

CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

Dobbins to serve first lunch Friday despite fire delay

CONNOR SATTELY
editor-in-chief

After facing a debilitating fire, a staggering cleanup job, and a tight schedule, the Dobbins Dining Hall has managed to complete construction in time to serve lunch to incoming freshmen.

The fire which all but destroyed the Gazebo at Dobbins on March 1 set back the renovation project of Dobbins, which was already on a tight schedule. However, through a type of construction "triage," workers and Penn State Behrend employees have restored the building enough to serve food to students.

Ken Miller, Director of Student Affairs, says that the fire set back the project in more ways than just the destruction.

"We lost a lot of time on a project which already had a very quick pace," he said. "You have to think about the process of figuring out what is salvageable from the building, then salvaging it, then the cleanup, the insurance, and then rebuilding the entire Gazebo."

"It's been an incredible coordinated effort that's led to the building's opening."

Much of the credit, says Miller, goes to Perry Construction Group Inc. and the Vice President of Operations for the company, Dennis Dolph.

"[Dolph] has been unbelievable moving the construction along," said Miller. "He's done a great job coordinating all of the subcontractors – electricians, plumbing, kitchen work – and getting them all to work in unison."

Dolph, however, was quick to shift the praise back to Behrend.

"It's been great working with the school," he said. "We couldn't have done it without their help and their staff here. The architect of the building has been right next to us to help us throughout the process too."

The workers worked 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week, said Dolph.

"It's a good group of people working here," he said. "They work smart, and they want to get the job done. They're so cooperative, and they know that they have to work together."

The largest problem for the 60-strong staff of workers, he said, has been one of materials.

Students were involved in the process as well, including a large contingent of student Housing work-

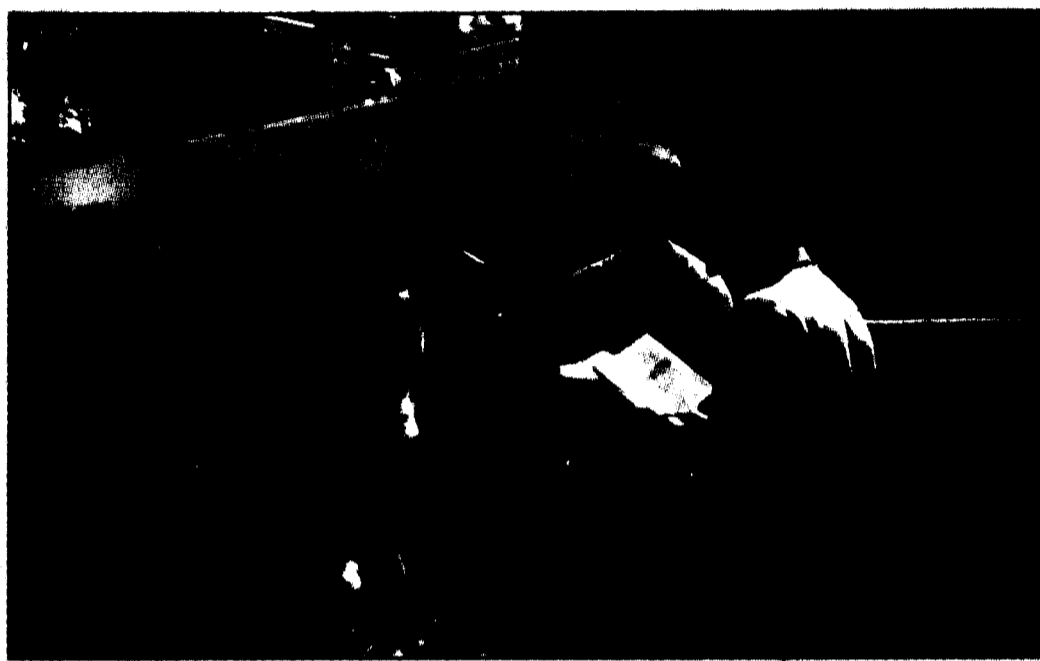
ers who were responsible for moving things into the building.

