

Editor offers optimism

By Katrina Wehr
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Journalism still matters, but the way it's delivered is changing dramatically.

That was USA Today executive editor John Hillkirk's message in his presentation Monday night in the Kern Building.

Hillkirk has been with USA Today since its launch in 1982. His career at the national paper began as a reporter, and from there he became the managing editor of the "Money" section, and eventually the executive editor, a position he has held since May 2004.

As editor, Hillkirk has witnessed the recent shift away from print and towards digital news firsthand. While USA Today's print circulation is one of the highest at 1.9 million readers, the Web site sees around 2 million unique visitors per day, he said.

The newspaper's iPhone application, however, has 2.5 million downloads, and the version for Apple's new iPad was downloaded on 25 percent of devices

purchased so far — which only proves that news reporting is changing, Hillkirk said.

"We don't worry about how you're getting news," he said. "Just that we're there when you need it."

USA Today is also pushing its "E-edition" — a subscription to the paper in digital form, but with video, he said.

Hillkirk also discussed the importance of social networking sites like Twitter, and utilizing blogs.

These outlets allow news to travel quickly, a key factor to successful reporting.

"If it weren't for the business challenge, now would be a great time to be a journalist," Hillkirk said.

Nicole Morgan, a student listening to Hillkirk's presentation, said the statistics about the new media were surprising.

"Social media is all survival of

the fittest," Morgan (sophomore-public relations) said. "But it's amazing to hear how much success they're having with it."

As far as the job outlook for aspiring journalists, Hillkirk said the best bet is to start out small at local papers, no matter how unappealing school board and borough meetings may seem.

He also said there appears to be a need for Web designers and other information technologists.

These are positions that he has a hard time filling, he said.

"It's important to know how to use all the tools," Hillkirk said. "Reporters have to bring more to the story than just the text."

This outlook on the changing industry was good news to Amanda Sokolski.

She said hearing about the paper's success with the iPad and other new media was comforting.

"It made me a little less pessimistic," Sokolski (sophomore-communications) said.

"It's good to know there are options."

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Hillkirk



Bob Bird/Associated Press

West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin, at podium, asks for a moment of silence at a memorial service Monday to honor the 29 miners killed.

Mine blast probe awaits recovery

By Lawrence Messina
and Tim Huber

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Federal investigators arrived Monday at the West Virginia mine where 29 men died in an explosion last week to begin piecing together what caused the worst U.S. coal mining disaster since 1970.

Thirty miles to the north, hundreds of mourners including the governor observed a moment of silence at the state Capitol, during a wreath-laying ceremony at the foot of a statue honoring the state's miners.

Karen Barker was among scores of state workers who attended.

"My dad was a miner and my grandfather was a miner. I have no idea how these people feel about losing their family member, but I can imagine," said Barker, 46, of Charleston.

The team of inspectors at the Upper Big Branch mine weren't heading underground until searchers removed all the bodies from the mine.

The team from the Mine Safety and Health Administration briefed Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis and MSHA director Joe Main at the mine.

The last bodies were expected to be taken out Monday, state mine office spokeswoman Jama Jarrett said.

Recovery efforts had been stalled in previous days by volatile gases, but teams entered after the tunnels were ventilated.

She said the crews late Monday were near where the bodies are located.

The state panel that writes mining safety rules and typically reviews inspectors' reports after the investigations are complete said it would like to join the

investigators underground this time. Richmond, Va.-based Massey has been under scrutiny for a string of safety violations at the mine, though CEO Don Blankenship has defended the company's record and disputed accusations that he puts profits ahead of safety.

Authorities have said high methane levels may have played a role in the disaster.

Massey has been repeatedly cited and fined for problems with the system that vents methane and for allowing combustible dust to build up.

Hours after the blast, the company flew Gov. Joe Manchin back from a Florida vacation on one of its planes, Manchin said.

The governor's top lawyer told him the use of the company's plane was acceptable because it was an emergency and a flight on a state plane couldn't immediately be arranged.

New York state's comptroller and a pension fund adviser called for Blankenship's resignation immediately as chairman of Massey's board.

Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli, trustee of a retirement fund holding more than 300,000 shares of Massey stock worth \$14 million, said the company failed to adequately manage risks at the West Virginia mine where 29 died after an explosion.

A similar challenge came in a letter to Massey from William Patterson, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based CW Investment Group, which works with union pension funds.

Mourning continued exactly a week after the explosion, with the ceremony at the state Capitol and a moment of silence at 3:30 p.m. President Barack Obama ordered all U.S. flags in the state flown at half-staff until sunset Sunday.

FREEZE FRAME



Amanda August/Collegian

Members of the Greek community freeze in place in the HUB-Robeson Center on Monday afternoon for the event Greek Freeze, which raises awareness about cardiovascular disease. Raul Mendez (junior-crime, law and justice) said that they wanted to raise awareness about this disease because it kills more people than cancer each year and it is not often discussed.

Senate to vote on ticket law to prevent scalping

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The Pennsylvania Senate may vote today on legislation that would prohibit software allowing a single purchaser to buy tickets in bulk and then re-sell the tickets at a marked-up price.

Unless the legislation passes, Penn State students may find themselves paying more than they anticipated for tickets to concerts and other events, said Tor Michaels, chief of staff for Rep. Scott Conklin, D-Centre. The Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously passed the legislation last year, but the Senate has not acted until now.

Sen. Jake Corman, R-Centre, said he will lend his support to the proposal when it comes up for vote. It's one thing to buy a ticket and then resell it on a one-time basis, but it's another thing entirely to make a business out of reselling tickets, he said.

