellness at Work
Tax Season Tips

A SPLASH OF FUN! *p. 11*

Q & A
Recipe Recommendation

Eleven years ago UMS hit the scene as a field installation company and since then has developed into a full-service, "one-stop-shop" firm. As many of you already know, we employ 225+ men and women across the country who provide the highest levels of customer service, manage operations and deliver fully integrated and innovative solutions to public utilities and city governments.

While there is no single model or formula that can be solely credited for the company's success, our executive leaders will assure you that UMS has been given more opportunities to manage and oversee complex technology projects because of our foundation - **our people**.



LEADERSHIP EXEMPLIFIED

BLAKE DAVIS INSTALLING A METER DURING A SITE VISIT IN COLORADO.

In other words, UMS has an unmatched ability to deliver excellence because our ever expanding departments and services work as a team. This month's newsletter cover features photos from the first quarterly Field Service team meeting held in Nashville, Tennessee. UMS HR Manager Christy Lee summed up the successful meeting, "The February 1st meeting was a super charged, jammed packed meeting that covered everything from HR compliance topics to Field Service job roles and responsibilities, and the teams focus on optimizing daily plans to balance resources and meet goals".

Ultimately, the focus of the meeting was on supporting the Field Service Manager's position through the PMO office, effectively optimizing core field work processes and monitoring the unending challenges the FSM faces. As the last mile of the customer experience, field service management is crucial to project success.

As we are entering the month of March, we want to thank every employee, especially our field team members, who make sacrifices be part of UMS.

"THE MAIN FOCUS OF THE FIELD SERVICES TEAM IS TO, OBVIOUSLY, GET METERS INSTALLED. I KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT IT'S HARD WORK. I ALSO KNOW THAT OUR EMPLOYEES BUST THEIR BUTTS FOR US AND AT THE END OF THE DAY, THEY ARE THE REASON EACH OF OUR CUSTOMERS ARE HAPPY WITH THE SERVICES UMS PROVIDES."

- BLAKE DAVIS, DIRECTOR OF FIELD OPERATIONS



Our Employee Referral Bonus Program has commenced!

Starting February 21st, eligible employees may collect a \$100 reward for referring a candidate once he/she has been employed by UMS for at least 6 weeks.

The policy must be signed/acknowledged by each employee, before a referral is submitted.

PLEASE NOTE:

- <http://jobs.umswater.com/referral>
 - All referrals must be submitted via the online form
- <http://jobs.umswater.com/>
 - All referred candidates must fill out an application to be considered
 - Be sure to frequently check the jobs site. It is updated regularly with available positions, across the country!

MARCH CALENDAR

HOW TO ENROLL IN BENEFITS



Benefits Open Enrollment BEGINS



National Employee Appreciation Day!



Daylight Saving Time #SpringForward



Saint Patrick's Day



Benefits Open Enrollment ENDS
World Water Day

> **Login** to the Paycom app. Within the Notification Center or from the Benefits section, click the current year's Benefits Enrollment.

> **Review** initial instructions and click "Start Enrollment". Then, enter your personal information and any dependents or beneficiaries.

> **Read** about each plan, choose your coverage, then elect either to enroll or decline.

Your selections will display and add up on the benefits summary tracker to the right dependents or beneficiaries.

A green check mark means you are enrolled, and the cost will be displayed in the column to the right.

A red X means you declined the plan. You can edit this by clicking on its name.

> **Upon completion**, you will arrive at the benefit plan selection review screen. If you need to make an adjustment, select the plan from the side bar. Otherwise, check finalize! To complete enrollment, click "Finalize", then "Sign and Submit".

Please contact HR for any assistance.

