



MARCH/APRIL 2012

## Housekeeping Services welcomes new director

Facilities Services is pleased to announce that **Darius Dixon** has been named director of Housekeeping Services. He officially came on board on April 23, and has hit the ground running leading the University's largest department.

Dixon is a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill, and returns to the Carolina community with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the housekeeping profession. He most recently served as deputy assistant director of housekeeping at North Carolina State University. This experience working in a campus environment, in addition to his firsthand knowledge of the Carolina campus, makes him uniquely qualified to lead UNC's Housekeeping Services department. In addition to his service at NC State, he has held a number of leadership positions in corporations that provide housekeeping services for private industry and governmental organizations.



**DIXON**

Dixon's education, experience and leadership are welcome additions to the Facilities team.

Facilities Services also extends a sincere thank you to Lea Holt, who has served as interim director of Housekeeping Services over the past year. Her service in this capacity came at a time when Housekeeping had been going through a significant transition with a great deal of attention focused on the department.

Dixon's office is located in the Cheek-Clark Building. He can be reached at 919-962-1440 or [darius.dixon \[at\] facilities.unc.edu](mailto:darius.dixon@facilities.unc.edu).

## Tipton named Recycler of Year

The Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling's (OWRR) **BJ Tipton** was named Recycler of the Year during the 2012 Carolina Recycling Association's annual conference in March.

This prestigious award honors an individual in the recycling field who has made significant contributions to the advancement of integrated solid waste reduction during the past year.

Tipton's achievements and the amazing strides that have taken place at the University related to recycling over the years make it hard to imagine a more deserving recipient of this recognition.

Tipton has served as the University's Solid Waste Pro-

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## Rone honored with Massey Award

Congratulations to Housekeeping's **Teretha Diane Rone**, who has been named a 2012 C. Knox Massey



**RONE**

Award winner! The award – which recognizes employees' "unusual, meritorious or superior contributions" – is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon University faculty and staff. The chancellor selects recipients each year based on nominations from the campus community.

Rone is the only daytime housekeeper for the School of Government building. She

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**BJ Tipton holds her Recycler of the Year trophy, surrounded by OWRR staff**

gram Manager for more than 13 years. She oversees OWRR’s extensive solid waste management program, and during her tenure has started the food waste recovery program, athletics recycling program, expanded the construction and demolition program, expanded indoor recycling, and developed a comprehensive rate structure for campus customers. This past year, the University reached a 41.5% recycling rate, up from 11.9% in 1990. Before joining UNC-Chapel Hill, she spent six years as UNC-Charlotte’s first recycling coordinator.

The Carolina Recycling Association is a nonprofit organization that is made up of approximately 200 member organizations from multi-national corporations, small businesses, local government, state government agencies, and individuals across North and South Carolina who are committed to waste reduction and recycling efforts. For more information on the association, visit their website at [www.cra-recycle.org](http://www.cra-recycle.org).

Log on to OWRR’s site frequently at <http://owrr.facilities.unc.edu> for the latest on the University’s recycling initiatives, programs and accomplishments.

**DID YOU KNOW**

**The University has:**

- 78 outdoor recycling sites collecting bottles, cans, newspapers, magazines & mixed paper from residence halls
- 60 walkway sites collecting bottles, cans, newspapers & magazines
- 248 buildings with indoor recycling bins on multiple floors collecting office paper, bottles, cans, newspapers, magazines & mixed paper
- 200+ trash dumpsters
- 130+ cardboard dumpsters
- 5 vertical compactors
- 17 horizontal self-contained compactors

helps keep clean the four-story building that houses 150 staff and faculty, and can have more than 500 visitors each week (who are always greeted with a smile and a hello from Rone).

Chancellor Thorp will host a dinner for this year’s six recipients on April 28. In addition, each honoree receives an award citation along with a cash award.

Facilities Services is proud to have this deserving Massey Award winner among its ranks. Rone’s attention to detail, professionalism and willingness to always lend a hand are examples for all from Facilities Services – and the University – to follow.

**A Walking Tour of Trees**



**UNC Forest Manager Tom Bythell speaks to a group of students, faculty, staff and citizens during *The Noble Grove: A Walking Tour of Trees* on March 23. The tour, led by Bythell and UNC Landscape Architect Jill Coleman, was part of the series of “Priceless Gem Tours” hosted by the UNC Visitors’ Center.**



Since the University’s founding, the beauty of the campus landscapes and trees has been appreciated, and the importance of maintaining this appearance has been a priority. In 1805, the Board of Trustees first proposed hiring someone to “trim the trees in the grove... in a proper and judicious manner.” Many of those same trees still stand today.

