

PENNARAMA offers credits to 1.5 million Pa cable users

By AMY McCARTY
Collegian Staff Writer

It is now possible to turn on your television set, relax in the comforts of your own home, and earn college credits at the same time.

The world's largest interactive cable television network, PENNARAMA, went into service yesterday, and Executive Deputy Secretary of Education Michael Barco, vice president of the Pennsylvania Continuing Education Cable Television Service (PECS), Barco, told approximately 150 people that without the University's commitment to the program, PENNARAMA would not have been possible.

The service, which is a joint effort between the University and the PECS, is offered in State College and Bellefonte on cable Channel 12, alternating with a cable news service.

A total of 27 cable systems, serving more than 200 communities throughout the state, are involved with the network.

Through PENNARAMA, Pennsylvanians can take college credit

earn college credits and work toward degrees through television courses.

"Today our destiny is at hand while we celebrate the completion of the project," said Yolanda G. Barco, vice president of the Pennsylvania Continuing Education Cable Television Service (PECS).

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courses such as personal finance, introduction to humanities, business logistics and reading literature. They can also take credit-free courses and instructional series courses such as classical guitar, "Be A Better Shopper" and microwave cookery.

However, education is not the only improvement PENNARAMA has made in the state.

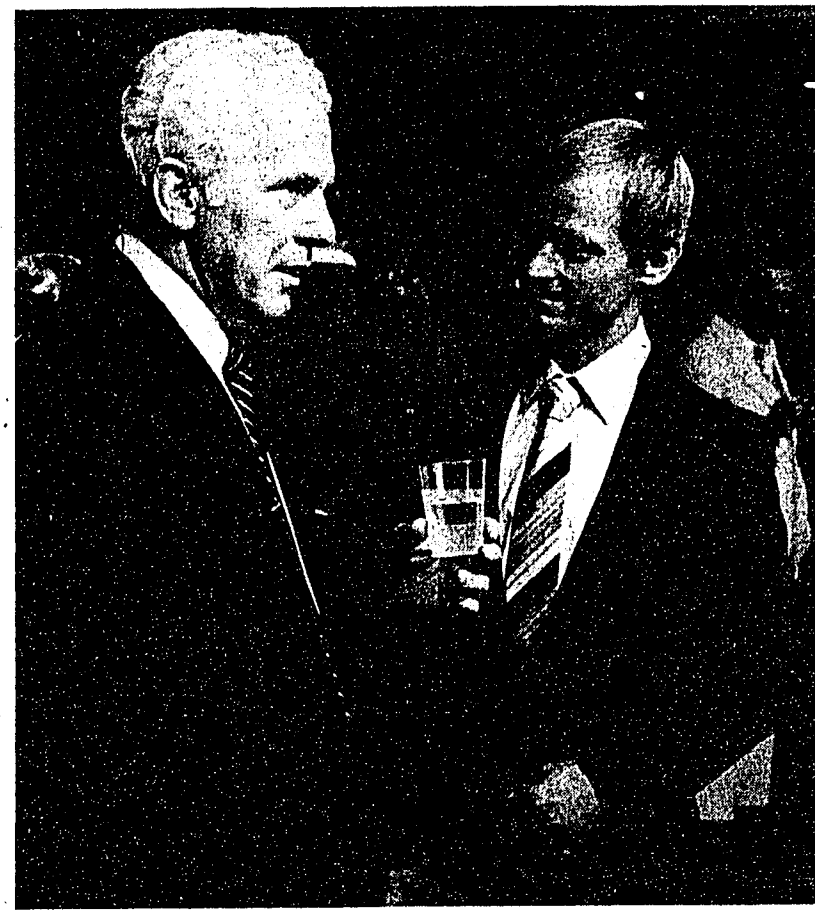
PENNARAMA will improve communications throughout the entire state, said Joseph S. Gans, vice president of operations of PECS.

"A doctor in a small hospital can look at an x-ray with a doctor in Pittsburgh," he said.

Thomas Wheeler, president of the National Cable Television Association based in Washington, D.C., agreed: "(PENNARAMA) is a break from the mindless sameness that we usually associate with cable television."

