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The Battalion

Vol. 90 No. 158 USPS 045360 6 Pages College Station, Texas "Serving Texas A&M since 1893" Friday, June 21, 1991

University installs new broadcasting uplink, video system

By Tammy Bryson
The Battalion

Texas A&M has taken a giant leap forward in communications technology with the installation of a new satellite broadcasting uplink and a compressed video system, said director Dr. Rod Zent of Educational Broadcast Services.

Both of the systems can be used to transmit educational and other types of programming globally.

The compressed video system, TransTexas Videoconference Network (ITVN), uses fiber optic cables that al-

low two-way communication between users.

"A&M is the only state university in Texas to have an interactive video network such as this," Zent said.

The system can be used to set up teleconferences between two or more cities, he explained.

Another use of the video network will be to transmit instructional programming, such as college courses, from campus to campus, he added.

The system will primarily be used by the agriculture department, but it is available to the entire university.

"There are 14 sites scheduled to be completed before July that can access

this network," said Al Powell, communications specialist at the Texas Agricultural Extension Service (TAEX). "Each university in the A&M system, as well as a few other sites such as Dallas, Austin and San Antonio will be included."

The second addition to the communication facilities at A&M is a satellite broadcasting uplink, which allows one-way video transmission.

Although the satellite system is separate from the compressed video system, the two systems are very complimentary, Powell said.

"The satellite network will allow

A&M to communicate world-wide, all the way from Alaska to the Virgin Islands," Zent said. "With a double hop (which involves making two satellite jumps) we can receive programming from somewhere as far away as Japan and then send it to another university."

Zent added that the new form of technology enables A&M to distribute materials at a much lower cost than before the University had this system.

"We previously had to rent a satellite transmitter in Dallas or Houston which was very expensive," Zent said.