A stop on the tour included once such tree – a holly tree in McCorkle Place, which is “quite possibly” the oldest tree on campus.

# Grounds' crew leader completes cross-country bicycle expedition

The Chapel-Hill/Carrboro region has always been a very bicycle-friendly community. That's apparent from the number of bikes on the roads on weekends, and many individuals bike to work during the week. Among them is Don Acrey, a crew leader from the Grounds Services Department, who often makes the three mile ride from his house to campus.

And sometimes his bike rides are a little bit longer than three miles. Like this past July, when he rode more than 4,000 miles to Seattle.

An avid cyclist for more than 30 years, the 63-year-old Acrey decided to take the ultimate excursion for any cyclist – a solo cross-country trip. Knowing he was leaving his north section of campus in his crew's able hands, Acrey took a three-month leave of absence from work and headed west, peddling out of Winston-Salem on July 6.

Acrey's goal was to average approximately 60 miles each day on his Surly Long Haul Trucker, a bicycle made specifically for long trips and the extra weight from sleeping gear and cooking equipment. Important pieces of equipment that he kept close at all times were his camera and smart phone with GPS and internet access so he could get directions and access maps if necessary. Acrey's bicycle weighed approximately 80 pounds – 15 of which was water to stay hydrated. It proved to be a very reliable mode of transportation – he only had to change one tire in Idaho.

Even with all the water he carried with him, Acrey would still run out and have to – sometimes almost desperately – find more. He also lived on Gatorade and power bars, and a typical meal consisted of tuna fish, pork and beans, canned peaches and York Peppermint Patties, which was both easily portable and provided fuel for the next stretch of the journey.

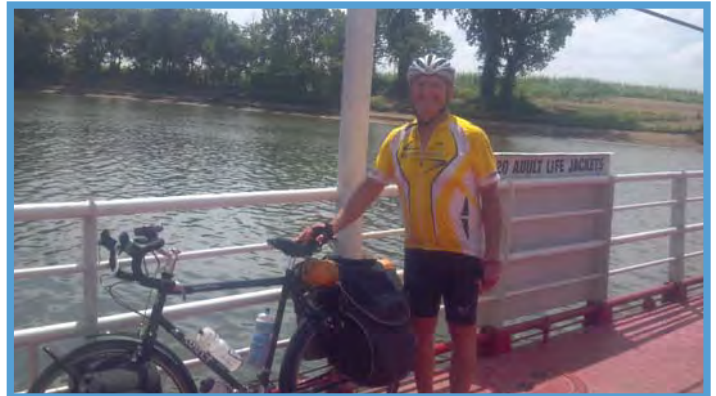
The cross-country expedition was on Acrey's "bucket list" – it was something he'd just always wanted to do – and it also turned out to be a living geography and history lesson. It provided the opportunity to literally see the United States from coast to coast – from coal mining country, to Native American lands, and everything in between. Many stops were in parts of the country Acrey had only heard about but never had the chance to visit, such as Yellowstone National Park.

While he preferred cheap hotels, Acrey slept in a variety of different settings – campgrounds, hostels and sometimes, just "the middle of nowhere." One of the most unique places was in Colorado, where a man constructed what was basically a tool shed with a bunk and rented it to cyclists for \$10 a night.

Hills are typically the hardest part for anyone when riding a bicycle, so imagine peddling through the Appalachian Mountains, the Ozarks, the Grand Tetons and the Rockies all on the same trip. According to Acrey, the Appalachians have the distinction of being the most physically challenging mountains to climb.

There are many potential hazards when making a solo trip across the United States – one of which is being alone in unfamiliar places with unfamiliar people. But Acrey did not have one single negative encounter with anyone. In fact, according to Acrey, the experience actually restored his faith in humanity, as the people he encountered were friendly, supportive, willing to help and even prayed for his safety. They would allow him to pitch his tent behind their stores or behind churches, and employees at restaurants would often give him free drinks. "They just feel so sorry for you when they see you," Acrey laughed.

