

programming included five workshops and weekly and monthly usage by such groups as the Youngstown Youth Academy, Mahoning County Joint Vocational School Jobs Club, and children's groups from the Youngstown Parks & Recreation Department. This urban center's 6-month demographic report included an unduplicated count of first time users of 1306 and a 3072 duplicated count of repeat visits. This report indicates an average 71% of users to this center are within their targeted low-income range.

3. The Akron Community Services Center and Urban League began receiving funding from Ameritech for a community computing center in November, 1995. Two sites encompass this program. The first is located at the Akron Community Services Center and Urban League, 250 East Market Street and the second is located at the Akron Urban League's United Services for All at 470 Wooster Avenue, Akron. The centers opened in February, 1996. Within the last reporting period of July - December, 1997 the centers were opened 55 hours per week and reported a combined unduplicated total of 331 first time users and a duplicated count of 2027 visits. Thirteen workshops were conducted in conjunction with other regularly scheduled programming which includes GED classes; Basic Literacy and Remediation, Business Technology, ASSET, After School Recreation, ACT/SAT Proficiency Test Preparation, and a very strong and active seniors program. The centers report 100% of users are from their targeted low-income range.
4. The Information Technology Center (ITC) is located within the Frederick Douglas Community Center at 1001 Indiana Avenue, Toledo. This center began receiving its Ameritech funding through the Toledo Area Black Data Processing Association (BDPA) in January, 1996 and opened in June, 1996. The center is open 25 hours a week. During this reporting period 12 workshops were conducted including workshops, and on-going programs for after-school, visual basic programming with the BDPA junior computer club, web design, and desktop publishing for children and adults. During this reporting period the center had an unduplicated count of 542 first time visits, and a duplicated count of 3,609 repeat visits, 64% of the users are from their targeted low-income range.
5. The North Education Community Computing Center began receiving funding from Ameritech in January, 1996 and opened in April. The center is located in the Columbus Public Schools North Education Center (NEC) at 100 Arcadia Avenue, Columbus. It is open 36 hours a week for open access and 11 hours a week for special programming. The most recent six month report covers July 1 - December 31, 1997. During this period the center offered four workshops and programming which includes: Black Data Processing Association (BDPA) Youth Program and Adult Basic Literacy Education. In addition, NEC nursing classes, and heating and cooling training programs utilize the center. The center has forged collaborative partnerships with the Ohio State University Campus Partners, BDPA, Homeless Children's Project, Job Connection Project, Columbus Employment Consortium, and Columbus Free-Net. During this six-month reporting period the center had an unduplicated count of 240 first time users and a duplicated count of 961 repeat visitors. 87% of those using the center are from the targeted low-income

population.

6. EdgeNet Community Computing Center began receiving funding from Ameritech in April, 1996 and opened in May. The center is located within the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition at 919 Miami Chapel Road, Dayton. In their last six-month report covering the time period between April 1 - September 30, 1997, this center had a 309 unduplicated count of first time participants and a 1,864 duplicated count. The center is open for 32 hours a week for open access and 12 hours per week for special programming. During this reporting period the center conducted 10 workshops including sessions for adults obtaining computer skills, preschool, and school age day camps, and a summer employment program. Collaborations and networking with other groups include: West Dayton Youth Services Coalition, Community Advisory Council of Bank One, City of Dayton's CitiPlan 2000 Committee, Miami Valley Literacy Council, Project READ, Dayton Legal Aid Society, and the Catholic Social Services. The EdgeNet computer center reports 70% of their users are within their targeted low-income range.
7. The Otterbein Computer Center is located at 111 Xenia Avenue, in Dayton, Ohio. This center is located within the Otterbein Methodist Church building and began receiving its funding from Ameritech in May, 1996. The center held its grand opening in September, 1996. In its last six month reporting period, the center is open 30 hours a week for open-access and programming. Their programming includes sessions for seniors, after-school, and an office education course. During this reporting period the center had an unduplicated count of 170 first time users and a duplicated count of 648 visits. The Otterbein Computer Center reports 64% of their users are within their targeted low-income range.
8. The Westside Neighborhood Computer Center is located at the Volunteer's of America at 379 West Broad Street, Columbus. This center is situated in an area called Franklinton and is part of the VOA programs which includes an emergency shelter. The computer center began receiving its Ameritech funding in October of 1996 and opened in November, 1996. The schedule includes 44 hours of open access and programming. During its last six-month reporting period the center conducted 14 workshops which included; Windows tutorials, a VOA tutoring program for VOA Shelter children, adult education/life skills, basic computer skills, and a production workshop to create the VOA Shelter Newsletter. There were 696 first time participants and a duplicated count of 2,363 return visits with 76% of users from their targeted low-income range.
9. The Columbus Urban League is located at 788 Mt. Vernon Avenue in Columbus. It began receiving its Ameritech funding in October, 1996 and opened in December, 1996. The most recent six-month report for this center includes April 1 - September 30, 1997. The center is opened for 13 hours a week open access and 34 hours a week for scheduled programs. During this reporting the period the center conducted five workshops and programs which included: Basic Skills/GED test preparation, after-school, math and

