

Field Services

National Public Works Week 2016—Always There

May 20, 2016



Field Services Facts

\$200,000	approximate cost of a log loader truck
250	temperature of asphalt as it's laid
25	streets crew members
4	downtown crew members
3	streets supervisors
1	downtown supervisor

Catchall group works in myriad ways all over the city

It would take several pages to cover every responsibility of the Field Services Division in the Department of Public Works.

We're going to present vignettes here, to set some of the scenes where you'll find these crews.

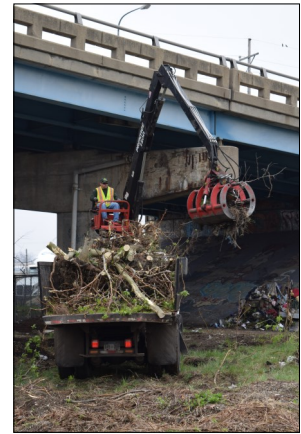
First, those interested in a career here should be mechanically-inclined and not afraid to get dirty. You don't need a college degree, but familiarity with large vehicles is a plus. You'll need a Class A Commercial Driver's License.

And off we go:

Stump Grinder

Jason Chapoton, Noah DeWyse and Joe Kline have spent much of this day clearing a previously wooded area in Bailey Park, between the Linear Park path and Capital Avenue NE. Path users couldn't see the road in that location, making for a rather isolated area.

This crew cleared most of the area, then brought in the stump grinder to remove some small stumps left behind. Noah operates the machine behind a door with a window, moving a huge grinding wheel up, down, left and right, in sort-of a scooping motion. This completely obliterates the stumps.



Log (trash, rock) loader

Chuck Orr has worked for the city 15 years and is the main operator of the log loader. It shows, if you ever get the chance to watch him; the claw almost looks like a bionic arm he's moving as smoothly as his own.

Chuck demonstrates by grabbing dirt, branches and rocks (well, boulders), gracefully lifting them into the truck. This day, he's working cleanup and clearing at a site under the Washington Avenue bridge.

The claw can grab topsoil, logs and trees, pulling the latter up by the roots when necessary. It's a beast, and custom-made, which is why it'll cost about \$200,000 to replace this 20-year-old machine.

Asphalt Laying

A crew of six seems like a lot to fill a rectangular, neatly-edged cut at the corner of a local intersection. Even though the space looks somewhat small, a dump truck carrying some of a total 4.5 tons of 250-degree asphalt has pulled up and started dumping.

The guys work quickly with their rake-like tools, called lutes. They push and pull the asphalt smooth, raising it just above the top of the cut. They'll roll over it afterward, and a couple more tons of asphalt will finish the job the next day.



Street Sweeper

The two, perhaps funny-looking sweepers occasionally stop by a fire hydrant to wash out and maintain this dirty operation longer; the sweepers might be the highest-maintenance piece of equipment we own.

The side broom, which runs along street curbs, is replaced every 10 days or so. The longer under-broom is replaced once a month.

This day, 27-year employee Mark Nicholls stops by a hydrant outside Willard Beach Park for a cleanup. He zips around the city with ease, making the streets look as good as possible.

Always There

Moving voting equipment to your precinct? Field Services.

Plowing snow? Field Services.

Using a backhoe to break through an unsafe building roof for the Fire Department? Field Services.

Removing road kill? Field Services.

Mowing grass in the parks? Field Services.

You get the idea. These guys are Always There for you.