COMMUNITY

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SPOTLIGHT

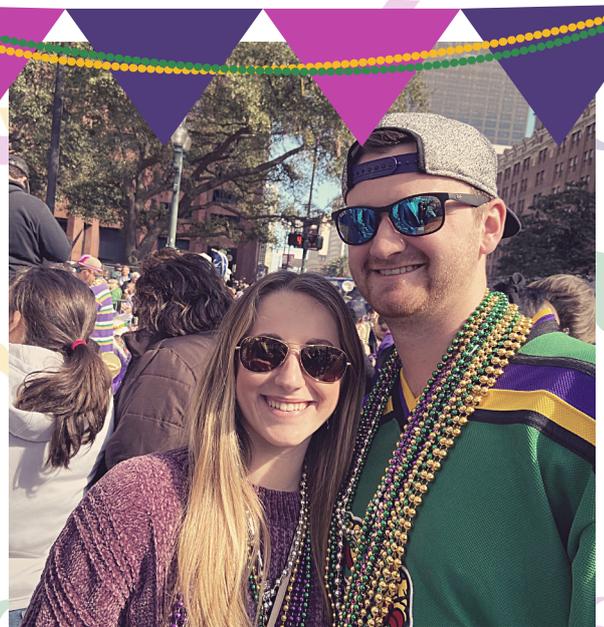


From left to right:
Lindsay Anzalone (Director of Finance & Admin)
Christy Glover (Senior Accountant)
Kim Fortinberry (Executive Administrator)
Sara Bardwell (Purchasing Manager)

The FeLions chapter at Southeastern Louisiana University (Hammond, LA) was established over 16 years ago to raise money for the Lion Athletics Association. This years Champagne Bingo fundraiser had 4 "roaring fun" guests in attendance!

Mardi Gras 2020!

Taylor Roberts (HR Generalist) & her fiance celebrating in New Orleans!



Lisa Mariakis (Staff Accountant), her husband, parents & 3 boys on Fat Tuesday!

The Anzalone boys enjoying the Krewe of Tucks Parade!



9 SIMPLE WAYS TO DEAL WITH STRESS AT WORK

According to research, the percentage of Americans who are stressed at work is high, and it's only getting higher. According to the CDC's National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, studies have found the number of Americans who are "extremely stressed at work" range between 29 percent to 40 percent.

Unfortunately, work stress has significant health consequences that range from the relatively benign—more colds and flu—to the more serious, like heart disease and metabolic syndrome. But, because stress at work is so common, finding a low-stress job may be difficult or impossible for many people. A more realistic choice would be to simply adopt more effective strategies to reduce stress at work. Here are some stress management techniques to try.

Start Your Day off Right

After scrambling to get the kids fed and off to school, dodging traffic and combating road rage, and gulping down coffee in lieu of something healthy, many people come in already stressed, and more reactive to stress at work. In fact, you may be surprised by how much more reactive to stress you are when you have a stressful morning. If you start off the day with good nutrition, proper planning, and a positive attitude, you may find the stress of the workplace rolling off your back more easily.



Stay Away From Conflict

Because interpersonal conflict takes a toll on your physical and emotional health, and because conflict among co-workers is so difficult to escape, it's a good idea to avoid conflict at work as much as possible. That means don't gossip, don't share too many of your personal opinions about religion and politics, and try to steer clear of colorful office humor. Try to avoid those people at work who don't work well with others. If conflict finds you anyway, learn how to deal with it appropriately.

Be Clear on Requirements

A factor that contributes to job burnout is unclear requirements. If you don't know exactly what's expected of you, or if the requirements keep changing with little notice, you may find yourself much more stressed than necessary. If you find yourself falling into the trap of never knowing if what you're doing is enough, it may help to have a talk with your supervisor and go over expectations, and strategies for meeting them. This can relieve stress for both of you!

Stay Organized

Even if you're a naturally disorganized person, planning ahead to stay organized can greatly decrease stress at work. Being organized with your time means less rushing in the morning to avoid being late and rushing to get out at the end of the day. Keeping yourself organized means avoiding the negative effects of clutter, and being more efficient with your work.



Be Comfortable

Another surprising stressor at work is physical discomfort. You may not notice the stress you experience when you're in an uncomfortable chair for a few minutes. But if you practically live in that chair when you're at work, you can have a sore back and be more reactive to stress because of it. Even small things like office noise can be distracting and cause low-grade frustration. Do what you can to ensure that you're working from a quiet, comfortable and soothing workspace.