science tutoring, and summer camp. Collaborations and/or networking efforts include relationships with Champion Alternative Middle School, PC Allies, Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority, and Columbus Public Schools. During this reporting period an unduplicated count of 174 first time participants came to the center and a duplicated count of 2,241 repeat visits took place. On average, 90% of participants are from their target low-income range.

10. The Akron Urban Minority Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Outreach Program's Lawton Street Computer Learning center is located at 1225 Lawton Street, Akron. This center began receiving funding from Ameritech in January, 1997 and opened in March, 1997. The most recent six-month report covers July 1 - December 31, 1997. The center is open 40 hours a week with day, evening, and weekend hours available for open access, workshops, and programming. During this time period the center conducted 11 workshops collaborating with organizations such as Summit County Volunteer Center, Alpha Phi Alpha's Mother to Son program, and the Betty Shabazz Academy. The center is currently in the process of opening a second center to be located at the Akron UMADAOP, 665 W. Market Street, Akron. The center reports an unduplicated count of 507 first time participants and a duplicated count of 922 repeat visits for its duplicated count with 64% of participants from within their low-income range.
11. The Community Computing Center at the Friendly Inn Settlement House began receiving its Ameritech funding through the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority in November, 1996. Their center opened in June, 1997 and is located at 2382 Unwin Road, Cleveland. The center is open 55 hours a week for programming and open access. This includes evening and weekend hours. During the last six-month reporting period, August 1, 1997 - January 31, 1998, the center offered 4 workshops. During this same time their on-going programming includes: GED preparation sessions, after school, evening, parent education and support, and preschool programs. During this reporting period the unduplicated count of first time participants was 360 and the duplicated count of repeat visits was 2,717. This center reports that 100% of their participants fall within the low-income range.
12. The Salvation Army-Cleveland Temple Corps Computer Center is located at 17625 Grovewood Avenue, Cleveland. It began receiving its funding from Ameritech in April 1997 and opened in September, 1997. The center is open 17 hours a week for open access and 41 hours a week for scheduled programs. The open access hours include days, evenings, and weekend time slots. The last six-month reporting period includes August 1, 1997 - January 31, 1998. During this time the center conducted 3 workshops and on-going program which includes: Head Start, Latch Key, Seniors, meals-on-wheels, job training, and a computer course which focuses on lessons using Office'97. The center has formed collaborative relationships with Cleveland State University, and their local schools and libraries. This last report shows an unduplicated count of 438 of first time participants and a duplicated count of 2,280 of repeat visits. There is an average 70% of

users from their low-income range.

13. The Westside Community Computing Center began receiving its Ameritech funding in July, 1997 through Merrick House in Cleveland. The center opened in October, 1997 and is located at 6209 Storer Avenue, Cleveland and is a project of the West Side Community Computer Partners, a coalition of community based organizations which include: Merrick House, Stockyard Area Development Association, May Dugan Center, Westside Industrial Retention and Expansion Network, Neighborhood Family Practice, Westside Community House, Cudell Improvement, West Town Community Development Corporation, El Barrio, Saint Colman Computer Lab, Saint Malachi Center, Detroit-Shoreway Community Development Organization, and other community organizations of Cleveland's West Side. The Westside Community Computing Center is open 39 hours a week, which includes days, evenings, and weekend hours. The last six-month reporting period covered July 1, - December 31, 1997. During this time the center conducted 8 workshops which included basic introductory courses to computers and the internet, and several on-going after-school programs, and programs for adults and students in spanish. During this reporting period there were 280 first time (unduplicated count) users and 1,170 repeat visits (duplicated count). On average, 64% of the users are from their target low-income range.

