

Turnpike prices to rise 10 percent

By Paul Osolnick
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Students traveling back to Penn State via the Pennsylvania Turnpike will face a more expensive trip next year, when toll prices are set to increase by as much as 10 percent.

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission approved a plan to increase tolls for E-ZPass users by 3 percent and those paying with cash by 10 percent starting Jan. 2, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission spokesman Carl DeFebo said.

DeFebo said two-thirds of passenger cars on the PA turnpike

use E-ZPass, the electronic toll system used in several states.

Hyder Alhassani said he uses E-ZPass to travel from his home in Philadelphia to State College on his trips during the year.

"It's much easier. You don't have to wait in line or anything like that," Alhassani (junior-industrial engineering) said. "It's really easy having an E-Zpass. There's no hassle or anything like that."

DeFebo said this is the first time drivers have an economic incentive to use E-ZPass on the turnpike.

Previously, DeFebo said it was just a matter of convenience.

DeFebo said passenger car

drivers can get an E-ZPass through AAA or online at paturnpike.com.

DeFebo said E-ZPass works through a debit system in which the driver deposits \$35 into a prepaid account.

Several drivers use the automatic replenishment option which automatically deposits another \$35 from the driver's account into the E-ZPass account when the prepaid account drops below \$10, DeFebo said.

The toll increases are in reaction to state law Act 44, which requires the turnpike commission to provide funding to the Pennsylvania Department of

Transportation for roads, bridges and transit, DeFebo said.

DeFebo said when Act 44 was originally passed in 2007, the turnpike commission expected to raise tolls annually by 3 percent, but the 2008 recession caused a decrease in commercial traffic on the turnpike which makes up about 50 percent of the revenue.

Pa. Turnpike tolls increase by 3 percent in January of this year and by 25 percent last January to meet the turnpikes requirements under Act 44.

DeFebo said starting next month, the turnpike commission will start making quarterly payments toward \$450 million annual

payments to the commonwealth for the next 47 years.

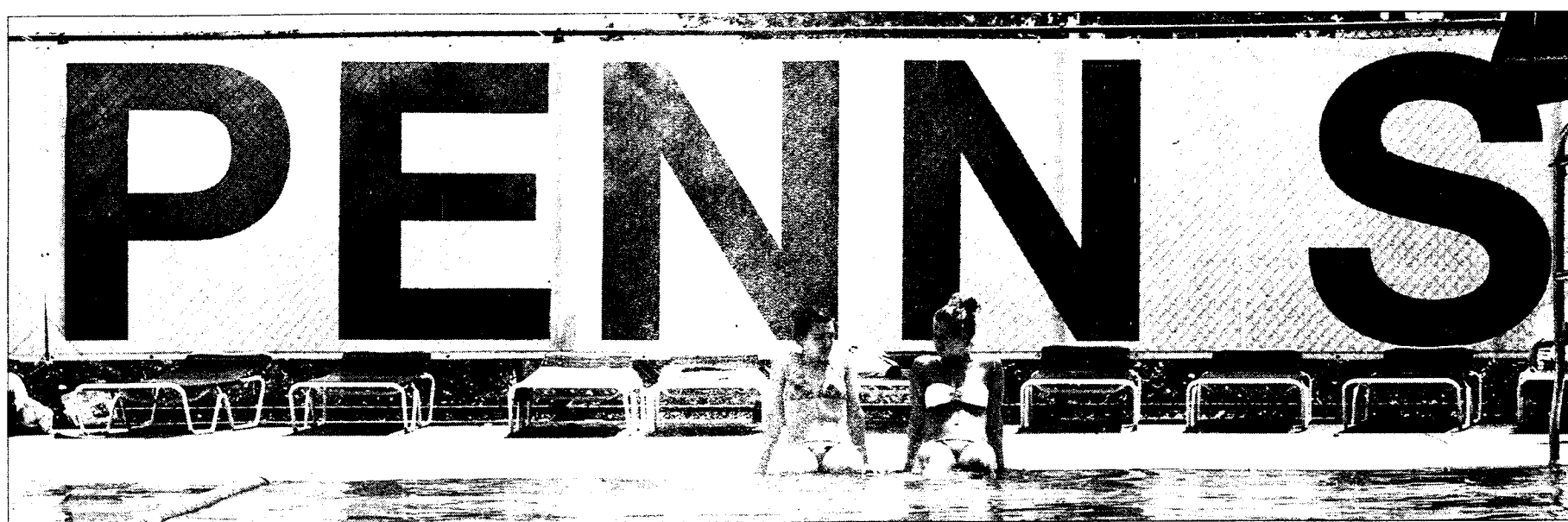
"We'll look at it every year and every year the commission will vote on and approve a toll increase that is necessary to meet this obligation and our other obligations," DeFebo said.

DeFebo said the turnpike has already transferred \$2.5 billion dollars to the commonwealth.

The increase in toll rates is estimated to bring an additional \$35 million in revenue for the turnpike, DeFebo said, an overall increase in revenue of about five percent.

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SOAK UP THE SUN



Steph Witt/Collegian

Susan Martens (sophomore-psychology) and Danielle Hover (senior-hotel, restaurant and institutional management) sit by the outdoor pool on Thursday afternoon.

HYPNOTIST TOM DELUCA

TOMORROW

SATURDAY
JULY 17
10 PM

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