TAP INTO UMSE

Walk at Lunch

Many people are feeling ill effects from leading a sedentary lifestyle. One way you can combat that, and manage stress at work at the same time, is to get some exercise during your lunch break and perhaps take short exercise breaks throughout the day. This can help you blow off steam, lift your mood, and get into better shape.



Listen to Music on the Drive Home

Listening to music brings many benefits and can offer an effective way to relieve stress after work. Combating the stress of a long day at work with your favorite music on the drive home can make you less stressed when you get home, and more prepared to interact with the people in your life.

Forget Multitasking

Multitasking was once heralded as a fantastic way to maximize one's time and get more done in a day. Then people started realizing that when they had a phone in their ear and were making calculations at the same time, their speed and accuracy (not to mention sanity) suffered. There is a certain kind of frazzled feeling that comes from splitting one's focus that doesn't work well for most people. Rather than multitasking, try a new strategy known as chunking.



Keep Perfectionism in Check

Being a high achiever can help you feel good about yourself and excel at work. Being a perfectionist, on the other hand, can drive you and the people around you little nuts. Especially in busy, fast-paced jobs, you may not be able to do everything perfectly. But striving to just do your best and then congratulating yourself on the effort is a good strategy. Your results will actually be better and you'll be much less stressed at work.

"One important way to recover from perfectionism is to begin focusing more on the process of reaching toward a goal, rather than just focusing on the goal itself."

Read How to Overcome Perfectionism here:

<https://www.verywellmind.com/overcoming-perfectionism-how-to-work-past-perfectionism-3144700>

5

TIPS TO STAY SAFE THIS TAX SEASON

The deadline for individual tax returns is approaching – **April 15th** is the deadline to file individual tax returns (Form 1040) for the year tax 2019 or to request an automatic extension (Form 4868). An extension provides an extra six months to file your return. Payment of the tax is still due by April 15th.

Anyhow, the deadline is sooner than later, and this is the time when scammers become very active. Criminals know that if you've waited that long to file your tax return you are probably under time-pressure right now, and prone to make impulsive decisions – they want to take advantage of your situation. Troublemakers are fully aware that when people are under time-pressure, regular taxpayers are susceptible to make irrational decisions and not be as careful as they are supposed to. This is why here at Panda Security we've decided to create a top five tips on how to stay safe during tax season.

#1 – Ignore the IRS scam calls

One of the most popular tax-scams are the calls we all get from people claiming to be from the IRS. They usually threaten you with a lawsuit or an arrest and require immediate payment. Keep in mind that IRS never calls you out of the blue and if they wanted to get you touch with you, they would have sent you multiple letters before they pick-up the phone to call you. If you are not expecting a call from the IRS, the person on the other side of the phone claiming to be an IRS officer is most likely a fraud. If you get such a call, it is important not to engage at all and resist the pressure to act quickly. Instead of panicking go ahead and report the contact to TIGTA at <http://www.treasury.gov/tigta>

#2 – Beware of phishing emails

Arguably the second most popular IRS related scam that flourishes every Aprils is the phishing campaigns executed by cybercriminals. As you know phishing scams are typically carried out through unsolicited email and websites that pose as legitimate sites and rely on luring unsuspecting victims to provide personal and financial information. If you have antivirus software installed on all your connected device those emails will not even reach you. However, you always have to be extra careful and not to open unsolicited emails. If a suspicious email makes it to your inbox, just delete it without opening it or clicking on any links in it. IRS also encourages everyone who receives such emails to forward them to phishing@irs.gov.

#3 – Be self-aware

We know that there isn't that much time until the individual tax return deadline, but this is not a good excuse to believe that you've somehow miraculously qualified for an immediate IRS tax relief. If it seems too good to be true, it probably isn't. If someone claiming to be from the IRS is on the phone demanding personal information such as your Social Security Number, just hang up. Avoid giving them information by just not letting them communicate with you anymore. Scammers do not deserve your time explaining why you are not feeling confident into sharing personal information with them – just stop talking to them, block the number and continue with your day. If you are concerned about IRS and that you might owe them something, you can call them directly on a contact number listed on <https://www.irs.gov/>

#4 – Keep your information secure

While personal information such as DOB, address, cell number and full name can easily be found online, your Social Security Number isn't readily available on online directory service providers such as White Pages. Avoid sharing your full SSN over the phone with anyone unless necessary and always keep all documents that have it, such as W2, safely locked in a secure place at home or on a connected device secured with antivirus software. Keeping an eye on your credit report is a good practice too. Making sure there are no irregularities on your credit report will mean that institutions that hold your sensitive information are doing an excellent job protecting it from cyber criminals.