14. The Computer Technology Center at the YMCA of Greater Toledo's Wayman Palmer Community YMCA is located at 2053 N. 14th Street, Toledo. This center began receiving Ameritech funding in June, 1997 and opened in October, 1997. The center is open 48 hours a week of which 13 hours a week are dedicated to open access. The last six-month report covered the period of July 1, - December 31, 1997. During this period the center conducted 4 workshops which include the following programs: Professional Office Skills Classes (in collaboration with Owens Community College), and Kids Labs. All of the YMCA programs utilize the center including the pre-school, after-school, and tutoring programs. The center has developed collaborative relationships with the Toledo Area Private Industry Council, the Department of Human Services, and H.O.P.E. Center at Owens Community College. During this time period the center reported an unduplicated count of first time participants of 186 and a 586 duplicated count of repeat visits. On average 99% of users are from within their targeted low-income range.

The Ohio Community Computing Center Network

In addition to writing an RFP and choosing sites, the Network Board has played an active role in overseeing each centers' use of the funds. The board designed several evaluation tools. (Attachment 5). The centers submit quarterly, semi-annual, and annual reports according to a schedule based on their opening dates. Each month the board reviews written reports from

centers and hears reports from staff members who have visited them. Based upon these reports, the committee votes twice each year on whether to allocate further operating funds to each center.

In most instances the written reports and the staff's observations showed that the centers were making great progress. Most funding checks were released on time, occasionally accompanied by a letter stating certain concerns or suggestions. In two instances, checks were held up. In one case, the fiscal agent delayed passing funds to the center operator and seemed intent on imposing bureaucratic delays on the project. The Board was able to resolve the problem and the center has opened and is now flourishing. In the other instance, a center had hired a director who was proceeding far too slowly. The center did very little publicity, was open too few hours, and had not purchased adequate software. The OCCCN Board and staff worked closely, first with the center's director, then with the center's board to resolve these problems. The result was that the initial director left, and a new director was hired. The center has made remarkable progress under the new leadership.

In addition to this funding review and oversight, the Network board has focused on providing technical and material assistance to the centers. The staff publishes a quarterly newsletter, hosts on-line discussions for center staff, and holds quarterly statewide meetings and an annual conference which features a variety of workshops and speakers. In addition, the Network administers a VISTA project which provides volunteers to the centers. The staff has also secured a variety of hardware and software donations for the centers. These activities have attracted 13 other centers, doing similar work but not funded from the Ameritech settlement.

OCCCN is the first and only organization of its kind in Ohio. It is a vital organization

because of the unique needs of community computing centers. In order to do their work effectively, centers need expertise in programming, outreach, social service and computer technology. This requires staff with a far broader array of skills than is found in most community-based service agencies. The centers have found it is much more efficient and cost effective for them to share knowledge and resources with each other than it is for each to go it alone. The OCCCN supports the centers' needs for training, information, fundraising, program development and advocacy, allowing the centers to devote their time and resources to implementing programs for end-users.

Plans for the Future

The Board has implemented a strategic planning process designed to transform the Network into a self governing organization that would pursue the mission of

continuing support of existing, and the ongoing development of new, Community Computing Computing Centers throughout Ohio. These centers provide opportunity and support to those who typically lack access to computer and telecommunications technology. OCCCN will provide technical, program, and fund raising support, advocacy, and develop and encourage communication and collaboration among organizations and communities.

A strategic plan has been drafted. (Attachment 6). By-laws, establishing a new structure for the Network, were adopted November 22, 1997 (Attachment 7), and at this year's annual meeting, in June, 1998, the Network's Board will be reformed under these by-laws. Most of the original members will stay, but the board will expand to add representatives of the centers and other important constituencies. The Network recently incorporated and received its own 501C(3) tax exempt status.

The originally mandated allocation committee will remain as a committee of the Network

to discharge any remaining responsibilities related to the Ameritech funds.

