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Physicians test telecommunications technology

By Heather R. Rosenfeld
 THE BATTALION

Physicians from Texas A&M University's Health Science Center and the Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple teamed up Thursday morning to consult with physicians in Mexico City using a high-resolution satellite video link.

Dennis Myers, associate professor in the College of Medicine and administrative director of the research and education department at Scott & White, said the conference is a unique experience.

"We are very excited about doing this," Myers said. "Typically, this type of conference would be held in an auditorium, but now we have the amazing ability to do this (via the technology)."

Myers said the primary purpose for the meeting was to see if images such as slides could be transmitted successfully with the technology.

"We knew that we could consult as talking heads on a TV screen," Myers said. "What we

wanted to find out was if the equipment could handle microscopic and similar images."

Janice Mauren, public relations official for the College of Medicine, said this method of communication is not fully developed.

"I can see the big picture [and] we are entering the embryonic stages of this technology," Mauren said. "In 20 years, we will look back at conferences like these and it will look the way black-and-white TV looks to us now. I think there is a lot of potential we haven't tapped into yet."

Ron Rodgers, Radio and TV technician, said although the technology can be practically applied, the visual aspect still requires some improvement.

"The information is first sent through special telephone lines, but there is too much information even for those lines, so it has to be condensed," Rodgers said. "You don't see every frame of movement; therefore, at times the movement that is seen might appear a little jerky."

Mauren said videoconferencing allows

physicians to consult with one another in a situation typically requiring travel.

"The potential for this is important, especially being able to go across the border," Mauren said. "The doctors have access to medical facilities in both countries."

Brent Michener, a senior biomedical engineer, said patients are the beneficiaries of videoconferencing.

"Technological advancement is improving medicine to give the best possible to the patients; this is just one of the many examples," Michener said. "The more doctors in a certain kind of specialty to be able to look at them."

Scott Poole, a communication technology professor in the speech communication department, said doctors will also benefit from the technology.

"Physicians will be able to learn by seeing the actions of specialists," Poole said.

See Technology

Easterwood Airport improvements will be made over 20 years

By Ann Marie Hauser
 THE BATTALION

The initiation of improvements at Easterwood Airport was approved Thursday at the Texas A&M Board of Regents' meeting in Stephenville.

The first phase of the 20-year master plan consists of high-priority items and will take about five years to complete.

Harry Raiser, director of aviation at Easterwood, emphasized the large amount of service the airport provides for the Brazos Valley.

"[Nearly \$26 million] a year goes to serving the Brazos Valley," Raiser said. "You've got to continually maintain everything and keep everything going."

The process of improvement will undergo several phases before the actual construction begins.

Dr. Jerry Gaston, interim vice president of finance and administration, oversees airport operations and said there is good and bad news with the future improvements.

"The bad news is that we need to improve some things,

but not as much as one might think," Gaston said. "The good news is that we will continue to have a first-class airport."

The federal government provides funding for the improvements through the Airport Improvement Program (AIP).

Through the AIP, \$350,000 to \$500,000 per year is allotted for capital improvements to the airport.

Thurman Whitworth, air traffic manager of Easterwood, said the construction of the north-south taxiway will make it easier for air traffic control.

"The new runway will expedite the flow of traffic," Whitworth said. "Pilots will be grateful for the new taxiway to get them off the runway."

Matt Grunenwald, president of the Texas A&M Flying Club, said he will not mind the construction because he thinks the new changes will enhance the airport.

"The improvements will benefit everyone that operates out of the airport," Grunenwald said. "I believe the Texas A&M Flying Club will support the improvements."

Raiser said 85,000 people a



Pat James, TAMU

Regents approved a 20-year master plan to improve Easterwood Airport.

year travel through Easterwood Airport and improvements are constantly being made.

Whitworth said, as an air traffic controller, it will be more convenient when directing heavy traffic.

"It will be a nice thing for us to have and makes it easier for us to man our job up in the tower," Whitworth said.

Runways and taxiways are areas slated for improvement:

- Construction of a north-south taxiway on the side of the airport.

- The application of a coat to the east-west runway taxiway to preserve existing asphalt concrete.

- The construction of (widening of turns) on a portion of the Fox Trot taxiway.

- New high-intensity lights for the primary runways.

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