#5 – Don't wait until the end

Filing your tax returns early guarantees you quicker tax refunds! Yes, you do not have to wait until the end of April to get your returns, you can do it as soon as mid-January and get an almost instant payback from the IRS. The longer you wait, the more prone you will be to be lured by a criminal. Bear in mind that filing your taxes early not only allows you to get the money you are owed but also gives you more time to pay any taxes you might owe. By knowing how much you owe to Uncle Sam, you will be able to create a better game plan, avoid penalties, and deal with your debt without the need to file for a tax extension. The chances of becoming a victim of identity theft also decrease significantly when you submit early. Over the last couple years, we've seen an unprecedented amount of major data leaks. The information of millions of Americans is probably still up for grabs on the dark web. Staying safe in this digital world could be tricky and making sure all your connected devices are secured with anti-virus software is a must. The only way to keep yours and your families' identities intact is to prevent them from getting stolen in a first place.

A GUIDE TO ERGONOMICS

Ergonomics is defined as: an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely. Simply put, the goal of ergonomics is to come up with solutions to make sure workers stay safe, comfortable, and productive.

Work can be a real pain in the neck sometimes - literally. Unfortunately, the tasks you perform every day can take a physical toll on your body if you're not careful. Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs) are the leading cause of disability for people in their working years. Ergonomics is the best preventative medicine.

Ergonomics applies to both computer-bound tenants/occupants & on-site team members employed by UMS. Specifically, when it comes to avoiding work-related injuries, YOU all are a vital source of information because you know your job the best.

This month, and moving forward, we challenge you to think of suggestions for how routine tasks, the work environment, equipment and tools can be changed to eliminate unhealthy body postures. Share these thoughts and/or tips with your team, during a safety meeting or office huddle! By sharing, you will help us create an overall awareness about neutral body postures and safe behavior on the job, whether in the field or at your desk.

AT THE OFFICE

Even though most of our office team members use the same tools (phones, keyboards, monitors, etc.), their work is very different. It's important to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all workstation. Just because one workstation/desk setup works for one person, does not mean that it is ideal for you! Taking it a step further, some scientists have suggested that the ergonomics of an environment - for example, the shape of a desk or a chair at work - influences posture **AND**... holds the potential to impact behavior (woah!).

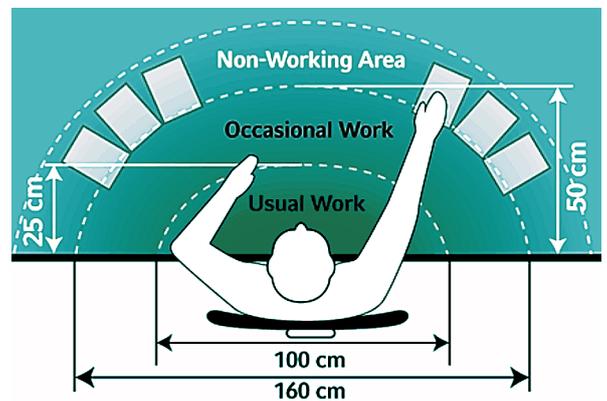


ON THE SAFE SIDE

HERE ARE 2 MAIN COMPONENTS WE SUGGEST EVALUATING, IN YOUR OWN WORKSPACE:

(1) REACH ZONES

It is easier to maintain a neutral posture because it takes less reach. Frequently used devices should be within comfortable reach. Keyboards & computer monitors should be located directly in front of your body. The mouse should be positioned next to the keyboard. Placement of the phone depends on how often it's used.