"It's not just building the structure," said Miller. "You've got to think about moving in all of the equipment, setting up the dishes, getting all of the kitchen equipment set up."

The building isn't 100 percent, says Miller, but students will be served a "normal lunch" on Friday. Some parts of the building, such as the inner level with conference rooms and a catering office, are not completed. The staircase going through the building will be closed for about the first month of the semester – Dolph expects to have it open in September. Until then, students will have to walk around the building to get in.

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"I REALLY WANTED TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT"



Alec Italiano / The Behrend Beacon

Orientation staff begin their training early so they are prepared to help freshmen with a smooth transition into college. Several days of events were held outside of the Reed Union Building.

Ambassadors for Behrend

BY ALEC ITALIANO
sports editor

Orientation leaders, known to most students as just the moving men and women, are actually trained specialists in the art of icebreaking, team building, and building a strong first image of Penn-State Behrend.

Seniors Erin Bliley and CJ Burns have been doing freshman orientation since their sophomore years and head all other activities orientation leaders do around campus as well. These responsibilities range from the convocation to alcohol presentations to even simple tasks such as directing lost and worried freshman to their destination on campus.

"I think it is a fun experience and really enjoy doing it," Bliley said. "CJ and I have been doing it for three years now and it really enhanced our leadership abilities."

For four days before freshman arrive, orienta-

tion leaders work on a variety of icebreaker scenarios and work on making a good first impression to parents and students arriving to Behrend for the first time.

Senior finance major Caleb Rodgers has been doing freshman orientation for three years. His motive? Simply the kindness of his heart and the traumatic experience he had while moving in four years ago.

"When I first came to Behrend, no one was really helping new students and I really wanted to make a positive impact," Rodgers said. "Making sure parents are comfortable with where their kids are going and that they have the best individual experience they can is what is most important."

By about mid-afternoon Sunday, orientation leaders' responsibilities ease and they integrate themselves back into the mainstream on campus, but for two long days they are ambassadors to our home.



ADMINISTRATION

Birx settles in to new role as PSB Chancellor

BY AMANDA STETZ
news editor

Chancellor Dr. Donald Birx spent the past month and a half adjusting to not only the administrative side of Behrend, but also the culture of the students and faculty.

However, he did this by living as a residential student in Ohio Hall for the summer.

While living on campus, Birx met with a few students who did research and took classes over the summer.

He observed the work of the researchers and got to know the students better.

When he was not in meetings or on campus, Birx took the time to explore Erie and became familiar with the different areas of Erie, such as Presque Isle and the downtown area.

"I want to keep Behrend the great place it is for the students."

- Donald Birx
Chancellor

While his time in the summer has been positive for Birx, he missed the vibrant life that comes from the students during the regular school year.

"I liked experiencing the city as well as the campus life," Birx said. "I just missed having all of the students here."

Before becoming chancellor of Behrend, Birx was vice chancellor and vice president for research for the large, urban University of Houston.

Prior to his work at Houston, he served as interim provost and vice president for research as well as a professor of physics at a more rural New Mexico State University.

With his experiences at two different universities, Birx feels that it has helped him understand the experiences of students and the diversity of Behrend.

"I was able to see two different perspectives," said Birx. "I can relate to both the commuter and residential students."

With the students moving in this week, Birx has moved out of Ohio Hall.

Birx planned to live on campus longer in Lawrence Hall, but he has since secured a house in Harborcreek and is expecting to move in this weekend.

"We were looking into moving me into Lawrence Hall," said Birx. "But the space was tight, and the housing needs to go to the students first, not me."

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CAMPUS CONSTRUCTION

Metzgar building completes "portal" to PSB

BY JENNA ABATE
staff writer

For decades, the first experience many students had at Penn State Behrend was climbing cramped staircases in a farmhouse and hitting their heads on its wooden beams.

The students of the future, though, will have the newest building on-campus to look forward to: the Robert and Sally K. Metzgar Admissions and Alumni Center.

