

County may upgrade 911 system

By Caitlin Smith
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Emergency communication services may upgrade from analog to digital in Centre County as a result of a project estimated to cost about \$20 million.

The potential upgrade will include broader emergency coverage via new radios and increased communication between radio towers, said Jon Eich, chairman of the Centre County Board of Commissioners.

The new radios would be placed in emergency vehicles in addition to the ones carried by first responders.

"Replacing the system will ensure that the calls are up to the level we would like," Eich said.

County officials have looked into an upgrade since 2008, when the company responsible for the current system closed, Eich said.

Currently, the county's 911 center receives about 160,000 phone calls each year, he said.

Responders are dispatched for about 60,000 calls and about 45,000 of

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Jon Eich

Centre County Board of Commissioners chairman

those calls are classified as emergencies, Eich said.

A new system will ensure that radio calls are received clearly, whether being made from inside buildings or out in the street, Eich said.

The project is also a response to population growth across Centre County's rural and urban communities. To help reduce costs, Eich said, the county is looking to partner with owners of already existing radio towers to avoid constructing its own, which can cost \$1 million per tower.

Safety and cost will be the primary considerations for the county as officials look to move forward with the proposal, Eich said. "We are aware of the high cost but are making every effort to ensure the changes are both efficient and necessary," he said.

Eich said he believes Penn State will work with the commissioners to maintain compatibility between the two communication systems, though the details of the university's involvement are not yet known.

Penn State spokesman Geoff Rushton said he was unsure of the university's involvement in the project thus far.

But he said he encourages university and county officials to work together.

Some students said they support the plan, as it would improve safety.

"I think it is important as well as beneficial for Penn State to communicate with the county," Kyle Ruffing (freshman-business) said.

"It will show that Penn State cares about the safety of its student body."

SECONDO TO NONE



Andrew Dunheimer/Collegian

Sports commentator Leah Secondo speaks to a group of students in the Foster Auditorium Wednesday night. For more coverage of the event, visit psucollegian.com.

Festival set to bring trees, holiday cheer

By Micah Wintner
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

After nine months of preparation, the 16th Annual Festival of Trees and Crafts Show is ready to showcase its 92 Christmas trees.

The event, which will be held from Thursday to Sunday in the Snider Agricultural Arena, was organized by the YMCA of Centre County in collaboration with the Penn State Forestry Club, Woodland Owners of Centre County and the State College High School Wild Dream Team.

"It's very gratifying to see the community come together," festival organizer Jennifer Stephens said.

Stephens, who has been the event's organizer for eight years, said planning has been going on since March.

The Wild Dream Team is a group of special needs children who come together and learn in one classroom. State College Area High School teacher Rudy Burruss said.

Burruss said the students enjoyed setting up the lights the most.

"It's their way of giving back to the community for the community giving to them," he said.

Vendors will also display artwork at the event, ranging from birdhouses to jewelry.

Longtime vendor Naomi Gallagher of Pleasant Gap, Pa., said she has been displaying her art — wood products and hand-crafted jewelry — since the second annual event.

"We really enjoy coming here," Gallagher said of Stephens.

"It makes it so pleasant for the vendors. It's a source of income for me, but at the same time I can help support a local organization."

All admission supports the State College Family YMCA Strong Kids Campaign, Stephens said.

The festival will include entertainment from local bands and will feature this year's new event targeted at children: Breakfast with Santa and Friends.

"Breakfast with Santa and Friends" will be hosted Saturday morning from 8 to 10 a.m. and children will receive complimentary photos and a holiday-themed goodie bag, according to the event's website.

But Gallagher said the event is not only for children. "It's a really fun thing for people of all ages," she said. "I'm talking about adults to the little toddlers."

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Libraries' loan periods extended

Undergraduate students can keep loaned materials for full semester

By Danae Blasso
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Just in time for the new semester, undergraduate students are now able to keep their loaned materials from the Penn State libraries for a full semester.

Library Supervisor Circulation and Reserves Specialist Chris Holobar said the idea to allow everyone affiliated with Penn State — not just graduate students and faculty — to borrow library resources for a full semester was first discussed on Nov. 12.