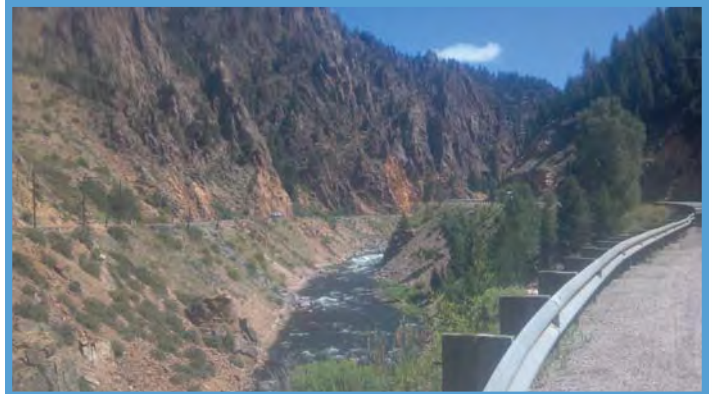
In one of the most "extreme acts of kindness," Acrey had stopped at a barber shop in the small town of Ash Grove, Mo. to rest in the air conditioning after peddling through the Ozarks on a 108° day. The barber wanted to hear all



**A short ferry ride allowed Acrey a moment to rest during his more than 4,000 mile expedition.**

about his experiences on the road, and when Acrey asked if he knew of a place where he could pitch his tent for the night, he called his wife, the local clerk of court, who gave him the key to a house located on a city park. Acrey had the luxury of spending the night in the air conditioning of the scenic 'home place.'

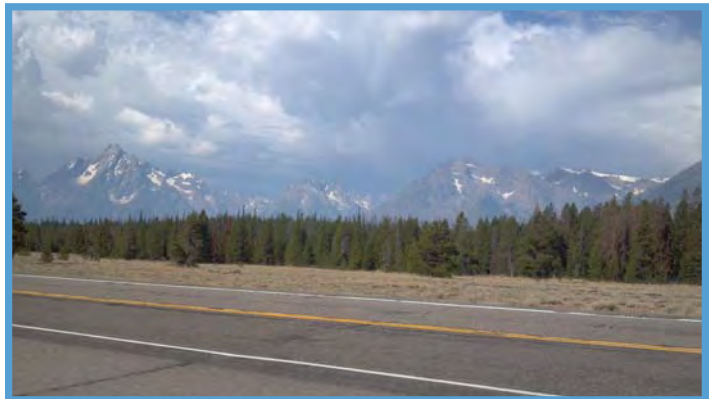
While people all across the country were supportive and cheered him on, bears were a bigger concern for Acrey. He actually encountered a black bear fairly early in his journey in Virginia, as he rounded a bend on a winding road. Fortunately for Acrey, the bear – who was standing in the middle of the road – was equally startled to see Acrey speeding toward him and quickly ran off. It was enough to leave Acrey very shaken, so he remained alert at all times, especially around the Yellowstone area.



Acrey's journey began in the middle of summer – it was 95° when he left Winston-Salem – and it was not uncommon to be riding in temperatures exceeding 110°. And at the other extreme, the temperature at night in some areas would be around freezing. In an attempt to beat the heat during the day, Acrey's days would typically start at 4 a.m., where he would ride during the early morning hours with a light. Getting such an early start allowed him to get his miles in by roughly 1 p.m. It also meant fewer cars on the road, which was particularly beneficial when riding on narrow, winding roads.



But no matter what time he started or finished for the day, riding a bicycle meant he was always exposed to the elements. Along with the extreme temperatures, he experienced thunderstorms, high winds and other severe weather, and one leg of the journey was near massive wildfires, making it difficult to breathe.



**Most bicycle rides that begin in North Carolina don't allow the cyclist to see the landscapes that Acrey got to experience during his ride.**

A cross-country expedition by bicycle is obviously physically challenging, but the magnitude of what he was attempting and what awaited each day was also taxing psychologically. According to Acrey, the first week was the most difficult mentally. And there were actually many times throughout that he was tempted to give up. He'd plan on making it to his next stop where he would call it quits, but once he made it there, it would give him just enough inspiration to keep going. And once he made it to the Rockies, there was no turning back.

In a little less than three months, Acrey arrived in Seattle, completing his roughly 4,000 mile cross-country adventure – where he got pulled over by Seattle police officers for riding on a six lane stretch of freeway where cycling isn't allowed.

Fortunately, the officers were sympathetic and greatly impressed with what he had accomplished. They even posed for a picture, and seemed excited about being a part of his once in a lifetime experience.

Except it might not be a once in a lifetime experience.

He'd like to do it again someday.