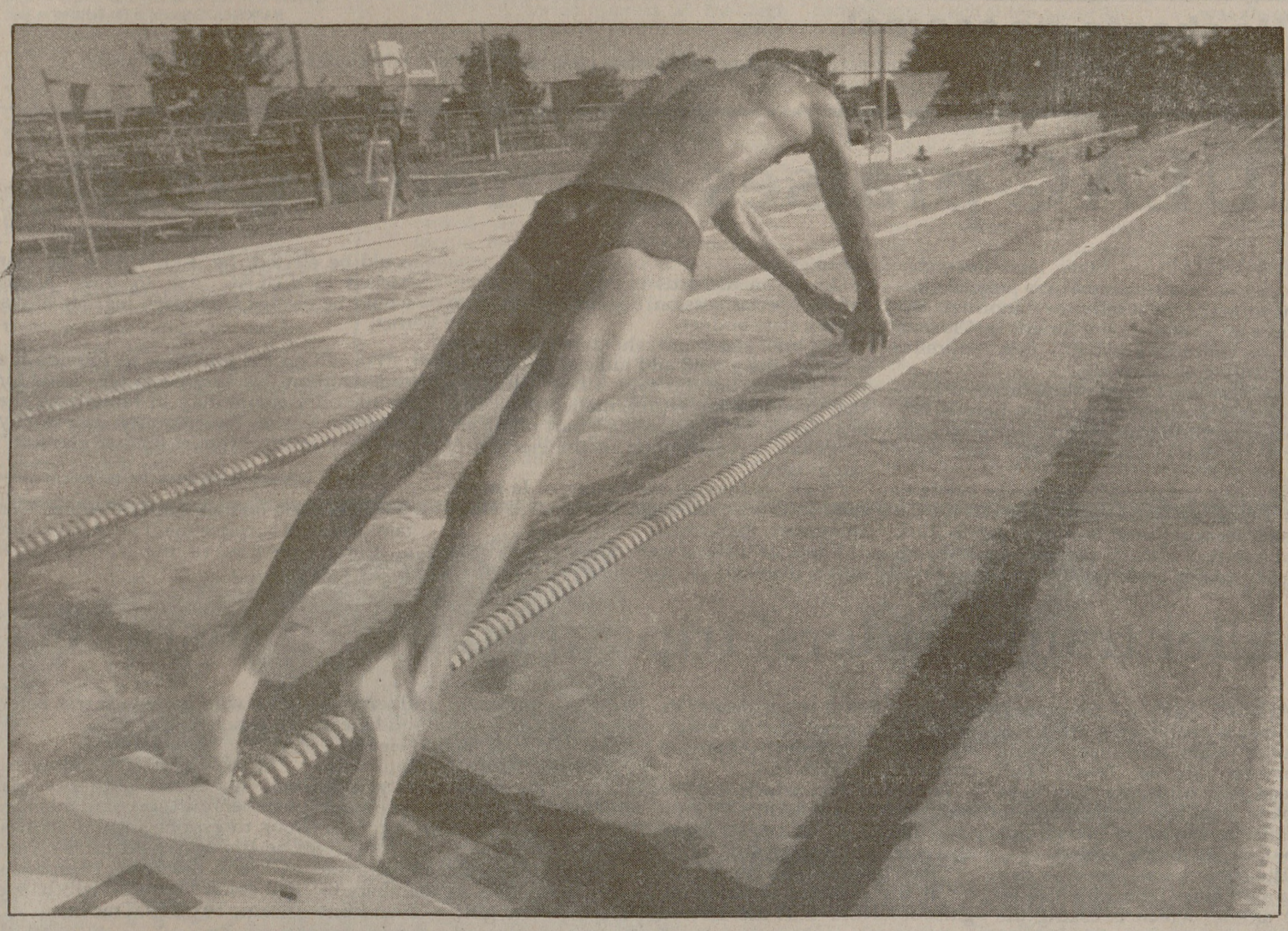
Both of the new systems are part of a

\$319,000 project funded by a federal grant.

Education Broadcasting Services will maintain and operate the systems.

"The agricultural department has no definite plans for the compressed video system, yet," said Dr. D.A. Suter, associate dean of instruction in the college of agriculture. "One use for the technology will probably be to teach graduate courses at off-campus sites."

Zent said installation and testing is being completed and the systems should be put into use sometime in the fall.



Testing the waters

Members of the Aggie Swim Club prepare for their swim meet Friday evening. The club is composed of junior high and high school students.

Treaty flop mars chance for summit

Differences impede arms negotiations

BERLIN (AP) — The United States and the Soviet Union failed Thursday to overcome the remaining hurdles to a landmark arms control treaty, clouding prospects for a summer summit between Presidents Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev.

But Secretary of State James A. Baker III and Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, emerging from nearly two hours of talks, gave differing assessments of the progress they made on the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.

Baker said "three major issues" are holding up completion of the treaty, which would reduce by 30 percent the number of nuclear missiles, bombers and submarines that can span the distance between the United States and the Soviet Union.

President Bush has made completion of the treaty, which has been under on-and-off negotiation for nine years, a condition for a summit with Gorbachev.

"We are right where we were when we last met, with respect to a summit," said Baker, answering reporters' questions with Bessmertnykh at his side in the garden of the U.S. ambassador's residence. The two foreign ministers, meeting at the end of a 35-nation Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, last held talks on the treaty in Geneva on June 8.

Bessmertnykh, however, said he and Baker "made considerable progress" on the treaty. And he added, "I think we can close all the outstanding issues in the coming weeks."

The Soviet minister said he and Baker had discussed an agenda for a summit and some agreements that would be signed there.

The differing views appeared to reflect Gorbachev's strong desire for a summit to dramatize his need for Western aid, as well as Bush's reluctance to rush into one before the arms control agreement is nailed down.

University Police Department participates in national seatbelt survey

By Jeff M. Brown
The Battalion

Texas A&M's University Police Department has started an Honor Roll Seatbelt Program created by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in support of President Bush's goal to achieve 70 percent national safety-belt use by 1992.