(2) CHANGING POSTURE PERIODICALLY

Did you know...sitting up straight and walking tall is good for your energy and mood? You should set yourself a reminder, every 2 hours, that cues a quick 2 to 5 minutes recess. It is a great opportunity to get up, move around, stretch and rest your eyes.

IN THE FIELD

Computer-bound workers experience discomfort and injury when postures are held for long periods of time and/or when the same body motions are repeated over and over. The same is true for individuals who don't sit behind a desk all day!

While there are many valuable ways to reduce injuries and increase productivity, this month we want to center your attention to using hand tools, because most of you spend a lot of time gripping tools or materials with one or both hands.

Continued on next page...



No matter how impressive a tool's design is, it's almost impossible for it to be universally ergonomic. After all, peoples' shapes and sizes vary greatly from one to the next, as do the types of jobs that hand tools are used for. In any case, no matter how user-friendly a tool is built to be, the most important deciding factor in what makes a tool ergonomic is, at the bottom line, **you**.

A tool can be considered ergonomic when it fits the task you do, fits your hand, allows a good grip, takes less effort, does not require you to work in awkward positions, does not dig into your fingers or hand, and is comfortable and effective.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS & GUIDELINES FOR SELECTING AN ERGONOMIC HAND TOOL

(1) THE HANDLE

You should choose a tool with handles that are free from sharp edges and seams that might irritate or cut the hands. The handles should be covered in a soft material, like foam or flexible plastic. Cushioned handles are not only comfortable for long hours of use, but they provide a much firmer grip and cut down on slippage. Hard-handled tools can be quickly and inexpensively converted by just adding a sleeve.

Large-handled tools allow fingers to wrap comfortably around the tool in a power grip, which prevents slippage and reduces stress and impact on hands, fingers and wrists. For tasks that require more force choose tools that range from 1 1/4" - 2". Smaller diameter handles make it easy to comfortably grip tools between the fingertips without overexerting fingers, knuckle joints, or hand muscles. For tasks that require precision, opt for single-handle tools whose grips fall within the 1/4" - 1/2" range.

(2) THE GRIP SPAN

The grip span of double-handled tools, such as pliers, snips, cable cutters and many more double handled tools can either make your job easier or cause you hand fatigue. To achieve the greatest comfort and efficiency while tackling tasks that require more force choose tools with a maximum "open" grip span of 3 inches, and a "closed" grip span no less than 2 inches across.

(3) WRIST POSITION

Pick a tool that keeps your wrist straight when you use it. A tool with a bent handle may work best if you are applying a horizontal force. A tool with a straight handle may work best if you are applying an upward or downward force.

(4) MORE HAND TOOL SUPPORT

Kneeling creepers provide support, reduce stress on the knees and lower back, allow you to move around more easily and quickly and may even have an area where your tools can be conveniently placed. Working overhead with hand tools may reduce your ability to do the job safely and productively. For example, you are at risk of many types of injury if your vision is obstructed, if you have an unstable footing, or if you have trouble holding or positioning a tool.

FEATURED PROJECT

GONZALES, LA

Gonzales turned to meter-reading vendor companies after one of the city's 2 meter readers retired several years ago. But another problem remained: outdated water meters.

"The city was not properly billing, because a lot of the meters were so old, they were less accurate," City Engineer Jackie Baumann said. "Especially on commercial accounts, we were losing revenue." The city had attempted to replace water meters on a piecemeal basis, but with its small staff that proved to be unworkable, Baumann said.

Gonzales learned about Utility Metering Solutions and paid for a pilot project to replace 500 of the city's water meters, over 2 years ago. The city then made the decision to pay for 5,000 new meters through the netAmp program with UMS, and began installing the meters in March of 2019 and finished in October.

Jackie Baumann recently gave kudos to Nick Sampey, Field Services Manager, who managed the meter installation & construction services portion of this project. She shared with us how quickly Nick earned the respect & admiration of everyone in the Gonzales Utility Office. Calvin Brown, Systems Integration Manager, has also been a huge help to the Gonzales Utility and it's citizens. Jackie specifically recalls a time that Calvin was at the grocery store, after leaving the Office for the day, and dropped everything to provide system and shared data support.

