

High speed rail:

Survey says 5 to 8 million riders by year 2000

By JANE KOPACKI
Collegian Staff Writer

The Pennsylvania High Speed Rail Commission's ridership survey results are in and reactions of confidence and international praise will allow the commission to continue its feasibility study, commission spokesman Dan Cupper said.

The survey's results, released in July, show that a projected 5 million to 8 million passengers will use the high speed rail system annually by the year 2000, Cupper said, in comparison with the current ridership figures of 1 million passengers a year for Amtrak.

The proposed rail system, which will run through State College and Amtrak trains, in the Philadelphia-Harrisburg-Pittsburgh corridor. Turnpike motorists were also among those surveyed. The survey received a 35 percent response, considered high by any survey standard, Cupper said.

"(Pennsylvania's) is the most extensive survey ever conducted in the country and has received praise from the world," said Richard A. Geist, Pennsylvania state representative and chairman of the inter-

tional High Speed Rail Association. The release of the second phase of the commission's three-phase study includes statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and the Commerce Department. Results of the objective origin-destination travel-habits survey are also included, Cupper said. He said the results indicate that the continued study of a high speed rail is justified. The commission has already begun work on the Phase 3 report.

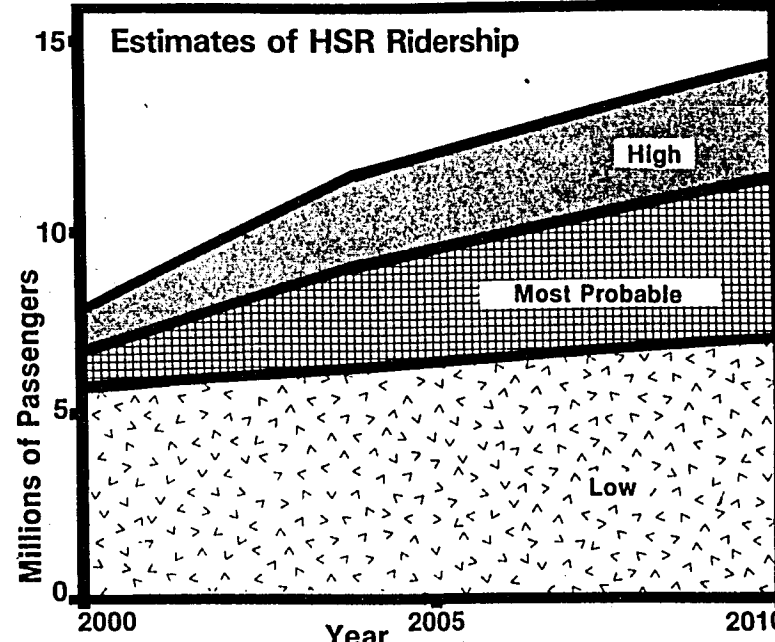
The third and final phase, to be released next year, will include studies on the financial, economic and legislative impact of a high-speed rail in the state, Cupper said. The study is important to the entire feasibility picture in that it will cost about \$10 billion, would allow passengers to travel from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh in two hours. That trip now takes more than seven hours.

"With the incredible response we received, the results are very valid and accurate," he said, adding that the numbers are fairly conservative.

"The study was geared to financial markets as well as the public eye," Geist, R-Altoona, said.

Cupper said the survey was necessary in projecting the feasibility of a rail system because the last significant transportation study in Pennsylvania was completed in 1968.

"We are attempting to interest investors, and investors need cur-



Three estimates of ridership on the proposed high speed rail line were calculated: a low estimate, a "most probable" scenario, and high estimate.

rent data to even consider such a project," Cupper said.

Cupper said the study, which included an objective survey and a subjective interview process, was conducted professionally and was not disguised as a public relations gimmick.

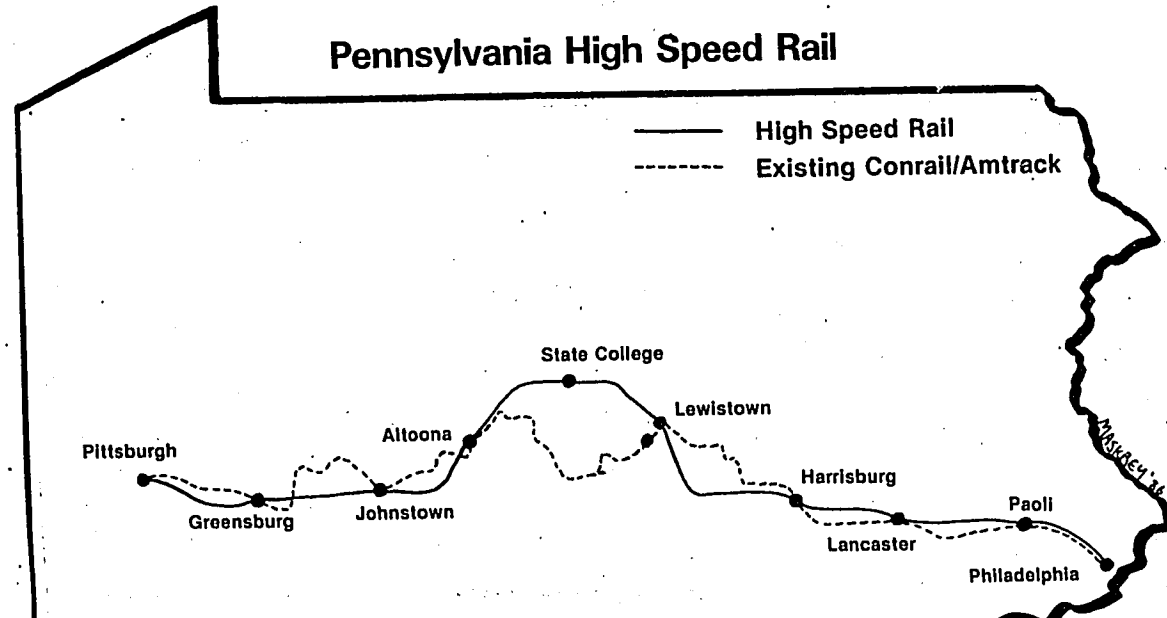
To participate in the interview, the traveler must have traveled at least 50 miles in the Philadelphia-