The program consists of two obser-

vational surveys, taken 30 days apart, counting only driver belt wearers at predetermined locations. The survey is taken with the help of the Texas Transportation Institute to see if a 70 percent usage is sustained across the two surveys.

Lt. Bert Kretzschmar with the UPD's Crime Prevention Unit said the first survey was taken June 3. Without any public awareness of the random count taking place, 75 percent of the drivers

on campus were seen wearing their seatbelts.

If both surveys show that more than 70 percent of A&M drivers wear their safety belts, the University will receive an award.

"If we're successful, A&M will be only the second university in the country to receive the N.H.T.S.A. Honor Roll Seatbelt Award," Kretzschmar said. "However, we would be the first in the Southwest."

The first award went to Virginia State University.

The surveys will consist of 16 on-campus locations with a count of one hundred at each. The second survey will be sometime in July, but Kretzschmar could not reveal the exact date.

Each year about 45,000 deaths result from motor vehicle crashes, or about 123 deaths per day, Kretzschmar said

those numbers are equivalent to a major airline crash every day of the year.

"It is because of these large numbers that we are encouraging and enforcing the use of safety belts," he said. "Our ultimate goal is always to prevent injuries and save lives."

For more information about the safety belt and child restraint law, call the Crime Prevention Unit at 845-8900.

Mentors provide support for students' various problems

By Karen Praslicka
The Battalion

The main purpose of the Texas A&M Mentors program is to give students a helping hand to succeed in their scholastic and emotional lives, said the coordinator of the University program.

Daniel Orozco, assistant director of the A&M Career Planning and Placement Center, has been a Mentor for the past four years.

More than 400 A&M faculty and staff members are Mentors. The staff participating hang a placard outside their office door that identifies them as Mentors

to let students know they are part of the program.

Orozco said it is the Mentors' philosophy to be there for students who might be having problems or who just want someone to listen. Some problems students have discussed with Mentors range from struggles with their classes to serious emotional problems.

Often students are more open when talking to Mentors because students identify with them as adults and believe mentors can be objective, Orozco said.

"They'll hear some of the same things from us their parents would say," he said. "But they won't listen to their

parents because that's Mom and Dad."

Orozco said the Mentors do not have all the answers, but they try to find someone who is qualified to help students in need.

Sometimes Mentors refer students to other Mentors.

"We're not trying to give someone the run around," he said.

There are faculty and staff members who do not identify themselves with the Mentor program but still make themselves available to students.

Orozco said just because a faculty or staff member does not have a Mentor sign outside their

office door does not mean they do not care about students.

"Many people do the same thing without being identified with the program," he said.

Dr. Ray Milford, professor and associate head of soil and crop sciences, said he has always had an open door policy for students.

Milford said he cannot separate his role as a faculty member from his role as a Mentor.

Even though he has been a Mentor since the program began in the early 1980's, Milford said he does not know if he has ever had students visit because they know he is a Mentor.

"Fifty percent of the students

probably don't know the program exists," he said.

Milford said he is thrilled to see students become successful, whether they came to him because he was a Mentor or not.

"It's always pleasing when you think your interaction with a student helps them solve a problem," he said. "But they might have done the same thing whether they ran into you or not."

Dr. Fidel Fernandez, academic advisor in general studies, said the only reason Mentors belong to the program is because they have a genuine interest in seeing A&M students succeed.

"It's an organization that's strictly voluntary," he said. "It doesn't assist us job wise."

Fernandez has been a Mentor for three years, and said he does not think the program is used enough by students.

This is an opportunity for students to discuss anything, academic or personal, with someone, he said.

"There is a deep sense of commitment to the educational mission and for the students to be successful," Fernandez said.

Milford said he believes the program was started by Dr. Rod O'Connor, former A&M chemistry professor, because O'Connor believed students felt they did not have access to faculty members.