

# Census could move online by 2020

By Karina Yücel  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Downtown officials and student leaders think that moving the U.S. census online would increase participation among college students. University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA) President Christian Ragland said moving the census online could be both a positive and a negative. "One of the things I loved about the census was that it was personal. [the Census Bureau] sent people into the communities and they got to know the environment,"

Ragland (senior-political science) said. But as a student, he thinks an online census could be more convenient. "It will be better for students. We pretty much live our lives on the Internet: ANGEL, Google, Webmail," Ragland said. "It would be easier for students to fill out." Some students agreed that the switch could be beneficial and gain more student support. "Absolutely," Jeffrey Holland (senior-health policy and administration) said. Holland said the Internet would

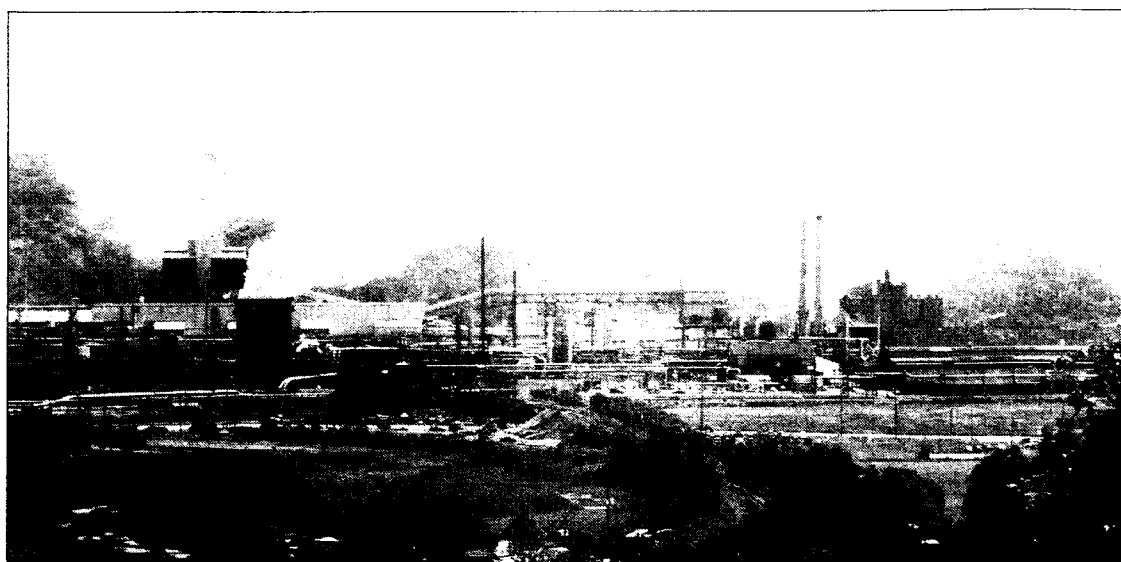
make filling out the census form both smoother and easier to complete. State College is 75 percent college students, and was struggling earlier this year to motivate that portion of the population to fill out the census forms, State College Mayor Elizabeth Goreham said. For each person who doesn't fill out a census form, the state will lose roughly \$1,000 per year for the next ten years, Census Bureau Media Specialist Pamela Golden said. Goreham said a lot of students may have been reluctant to fill out

"It will be better for students. We pretty much live our lives on the Internet: ANGEL, Google, Webmail."

Christian Ragland  
UPUA president

the form because they were either from out-of-state or might have been worried their landlords would out about overcrowding in downtown housing. Golden said she believes that to the student population, an online census would be very attractive. "Moving to the Internet in 2020

could help participation," she said. "Some people would be comfortable using the Internet, while others might not be. We would have to give out the forms multiple ways." The Census Bureau's best idea this year was its heavy advertising, Golden said, which included television commercials.



Keith Srakocic/Associated Press

Wednesday's explosion at Clairton has led officials to investigate the safety of other steel plants.

## Explosion leaves safety doubts

By Jennifer C. Yates  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PITTSBURGH — From the outside, a typical coke plant looks like something from a dystopian science-fiction movie: a maze of metal buildings, pipes, conveyor belts and tall smokestacks belching white puffs of smoke and steam into the air.