Previously, Holobar said the limit for all others outside of faculty and graduate students was four weeks.

"We really want to promote the use of our collection," Holobar said. "There are a tremendous amount of resources that we want you to take advantage of."

The semester-long borrowing system was in place for more than ten years for graduate students and faculty staff, Holobar said.

By extending the loan period for

books, Holobar said the new system makes it fair for all students whom try to check out books.

"We are assuming that many of the materials students are checking out are used for course purposes," Holobar said.

It also makes it easier to return the borrowed books at one common time, which would be at the end of the semester, said Stephanie Movahedi-Lankarani, manager of library services at the Architecture and Landscape Architecture Library.

"[Students] were pleased to have a longer period," Movahedi-Lankarani said. "They thought it would be very useful for research needs."

Students are allowed to renew their books twice during the loan period, but their books can still be subjected to recall, Movahedi-Lankarani said.

"If someone needs [the book] they can click the 'I want it' button," she said.

The "I want it" button online sends an e-mail to the individual that currently has the book checked out and

states they have ten days to return the book, Holobar said.

Besides the option to have the book recalled, the Easy Borrow system is still available, Holobar said.

Through the Easy Borrow system, institutions in Pennsylvania as well as several in New Jersey and Virginia can send the student a copy of the book from their library, Holobar said.

However, not all materials are covered under the new semester loan policy, Movahedi-Lankarani said.

Students can not check out course reserve materials, DVDs or reference materials for a semester, Movahedi-Lankarani said.

Holobar said he looked at the use statistics of undergraduates registered with the libraries and the books they used when developing the new system.

The statistics found that undergraduates are as responsible with their books as graduate students are, and it wouldn't be a problem to allow them to check the books out for a whole semester, Holobar said.

UPUA intern program sees success

Geared toward freshmen, UPUA's internship is designed to teach students about the organization.

"The more we train the future of the organization, the more legitimate we're going to become."

Rebecca Alt

sophomore-communications arts and sciences

By Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Though the University Park Undergraduate Association's freshmen internship program is only in its second year, UPUA Director of Freshman Outreach Rebecca Alt said there have already been improvements from last year's pilot program.

During the program — known as Year-One Undergraduate Supporting Representative Voice — interns attend classes where various UPUA members give presentations so interns can learn about all aspects of UPUA, Alt said. Each intern is also assigned a mentor within UPUA to help bring initiatives to fruition.

In addition to growing in size, the internship program has also expanded to include interns to the assembly rather than solely the executive board, Alt (sophomore-communications arts and sciences) said.

"It's really beneficial because I know there are so many students that run for UPUA, and they don't

know the structure of it or the history of it," she said. "These interns are already networking with UPUA members."

UPUA Vice President Colleen Smith said the program was mainly focused on educating the interns last year, but having mentors now has helped strengthen the internship.

"I really like that it's a good mix between education and hands-on involvement," Smith (junior-history) said.

UPUA Director of Governmental Affairs Travis Salters said his intern, Candace Fox, has helped him with organizing the Pennsylvania Student Association.

"As much support as we can get is always helpful," Salters (junior-broadcast journalism and African and African American studies) said. "I couldn't be more proud of my intern. She's definitely getting a great experience, and I wish more students could take advantage of this opportunity."

Fox (freshman-accounting) said she decided to apply for the program

because she wants to be involved with UPUA.

"I've learned so much," she said. "I've learned how UPUA works, how it's structured, who's friends with who, the politics of everything and just in general how everything gets done."

Intern Tom Bremer said he's enjoyed being a part of the program. "I've been really impressed with it," Bremer (freshman-mechanical engineering) said.

"I didn't really know what to expect, and so far I'm happy I'm a part of it."

Alt said she has received positive feedback about this year's internship program.

"It's become a really essential part, and I know a lot of the assembly members and executive members have expressed that it's the future of UPUA," she said.

"The more we train the future of the organization the more legitimate we're going to become."

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If you go

What: 16th Annual Festival of Trees and Crafts
When: Thursday to Sunday
Where: Penn State Snider Agricultural Arena
Details: Doors open at 10 a.m. and close at 8 p.m. The event will end at 6 p.m. Sunday.

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