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Robert J. Scannell, vice president and dean for the Commonwealth Education System, and Joe Gans Jr., vice president of operations for the Pennsylvania Continuing Education Cable Television Service.

Photo by David Benson

Pre-program is established

By MARK KIRBY
Collegian Staff Writer

A pre-engineering program, designed to help freshmen whose predicted grade point averages are inadequate for the College of Engineering, has been implemented at the University's Commonwealth campus.

This program was developed to help those students who meet the 2.0 University minimum, but fall short of the 2.5 required in engineering, said Glenn Carter, associate dean of undergraduate admissions.

In the pre-program, students enroll in the same courses for their first two years of study as the students in the regular program do. During these first two years, each student's progress is carefully monitored by the Division of Undergraduate Studies, as well as the engineering department, said Harvey W. Wall, director of DUS.

"DUS will be available to provide professional consultation to students," Wall said. The advising will be "professional rather than administrative," he said.

Donald G. Dickason, dean of admissions, said that after the first two years, students who do not meet the criteria of the program will have to change to another field of study. Dickason said he stressed that each student's progress will be followed very closely so that

students are forewarned and know their options.

For this academic year, 175 students are enrolled in the program, Dickason said.

Carter said the pre-engineering program is beneficial because the student knows up-front that he is going to have to work to achieve the higher grade point average.

Another positive aspect of the program is that only one-half of the students accepted into the pre-engineering program decided to take advantage of it, Carter said. He said this was positive because it reduced the number of students in the already crowded engineering program and also eliminated the students who might have wasted a year before realizing they were in the wrong field.

The advantages of a student enrolling in the pre-engineering program, as opposed to someone who switches from DUS into engineering, Carter said, is that students are directly managed and advised by the college of engineering.

Rob Campbell, DUS adviser at the York campus, said advisers explained the program carefully to interested freshmen and will meet with the students for further counseling during the year.

As for the future of the pre-engineering program, Carter said the department is still evaluating the needs for next year.

SEDA-COG assists small businesses in bids for securing federal contracts

By HARRY R. WEISS
Collegian Staff Writer

No one said it was easy, but with the help of a Southeastern Development Association of the Centre Region Council of Governments representative, small businesses in the area are increasing their chances of securing federal government contracts.

Larry Barletta, SEDA-COG senior program analyst, said Tuesday that small businesses, long discouraged by endless application forms and slow government payments, had preferred to leave the federal market to big corporations.

But since Jan. 1, SEDA-COG has offered a program to help businesses cut their way through the complex area of government contract bidding, Barletta said.

"The government buys everything," he said, "so there are always companies eligible." He said that under congressional mandate, the

federal government must solicit a portion of needed goods and services from small businesses.

"It's just a matter of getting (the firms) through the procurement application. We step in and work with the company, holding their hand through the whole process."

According to SEDA-COG, approximately 12 firms in the 11-county region are using the program, but none in Centre County have applied.

Joan Chernega, secretary-treasurer of EMP Systems Inc., 121 Science Park Road, State College, said in an interview Wednesday that her firm is aware of the program, but has been directly contracting with the government for 16 years.

She said her company, which manufactures solid state microwave oscillators, is already familiar with the procurement process, but if needed in the future it would welcome any help from SEDA-COG.

Jim Powers, president of Polestar Plastics Inc., 3110 Research Drive,

State College, said Tuesday that although he would be interested in government business, his company would probably be excluded from the market because it does sub-contracted work.

Barletta pointed out, however, that firms such as Power's, which specializes in custom-injected moldings, can deal with the government by selling to prime contractors. These major government contractors are usually required to sub-contract part of their work to smaller firms, he said.

One firm taking advantage of this sub-contracting requirement in State College is State of the Art, 2470 Fox Hill Road, which credits government sub-contracting for more than one-third of its sales.

Donald W. Hamer, president of the firm that makes electronic components, said yesterday that his company has many existing military and satellite contracts with such corporations as Sperry-Rand, RCA and Hughes Aircraft.

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