Harrisburg-Pittsburgh corridor during the preceding year, Cupper said.

A survey on the proposed high-speed rail conducted in Ohio boasted a high response also, said Paul H. Reistrup of R.L. Banks & Associates, Inc. in Washington, D.C. The vice president of the consulting firm added that Ohio's survey method was considerably different from Pennsylvania's. He said that in the Ohio method, state troopers pulled motorists over on the highways to distribute and collect surveys.

"Once the motorists realized they weren't getting a ticket for doing something wrong, of course they would be cooperative and respond positively to the survey," Reistrup said.

Cupper said the interview process was conducted in a "blinded fashion." Random volunteers for the interview process were screened carefully to insure they were not biased. The questions posed to travelers in both the survey and interview processes were questions about aspects of traveling that were most important to a frequent traveler. Among the subjects investigated in the study were socioeconomic conditions at the departure and destination sites of the traveler and attitudes on safety, reliability, security, comfort and convenience.



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WPSU strives to keep in tune with student tastes

By KIRSTEN LEE SWARTZ
Collegian Staff Writer

The brass sounds of jazz trumpet through the air room at WPSU, the University's 24-hour, student-run radio station in 304 Sparks. Folk, classic, and blues tapes and albums line the walls and frame the console of colored buttons.

Periodically, disc jockeys and coordinators buzz in and out of the room, eager to find when the meetings for their respective shows will begin.

And students who work at WPSU are attracted to the station's wide range of music, ranging from reggae to new music and jazz to oldies, which has set it apart from other local stations.

Matt Esserman, a disc jockey and the "new music" coordinator for the station, said he feels strongly about the types of music WPSU plays.

The bands that WPSU promotes are concerned more with "their soul and their integrity," Esserman (junior-business administration) said.

"I have a lot of respect for bands that don't really concentrate on writing about love and be-bop music; bands that don't go out and play where people want to hear, but bands that concentrate on getting an audience of their own using their own techniques," he said.

Disc jockey and folk-music coordinator Jerry Salem (graduate-chemistry) said the staff is not entirely made up of communications majors. He said he became involved because of his love for music.

"I wanted to turn on other people to music that I like," Salem said. "And I

thought the best way to do it would be to play it."

The radio station's staff consists of 180 people. For those interested in joining the staff, the station will announce a meeting next week. A background in radio is not required, although it cuts down training time, said Jeff Daley, assistant station manager.

"We provide music not already available in the community. We don't play Top 40. We play new progressive music."

—Jeff Daley, asst. station manager

"We try to weed out the people who just want to be a DJ," he added since there is more involved in a radio station than talking on the air.

"The station is set up as an alternative station," Daley (senior-chemistry) explained. "We provide music not already available in the community. We don't play Top 40. We play new progressive music."

WPSU's program content is controlled by the University, Daley said. The station recently added "All Things Considered," a nationally sponsored news and information

show, to its list of programs. Daley said the community had requested the show's addition for quite a while.

"NPR, National Public Radio, is a non-profit organization in Washington, D.C., that puts out programs for non-commercial radio stations," Daley said. "All Things Considered" is a program offered by NPR along with "Morning Edition," another national news and information program that will air this fall, weekday mornings from six to nine.

"The new auxiliary membership not only allows the station to carry NPR but to choose which NPR programs they will carry," Daley said. "The auxiliary status is for smaller public stations, like ourselves."

The University's School of Communications funds the national programs. "Through fundraising (done in October) we hope to fund the programs ourselves," Daley said. "The School of Communications has been very helpful to the station, Daley said.

"They're committed to making this (the station) a focal point of the School of Communications and making this one of the best college stations in the country," he said.

"(However), it's the students who run the stations. We make all the program decisions. We decide when the shows run and what the content of the shows will be," Daley said.

School of Communications Dean Brian Winston said, "I'm very new but it's clear that WPSU plays an extremely important role here and we can see it helping us in the education of students wanting to study radio."



Bill Gould (sophomore-Division of Undergraduate Studies) plays classical music on WPSU.

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