Calvin and Nick, without your thoughtful planning, oversight and personalized services an undertaking like this project would be nearly impossible. What a fabulous job you 2 have done and continue to do, on behalf of UMS! Thank you for helping us establish a long term relationship with the City of Gonzales!

Nico has been a part of the UMS Meter Installation team since February 2019 and has been installing under the direction of Rick Soper (FSM) in the Michigan area for the past 2 months.

Recently, our client services team received an email praising Nico for going above and beyond in Northville, MI. See below:

I wanted to thank the installer I had today who came out in the snow to replace my water meter in Northville. I believe he deserves accolades from his supervisor and the City of Northville for a job well done! His name is Nico Deramo. He arrived promptly, was very professional, personable and explained the whole entire process to me. He is a young kid and honestly, these days, I don't see young kids who care very much about a job well done. He is definitely an exception. You've got a good employee on your hands! Please let him know somehow that his efforts are appreciated.



NICOLO DERAMO

DEPARTMENT: FIELD SERVICES

POSITION: TRAVELING METER TECH



TRAVIS HAUCK

DEPARTMENT: FIELD SERVICES

POSITION: FERNDALE METER TECH

Weeks later, another Michigan occupant called to express how happy she was with the services provided by the Meter Tech at her residence in Ferndale. She stated that Randy Hauck was very professional, polite, courteous and prompt.

She said that it's not often that you run across well trained young people these days and that Randy is a fine example for the rest of the UMS team.

Randy began working with UMS less than a month ago. We want to thank Randy and the Michigan team for spending the time to make sure UMS is represented in such a professional way. Best wishes for your continued success!

MICHIGAN

EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

3/1
- Ammar Haji

3/2
- Ronald Reace
- Rhyne Timberlake

3/5
- Gregory Grissett
- Devionne Simmons

3/8
- Margaret Bolar
- Troy Parenteau

3/11
- Thomas Ray

3/13
- Marcus McCormick

3/15
- Zachary Lemay

3/16
- Brett Pruett
- Constance Klag

3/17
- Tyler Wagner

3/18
- Rick Soper
- Lorenzo Lueras

3/22
- Dennis Harvey

3/24
- Joey Mitchell
- Franklin Corrales

3/25
- Julie Peterson
- Patrick Bentley

Happy work anniversary!

1 Year

Patrick Bentley
Margaret Bolar
Zachary Davis
Clint Goodwin
Drew Knauf
Edgar Mendoza
Julie Peterson
Caleb Smelcer
Rhyne Timberlake
Russell Wilson

2 Years

Zach Mosier

3 Years

Jeremy Gilcrease
Nick Sampey

4 Years

David Napier

5 Years

Sara Bardwell
Ryan Cumiskey
Rhonda Crocker

TONY HOWELL



2018, Louder Than Life (2-day outdoor concert)
Ozzy Osbourne, Rob Zombie & Godsmack

WHAT WAS THE BEST CONCERT YOU EVER ATTENDED?

SLADE STILLEY



2001, New Orleans
Willie Nelson & Kid Rock

LARRY MERRIMAN



The Eagles

EMERIL LAGASSE'S CRAWFISH ETOUFFEE



WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

INSTRUCTIONS:

½ CUP BUTTER	2 BAY LEAVES
2 CUPS ONIONS CHOPPED	1 TBSP OF FLOUR
1 CUP CELERY CHOPPED	1 CUP WATER
½ CUP BELL PEPPER CHOPPED	1 TSP OF SALT
1 LB CRAWFISH TAILS PEELED	1 TSP CAYENNE
	1 TBSP PARSLEY
	3 TBSP GREEN ONIONS CHOPPED

- In large skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the onions, celery, and bell peppers and saute until soft and golden, 10 to 12 minutes.
- Add in the crawfish and bay leaves.
- Reduce the heat to medium. Stirring occasionally, cook until the crawfish begin throwing off a little liquid, 10 to 12 minutes.
- Dissolve the flour in water. Add to the crawfish mixture and season with salt and cayenne. Stir until the mixture thickens, about 4 minutes.
- Add parsley and green onions and cook an additional 2 minutes.
- Remove the bay leaves and serve with rice