Inside, there's danger seen and unseen: ovens that heat coal to more than 3,000 degrees, massive steel doors for loading the ovens, moving cars and chutes for coal, and gases that can cause cancer or ignite.

Turning coal into coke, a raw material used in steelmaking, is a complicated and dangerous process, as evidenced by Wednesday's explosion that injured 20 people at the country's largest coke plant. But those familiar with the industry say it can be done safely.

"When people ask me, is this is safe place or is this a dangerous place? (I say) it's both," said Michael Wright, head of the health, safety and environment department for the United Steelworkers union. "Our philosophy is that anything can be done safely if you work at it, but clearly something went wrong here."

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration was investigating Wednesday's blast at U.S. Steel's Clairton Coke Works. A cause was not yet known.

The plant's largest battery, a structure containing dozens of coke ovens, was shut down after the blast. Company officials said it was operating at a reduced rate Thursday and expected it to be fully operational in a week. The rest of the plant was operating normally.

Fourteen employees and six contractors were injured in the blast. Nine remained hospitalized Thursday, including two in critical condition at West Penn Hospital and three in critical condition at UPMC Mercy.

About 1,500 people work at the plant, one of four operating coke plants in Pennsylvania and 20 in the U.S.

Clairton, a town outside Pittsburgh of about 7,800 residents and with a median income of about \$26,000, is perhaps best known as the setting for "The Deer Hunter," the 1978 Vietnam epic that won five Oscars.

It's not clear how many residents work at the plant, which dominates the city's landscape and has been owned by U.S. Steel for a century. Census figures show that about 12 percent of people in Clairton work in manufacturing.

Elaine Lawrence's 19-year-old son, Martin, started working there in June. He was at the mill during the explosion but was not injured. "He's not going to be going to school," she said.

To make coke, coal is baked in

special ovens for high temperatures to remove impurities that could otherwise weaken steel. The process creates what's known as coke gas — made up of a lethal mix of methane, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.

Because of those and other hazards, coke plants must meet federal requirements on everything from how machinery operates to workers' protective gear. Employees have flame-retardant clothing, hardhats, safety boots and respirators, depending on their job.

Clairton was last inspected by OSHA in 2009, and the agency found no violations. A U.S. Steel spokeswoman said there was no one available Thursday to talk about working conditions at the plant.

Bruce Steiner, president of the American Coke and Coal Chemicals Institute, said more common accidents at coke plants involve workers falling, getting pinched between equipment or other similar injuries.

"Explosions are pretty rare. I've only heard of maybe two or three in the last five years or so," Steiner said.

One of those explosions happened at Clairton in September 2009, when a maintenance worker was killed. The blast happened in a different area from Wednesday's blast, and OSHA has issued no citations against U.S. Steel in that case.

## Sestak ads removed

By Marc Levy  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG — Two Pittsburgh-area stations are pulling a commercial attacking Democratic policies and the voting record of Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Joe Sestak after he complained about its accuracy.

An e-mail message to the Sestak campaign from sister stations WPGH and WPMY said the ad will be discontinued.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette first reported on Thursday.

Sestak, a second-term congressman from the Philadelphia suburbs, had complained in a letter to WPGH, WPMY and 14 other TV stations that were airing the ad sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The ad, which began airing Monday, says Sestak voted with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi "100 percent of the time," "for a government takeover of health care" and "billions in job killing energy taxes."

Sestak calls all three statements false.

"We'd just like to cite the facts," Sestak said. "I'm not liberal, I'm not conservative, I'm very pragmatic. I look at the facts. ... Their ads don't do that, they're at best misleading."

Sestak is in a competitive race with Republican Pat Toomey for an open Senate seat.

The candidates are trying to portray each other as too extreme for Pennsylvania's voters.

At least two third-party ads, including the chamber's ad, already airing in Pennsylvania against Sestak, and many more are expected in the remaining months before the Nov. 2 election.

WPGH and WPMY said in the message to the Sestak campaign that the ad is being pulled because its claim that Sestak voted with Pelosi 100 percent of the time is untrue, campaign spokesman Jonathon Dworkin said.

