

Data Center Based at PSU

By Tom Boyle

How do you find out how the Federal Government is spending your tax money or what are the most popular names given to babies in the state? A recent edition of the Pennsylvania State Data Center News contained the answers to both questions.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center (PSDC), located in W301 of the Olmsted building, disseminated census data on all 50 states to both private and public interests.

Data from the 1980 census comes on computer tapes which creates a need for a center that allows the information to be accessible to the public. The center currently has about 800 tapes in all from the 1980 census.

The data center started in 1980 and is located in this area because of the proximity to the capital. The center has 30 affiliates statewide to provide better access to the public. "We receive about 150 calls a week," said Lisa Bontempo, manager of PSDC. The inquiries range from

the serious to the silly and are handled by the center's five member staff.

The data center, set up by the Federal Government and the Governor's Office of Budget and Administration, receives no state funding.

"We operate on a 100 percent cost recovery basis, we are more competitive than other data center," said Bontempo. Some private firms charge large fees while PSDC can provide a no-frills product at a much cheaper price. The data center bases its fees on the nature of the inquiry and the staff time needed to fill it.

"The percentage of inquiries from the private sector is growing," said Bontempo. "We are doing less government work than before."

The data center provides numerous services, but some of the most popular products are market, customer, and zip-code profiles. Another popular service is survey processing for professional and private organizations.

Renovations to TV Studio Completed

By Denise Reinas

This year, the television studio at Penn State, Harrisburg, was renovated and supplied with many new pieces of equipment. Years of planning and various sources of financing fulfilled the desire for a new television studio.

When Dr. William Mahar became the Humanities Department head, he began planning the renovation of the studio. His reasons were: he wanted to support the academic Multi-Media program; he wanted Penn State, Harrisburg to become

a telecommunications hub for Central Pennsylvania; and he made a commitment to media students that they would have equipment good enough to give them experience for the competitive job market. "It is a long-range plan to make Penn State, Harrisburg a regional communication center," said Mahar.

Approximately \$60,000 was spent on the studio. Financing came from various sources. The PA Department of Education instructional grant was for \$25,000; another \$10,000 came from Benjamin Franklin Advance Technology Center; \$12,000

came from the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and Eton Churchill; and \$5,000 was a matching grant from the Kline Foundation. The rest was provided by the Humanities Department, the Central Funds Administration, and the Alumni of Penn State, Harrisburg.

The studio room was rebuilt and rewired and a large amount of sophisticated equipment was bought and installed. Ten thousand dollars more is on the way to Penn State and additional funds are now being requested to provide even more necessary equipment.

Is This College?

I happened to be on the way to the library this Saturday via a pit stop at the vending center when a curious group of high school students followed a guide into the Lion's Den. What were they here for? They couldn't have been here to taste the food, for the concession stand stood silent behind its metal armor. They couldn't have been here to talk to the students, for the only students around were breathing heavy concentration and isolating themselves from the world by a fortress of books. They couldn't have been here to talk to the teachers to find out how this college thinks, for there were no teachers around. Why do you suppose they were here?

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