

Noise Pollution A Problem

University Park, PA.--How much would you be willing to pay for a little more peace and quiet?

For the past several years, a Pennsylvania State University economist has been trying to determine how homeowners in various locations would answer that question, in an attempt to put a price tag on noise pollution controls.

Now Dr. Jon P. Nelson, associate professor of economics, has written a book summarizing his own research and the work of other specialists in the field.

Entitled, "Economic Analysis of Transportation Noise Abatement," it is the first comprehensive economic study of U.S. noise pollution problems.

Among other things, Dr. Nelson points out that:

---Noise pollution is becoming increasingly offensive

to Americans. However, there is no evidence to date that everyday noise from highway or air traffic is a health hazard.

---Federal noise emissions standards will become increasingly stringent over the next several years. Eventually, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) may even regulate noise levels of such household appliances as blenders and kitchen fans.

---Using property values and other economic data, it is possible to assign a dollar value to the benefits derived from proposed noise controls in specific cases. For example, existing EPA standards specify that new medium and heavy trucks emit no more than 83 decibels now, and no more than 80 by Jan. 1, 1982. EPA is considering cutting the maximum to 75 or 78 decibels in 1985, but according to Dr. Nelson's figures, the benefits of

the additional cut probably wouldn't justify its expense.

---Decibel taxes, levied against companies whose trucks or planes exceed specified levels, might be more effective than government regulations and fixed standards in limiting noise pollution. Several other countries are currently experimenting with such taxes.

"The benefits are that a decibel tax would avoid treating polluters as criminals but would appeal directly to their self-interest. It would be a positive economic incentive to cut noise," Dr. Nelson says.

In the past, it has been difficult to design noise pollution controls because of a lack of hard economic data. Responses to surveys don't tell how much a community would be willing to pay--or what goods and services people would sacrifice--to bring noise from

highway and air traffic under control.

"If you live near an airport and someone comes to your door with a questionnaire, you'll probably say noise is a very serious problem. It doesn't cost anything to complain," Dr. Nelson says.

There's nothing wrong with that, he adds, except that it doesn't tell government standard-setters how far to go in restricting noise emissions in specific cases. There is almost always a point beyond which additional restrictions cost more than they are worth.

In 1976-77, Dr. Nelson was a member of the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on Appraisal of Societal Consequences of Transportation Noise Abatement. His book was released this month by Ballinger Publishing Co., a subsidiary of J.B. Lippincott.

Middletown-The Continuing Education Office of Penn State-Capitol Campus announces that "Two Sports Clinics: Power Volleyball and Soccer" are scheduled.

The purpose of the Power Volleyball Clinic is to assist young players between the ages of 12-19 to acquire greater skill and individual development in the sport through a series of work sessions.

The Soccer Clinic is designed to increase individual and team skill of players between the ages of 11 and 18. European style of play and team strategy are discussed as well as participating in scrimmages each day.

The Clinics take place on Mon., June 26 through Fri., June 30, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the gymnasium of the Multi-Purpose Building.

The fee is \$65 for each clinic, which includes cost of instruction, lunches, break drinks, and a souvenir tee shirt.

May Is High Blood Pressure Month

During High Blood Pressure Month hundreds of national and local organizations, civic and medical groups are involved in educating the general public, patients, and health professionals on the nature of the disease and its treatment. The main emphasis of this year's High Blood Pressure Month will be on convincing patients to take their pills as their physician advises. That's why, according to Ward, the slogan for May is, "High Blood Pressure . . . Treat It for Life."

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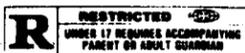
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