

Changes and renovations progress at PSH

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Capital Times Staff

There has been a considerable number of renovations and innovations to the Penn State Harrisburg surroundings over the summer months. James D. South, associate provost for administrative operations, outlined a few of the changes that have been made and others that are still in the works.

The first topic was that of the current status of the Eastgate Center. Final preparations are being made to begin fitment of classroom furnishings at the college's Eastgate Center in uptown Harrisburg. The opening of the center, located at 1010 N. Seventh St., had been delayed since late 1990 because several structural and safety modifications had to be completed.

Initial use of the Eastgate Center will be strongly geared toward accommodating special programs rather than toward traditional student needs.

"We anticipate that a lot of the use of this building will be as a service facility," South said, "providing contract programs for state government or business and industry, in addition to its regular program of resident instruction."

First classes are scheduled to meet Sept. 3. "We're moving some temporary furniture in there on Saturday [Aug. 25] and we'll begin moving staff as soon

as we receive a certificate of occupancy from the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry," South said. "An inspection of the fire alarm system is still needed.

"The necessary changes to the stair tower doors, the high-volume air-conditioning system and fresh-air system, and installation of a handicapped restroom have been completed," he said.

According to South, Penn State officials conducted an inspection of the facility on Aug. 12, and noted 38 discrepancies, many of which were minor cosmetic imperfections in need of repair by the building's developers. A follow-up inspection is required to determine whether those 38 items have been corrected.

"There will be a grand opening for Eastgate Center," South said. "That will probably be scheduled for January, 1992. We'll do that after the furniture is here and after we get some of the 'bugs' worked out of the building."

When asked about concerns for students' personal safety, South replied, "I don't see that the location is anything to be concerned about. When you look at the high-quality lighting that's around the Eastgate Center and the office building complexes situated nearby, it'll be a nice neighborhood." The building is situated only blocks from a neighborhood with a rather unsavory reputation.

"There's a lot of excitement about the location of the building because it offers a great deal of potential. About the time we start classes in early September, construction work will begin on the new Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency office building, which is going to be adjacent to our Eastgate Center on the north side. That will dramatically change the face of North Seventh Street," he said.

On-campus changes included a major upgrading of the PC computer lab located in W304 of the Olmsted Building. The old IBM PC AT machines in that lab were replaced with 35 Swan Technologies 386SX computers. The lab's network is scheduled to be connected to the University Park mainframe this week.

"We've installed a 'backbone' connection which provides for higher quality data communication with University Park, making local area networking more flexible," South said.

Another on-campus improvement was the completion of the classroom communication system. To aid in the educational process, Penn State Harrisburg has installed a communications capability into every common classroom on campus.

According to South, any classroom can receive signals such as data coming from the University Park mainframe

computer, video that might come from cable television, or closed-circuit video which might originate someplace on campus and then be shown to one or several classrooms at the same time.

"We worked very hard this summer to put the capability in," South said. "I don't know whether any of the faculty has begun to use it, but even if they haven't, it's just a matter of time.

"It adds a tool to the toolbag carried by the faculty member. It increases the kinds of things that a faculty member can plan to do in a given course, because it makes more information available much more easily.

"All the necessary equipment is now available to utilize the system. We've completed the connection to University Park on what is known as a T-1 link and we've installed a device which will make it possible for us to do compressed video, which is interactive audio and visual," he said.

In other business, Penn State Harrisburg's plan to purchase a large portion of the Fruehauf property is still on hold. According to South, there are some environmental issues that will have to be cleared up.

"There are some questions about environmental concerns on their property dating back to when it was still part of Olmsted Air Force Base," South said. "We would need to have an environmental guarantee on it.

"These concerns are not about the sections of the Fruehauf property we're looking at, but they have to get that straightened out before the purchase is going to go anyplace. There has been progress, but there's been no deal made. It's still in the works," he said.

The Student Apartment Building, located across from the CUB Building, is also being refitted. When completed it will have seven classrooms, four seminar rooms, an office complex for Continuing Education, two Continuing Education workshop spaces and two overnight guest apartments.

"We made a lot of progress on the renovation this summer," South said. "This week, they're installing the elevator. Drywall is up on the phase-one section of it, and we now have a target completion date of November 25th to move staff into the newly renovated areas.

"We've had a couple of small contractors, but our Maintenance Department is doing 95 percent of the renovation work," he said.

South added that when the building is completed, a new name will be sought for it - perhaps naming it for someone making a generous donation.

The campus auditorium is also scheduled for major renovation to begin this year. "We have worked with an architect and are just about to begin," South said. "We'll start doing the first phase this fall."

New air conditioning, sound system, and room and stage lighting are in the works. All of the windows will be removed and replaced with a wall featuring acoustical enhancing characteristics. A major extension and redesign will be made to the stage area, and even

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"Yeltsin did not compromise, and it was due to his act of defiance and calling for the support of the people that he succeeded."

Nechemias said that Yeltsin's decision to occupy the Parliament building was a decisive blow to the right-wing coup, making himself a "high price" to pay if the coup leaders wished to capture him. She said that one of the other problems the right-wing encountered was the lack of reliable troops, due partially because many of them were forced to fight against some of their own family members.

"There's no love for these people," [right-wing opposition] she said. "They would have had to act more decisively and with greater military clout to succeed. Something they just didn't have."



Carol Nechemias

Were there signs that a coup attempt was in the works before it happened?

Nechemias said the unstable economy had made many people skeptical this past winter and spring, and that Gorbachev's control might be in jeopardy. She recalled a woman she had interviewed before her most recent trip. When she asked her where she thought she would be in six months. According to Nechemias, the woman replied, "We don't know where we are going to be tomorrow."

But Nechemias said as early as last month and the first part of August when she was there, the so-called "reform-minded" people saw the country's situation improving and were feeling "upbeat about things."

"I think the people saw it as an outside chance that there would be a right-wing coup attack," Nechemias said. "It was the worst possible scenario with the best possible ending."

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