The building, for which construction had been completed this summer, provides what college officials call a "portal" for students: the first thing they see when they arrive, and the first thing they see when they come back.

"We finally have the front door that matches the rest of the college," said Andrea Konkol, an Admissions Counselor who has a new office in the building. Konkol, who manages on-campus tours and meets with prospective students, says

that having them go to the Glenhill Farmhouse might have given visitors the wrong first impression.

The \$4.7 million construction project took roughly 18 months to complete, and has been in operation for several weeks, according to Randy Geering, Director of Operations for Penn State Behrend. Geering also mentions a unique part of the process was the involvement of architectural students from University Park, who worked on the designs and execution of the building, under the Metzgars' request.

Director of Admissions Mary-Ellen Madigan is happy about her new offices – at least, it means she can stop using bathtubs for storage.

"We had boxes of brochures in bathtubs, shelves in bathrooms, pamphlets on old inactive fireplaces," she said.

"It's really exciting because it gives us more opportunities," she said. "We have a presentation space, so we can do group presentations without having to find an open classroom or a conference room in Reed or something. The space is right here, and it's ready to use."

That space will prove even more valuable to students as the year goes on.

"For current students, it's huge to have the Registrar's Office, the Bursar's Office, and the Financial Aid Office in one building," Madigan said. "When students get

here and have to deal with paying their bills, instead of hopping between two buildings it's all in one place, which is going to be really nice for them."

For the Alumni Relations Office, the new office space represents new opportunities as well as a new view on-campus.

Kristin Comstock, Associate Director of Alumni Relations, says the Metzgar Center might help her office feel more "included."

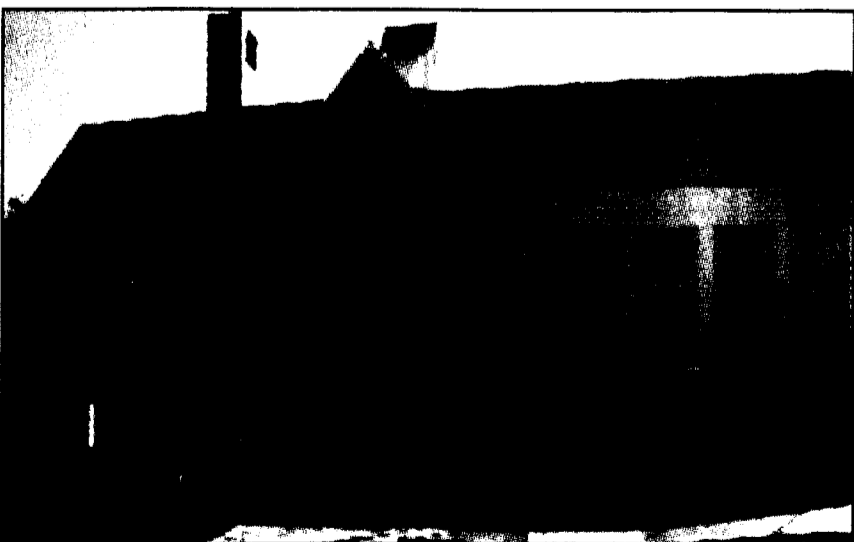
"I used to have my office at the Logan House," she said, referring to a building on the far side of the Behrend fields, roughly a 25 minute walk away from the center of campus, "and at times that made me feel a little removed from campus."

"Now, with my new office, foot traffic is actually encouraged, and we're seeing a lot more alumni on-campus."

That, in turn, will provide new opportunities for the Alumni Office's new buildingmates.

"Having the Alumni Office with us provides some great ideas," says Madigan, who has directed the Admissions Office since 1990. "To be able to work collaboratively, to be able to get alumni involved in recruitment activities, that's invaluable."

"It's a warm and welcoming place, and serves as a great front door for the campus."



Amanda Stetz / The Behrend Beacon

The completed Metzgar building allows Admission and Alumni to work together in a new space.

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