Monitor Newsletter August 06, 1990

Bowling Green State University

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State Representative Randy Gardner (right) presents a check from the Ohio Board of Regents for the Program Excellence Award to Dr. David Chilson, computer science, while Dr. Eloise Clark, vice president for academic affairs, looks on. The check for $123,325 was awarded to the computer science department as part of the Selective Excellence program when winners are chosen competitively from Ohio’s state supported universities. Chilson said the grant will be used to purchase work stations for software engineering courses at the undergraduate level and to enhance computer communications and networking curriculum in a laboratory environment.

Census data useful for researchers

Approximately 250 million people in the United States participated in the 1990 census this past spring and once they returned their forms, they probably forgot about it. What happened to all those forms and what is the purpose behind gathering the information? Kim Wright, director of the Survey Branch of the BGSU Population and Society Research Center and liaison to the Ohio Data Users Center, said the national census provides the government and researchers with a wide range of important data.

Wright said the main purpose of the census, known to many people, is that it provides population counts every 10 years to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives as mandated by the Constitution.

Apportionment determines how many congressional representatives each state has, and reapportionment occurs after each census. Redistricting determines the boundaries of the congressional and legislative districts for the state. After each census, states redefine their districts based on the number of representatives they have been apportioned. Based on the 1990 census, it is anticipated that Ohio will lose two seats in the House.

But there are many other important uses of the census too, Wright said. For example, federal and state money is allocated on the basis of population counts and characteristics, she explained.

Also, the census provides count lists to businesses and government for funding of highways, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and even for forms of evacuation in communities. These facts and figures are used by civic and neighborhood leaders to help meet community needs throughout the United States.

For example, the high number of working women with small children in a midwestern community, revealed by a study of census data, prompted community leaders to seek and win approval for a day care center.

Also, during a severe heat wave, public officials in St. Louis used census numbers to locate neighborhoods with large numbers of the elderly to convince them to go to “cooling centers.”

Certain data from the census is important to the University as well, especially numbers that indicate the age structure of the population, Wright said.

Sixty-five dispatchers, who came from as far as Hawaii, participated in a two-day public safety dispatcher training program hosted on campus last week by the public safety department. Above, Phil Sabatino, president of Powerphone which presented the program, lectured to one of the classes which covered topics such as breaking hysteria thresholds, crisis intervention, the law and liability issues, officer training, effective listening skills, hazardous materials incidents, suicide calls and dispatcher stress. Janet Tracy, dispatch supervisor who helped coordinate the event, said participant response to the program was almost double than what was expected and included police dispatchers from the University, Bowling Green, the county and some members of the U.S. Marine Corps who flew in from Hawaii and Arizona.
Staff need to register for 1990-91 parking decals

Parking and traffic parking decals will be needed on all faculty and staff vehicles by Aug. 29. All transferable hanging decals and non-transferable bumper decals currently in use will expire Aug. 11.

Full-time faculty and staff will have a choice between a transferable hanging decal or one non-transferable bumper decal. To obtain either decal, each employee must present a fee waiver form completed and signed by the budget administrator. Only one fee waiver will be accepted for each full-time employee and only one decal will be issued to each employee.

Apologies from the front

During the 1960s and 1970s, the baby boom generation was of college age and enrollments at universities rose. However, figures also show a pattern following the baby boom when there was a decrease in births. Persons from this "baby bust generation" are currently attending college which explains why enrollments have declined, she said.

Wright explained the University uses these figures to predict future enrollments. Also, the University will look at the change in racial composition of the population. These numbers will be used to see if enrollment at the University matches racial composition in the country, Wright added.

Ohio also is arriving new census figures. "There is a tremendous amount of demand on the state level because the 1980 census figures are simply outdated," she said.

Even though the 1990 census celebrated the bicentennial of its first survey this year, it also added some new features.

For the first time, people of the homeless, the underclass, and the illegal immigrants was done to include the normally "uncounted" in the 1990 census.

Also, the 1990 census will go high tech. For the first time, census information will be compressed from the information capacity of 1,800 computer floppy disks to a single, small CD-ROM (Compact Disk Read Only Memory) at a cost of $180.

Wright said the advantages of the CD-ROM are that it is less expensive, holds more information and can be used on a desktop computer. Data overlays will enable the blending of statistical information to reveal details about the nation never before imagined.

Normally most census information is collected by mail. But this year census takers had to knock on a few more doors because by April the governing had received only 57 percent of the returned questionnaires through the mail compared to 78 percent in 1980, according to U.S. News and World Report.

The Census Bureau hired approximately 555,000 people to help gather and analyze census data, so it can deliver appointment counts to President Bush by December 31 and provide data necessary for redistributing to states no later than April 1, 1991.

The detailed data from the 1990 census is not planned to be released until 1992. - Beth Watson