"We want to make sure that people who want tickets can buy tickets, not scalpers who want to make a profit," he said.

But those in the industry say that's not a problem at Penn State. Associate Athletic Director for

"We want to make sure that people who want tickets can buy tickets..."

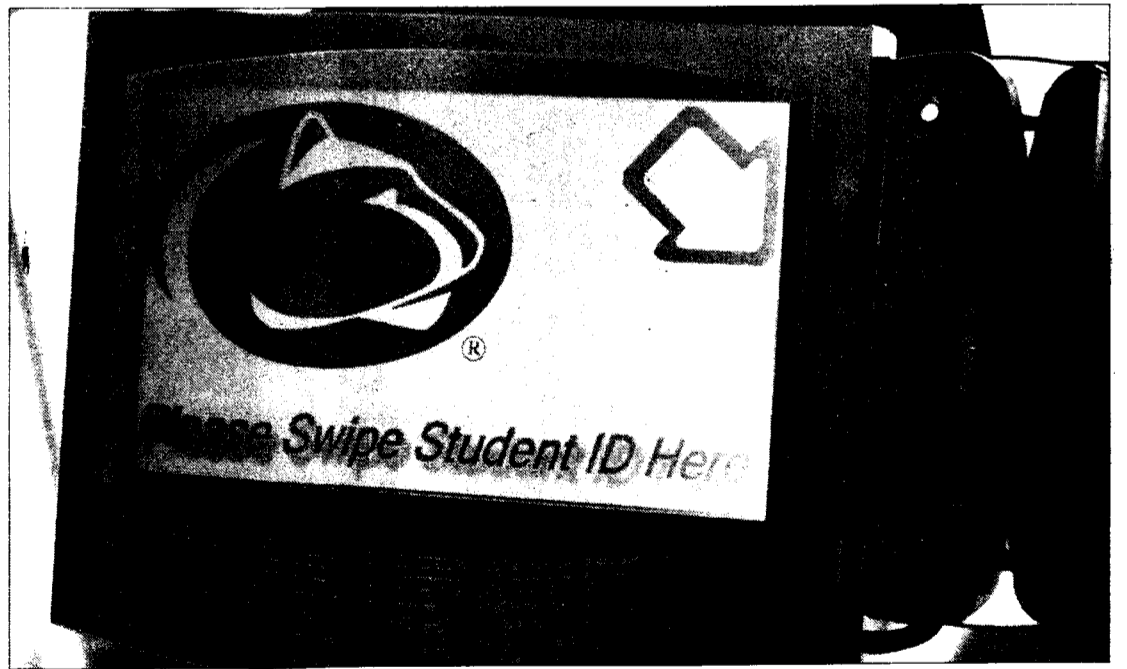
Sen. Jake Corman
R-Centre

Marketing and Communications Greg Myford said scalping for athletic events is rare in State College. Most tickets are purchased by season ticket holders and not on a game-by-game basis, leaving little room for scalpers.

"We don't have that occurring at all here for Penn State athletic events," he said.

And because the Bryce Jordan Center uses a paperless ticket system, ticket director Kevin Kozak said he does not have to worry about scalpers. While he does occasionally hear of scalpers at BJC events, the center does not see the volume the legislation is targeting.

Major one-time events like the Olympics and the World Series are more prone to scalpers, he said, and the bill would be more effective in preventing marked-up ticket prices for those events.



Abby Drey/Collegian

A paperless ticket system was introduced for last fall's football season to discourage ticket scalping. Pictured above is the student ID swipe station at Gate A at Beaver Stadium.

When introduced last year, the legislation was jokingly called the "Hannah Montana" bill because many parents were outraged they had to pay marked-up prices for

her concert tickets, Michaels said. "Could you just imagine if you waited all night at the Bryce Jordan Center for tickets only to get to the front window to find out

a vender bought all of the tickets and you now have to go to the middle man?" Michaels said.

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Institute to bring Chinese culture to Penn State

By Colleen Boyle
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

As the United States watches China grow into one of the world's superpowers, students at Penn State will soon be able to connect with the culture of the most populated nation in the world.

The Confucius Institute at Penn State, opening in the fall of 2010, will offer students the chance to enhance their knowledge of not only the Chinese language, but also the nation's history and culture.

The China-based Office of Chinese Languages Council International, also known as the Hanban, awarded a \$1 million grant to help support the institute at Penn State. Similar institutes have already opened at the University of Michigan, University of Minnesota and Columbia University.

Faculty members Denis Simon and Eric Hayot will direct the institute, as both have experience in the study of Chinese culture.

"We're thrilled," said Hayot. "It's going to help us grow. It's

going to give students and the community opportunities they didn't have before."

The Confucius Institute will also provide 10 student scholarships for those wishing to study the language in China. Many students said they agree working with the people of China is an important step for the United States — and one in which Penn State should be involved.

"China's right behind the United States," Maria Robles (freshman-sociology and international politics) said. "The more we

know China, the more we can better the U.S."

Penn State's Confucius Institute aims to advance the study of China's language, its culture and the importance of creativity. Working with a Chinese partner school, it'll also focus on outreach to the larger community and local schools.

"We will use Penn State as a hub to deepen and expand the availability of courses dealing with Chinese language and culture," Simon said.

The institute is not the first ini-

tiative on Penn State's campus to expand the understanding of Chinese culture.

The Penn State Forum on Contemporary China began in fall 2009, aided by Simon. The forum brings outside speakers and Penn State faculty to address the issues China is facing.

"The institute is but another positive step in the strengthening of intellectual resources here on campus for the study of Chinese affairs," he said.

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