Rich Cook, the executive sales manager for WPGH and WPMY, confirmed he contacted the campaign, but declined further comment Thursday.

A chamber spokesman, J.P.



Courtesy of moonbattery.com  
Joe Sestak speaks at a rally.

Felder, on Thursday said the ad's discussion of Democratic policies was accurate, but he said he was still looking into the other details.

The chamber ad is supposed to be independent of Toomey's campaign. On Thursday, Toomey, a former congressman from eastern Pennsylvania, acknowledged that a couple of Sestak's votes this year clashed with Pelosi, but he said Sestak's record was identical to hers in 2009 and that Sestak supports the broad Democratic agenda.

"The only thing that would be misleading and deceptive is to suggest there's any substantive difference" between Pelosi and Sestak on policy ideas, Toomey said.

Last month, Sestak opposed an amendment that exempts the National Rifle Association and certain other lobbying groups from some of the disclosure requirements in a bill that places new limitations on interest groups' political activity.

Pelosi supported the amendment, although both Pelosi and Sestak voted for the bill when it passed the House, Sestak said.

In addition, Sestak said independent studies by Yale University, the University of California and the University of Illinois of the so-called "cap-and-trade" pollution-reduction bill he supported in the House show the measure would result in the net creation of jobs.

Meanwhile, the Obama administration's health care legislation passed by Congress earlier this year "built on and improved private insurance markets," his campaign said.

## State police must release records

The state police have 30 days to appeal the ruling from the state Office of Open Records.

By Peter Jackson  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

HARRISBURG — The Pennsylvania State Police must release most of its records about work that its employees perform while they are off-duty, the state Office of Open Records has ruled.

The office concluded in Wednesday's decision that the state police erred in withholding information about employee moonlighting in response to a right-to-know request filed in April by the Associated Press.

The regulatory agency gave the state police 30 days to release all requests, decisions and other records involving outside work by employees.

State police spokesman Jack Lewis said the department had not yet received a copy of the decision.

The department has 30 days to decide whether to appeal to Commonwealth Court.

Earlier this year, a moonlighting state trooper was connected to the off-field carousing and legal problems of quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

The Pittsburgh Steelers star sometimes used the trooper friend as his personal assistant.

Office of Open Records appeals officer Lucinda Glinn said in her decision that state police may legally black out home addresses of law-enforcement officers and Social Security numbers for all employees.

But she said state police failed to establish that information about outside jobs is protected by exemption. The state Right-to-Know Law.

Glinn also rejected claims by the state police and the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association that disclosing the

location and approximate start and stop times of outside work should be withheld for security reasons.

The state police and the troopers' union had provided examples of officers being attacked while performing off-duty jobs, but they failed to show that releasing the information the AP was seeking would lead to any similar attacks, Glinn said.

On Thursday, based on similar conclusions, the open-records office also ordered the release of information about state police employees' outside work to the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, which asked for it shortly after the AP request.

In March, a college student accused Roethlisberger of sexually assaulting her in the bathroom of a Georgia bar.

The local prosecutor decided there was not enough evidence to prosecute, but the investigation earned Roethlisberger a six-game suspension from the NFL.

Trooper Ed Joyner was with Roethlisberger on the night of the alleged attack.

The state police are investigating his actions and have barred him from working for Roethlisberger.

In an interview among dozens of audio and video recordings from the Georgia investigation, Joyner indicated he was worried about his superiors finding out about his involvement.

He asked a Georgia investigator to let him know before she ran his name or Social Security number.

"It is very imperative that if anything is going southward, you end up running that, you have to call me before you do that," he said in the March 13 interview.

"You've got to be because what will happen is it will flag. As soon as you run any trooper's name, it flags."

"You know, my department, I don't really have to let them know unless I'm the subject of (an investigation)," Joyner said. "As a witness, there's no reason to. But once they run your name, they're like, 'If you're a witness, what the hell are they running your name for?'"

**Hungry?**

Order Food Online  
**@ THE PAPER PLATE**  
DINING GUIDE

Delivery • Take Out • Dine-In

GO TO PSUCOLLEGIAN.COM