The work of the Network has been financed from \$100,000 set aside for this purpose in the Ameritech Alternative Regulation settlement. These funds are now almost exhausted and the staff has been writing grant proposals and engaging in other fund raising. Many of the cities which have centers have made contributions. All of the centers and other organizations which support the Network's work will begin to pay dues in 1998.

Conclusion

When the PUCO approved the Ameritech settlement it became the first Public Utility Commission to adopt funding that enables low income neighborhoods to have access to the information super highway through community computer centers. Since then, Ameritech has lived up to the letter and spirit of the agreement. The company has provided additional resources, materials, and support to foster the work of the OCCCN Board and the Centers. As a result of what has become a truly cooperative effort, important progress is being made in Ohio. The centers are thriving, the Network is growing, and through this work, many communities which would otherwise not have access to computer and telecommunication technology are getting access and training in the use of this technology.

Respectfully submitted,



Ellis Jacobs
Chairman
Ohio Community Computing Center Network

May 4, 1998

COMMUNITY COMPUTER CENTERS

Community Computer Centers bring together hardware, software, network access and training in a tutorial and workshop atmosphere. To be eligible for funding, a Center shall be housed in a location that is readily accessible to the Community it serves, such as a school, library, church or community center, shall be open after school hours, shall be located in a low income neighborhood, and shall contain an appropriate number of computer workstations.

There will be 14 such centers, located as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u># of Centers</u>
Cleveland	3
Columbus	3
Dayton	2
Toledo	2
Akron	2
Youngstown	1
Marietta	1

The centers will be phased in. In the first year of the Plan one center will be funded in each city. In the second year of the Plan the additional centers will be funded.

Each center will receive \$40,000 start-up costs at the start of its first year.

\$ 560,000

Each center will receive operating funds for three years. For the first two years that each center is funded, each center will receive a \$40,000 per year annual grant. In the third year, each center will receive a \$30,000 annual grant.

\$ 1,540,000

All funds described herein are to be expended by the Company. All operating and start-up funds shall be made available beginning on the effective date of this Plan and on the anniversary of that date every year thereafter pursuant to the schedule set forth above. Should a center not be ready to receive funding in a particular year, that money will be made available in subsequent years. Monies not claimed by the beginning of the fourth year shall be made available to existing operating centers. All centers shall be notified of that availability and the decision on how the funds shall be allocated shall be made by the committee described below.

The entities to receive funding for community computer centers and the use of these grants shall be determined solely by a committee composed of one representative each from the Company, the City of Cleveland, Greater Cleveland Welfare Rights Organization, the City of Columbus, the City of Toledo, the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition, and a representative to be selected, by those Stipulating Parties who will be part of the Committee, from each of the cities of Akron, Youngstown and Marietta. The Committee will be convened and initially chaired by the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition.

The Committee and each center will have equal access to funds to hire a consultant for a period of four years to provide assistance in choosing the entities to be funded and to assist in program design and implementation. Consultant expenditures shall be decided on and allocated by the Committee and shall become available on the effective date of the Plan and on the anniversary of that date every year thereafter pursuant to the following schedule: funding for the consultant shall be \$30,000 for year 1 and 2, and \$20,000 for years 3 and 4 of this program.

\$ 100,000

\$ 2,200,000

BLADE PHOTO BY LOUI KING



Doug Chea of Black Data Processing Associates instructs Brittany Norwood on the computers.

Central-city community set to learn how to surf the net

BY NANCY COSTELLO
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Residents of a central-city neighborhood will be surfing the net, trolling computer-based encyclopedias, and clicking through on-line data bases as the first Ameritech-funded community computer center plugs into Toledo.

"We have been screaming for technology in the community," said Ann Moore, board president of ONYX, Organized Neighborhood Yielding eXcellence. "There's a lack of it; we don't have it. And that shuts us off to the rest of the world.

"For us to have equal footing and step off into the 21st century — this is it," Mrs. Moore said, making a sweeping gesture toward the 15 computers lining the new information center at the Frederick Douglass Community Center.

The center targets youths and adults with the goal of improving computer literacy.

Instructors will provide training for using keyboards, creating databases, doing word processing, producing spreadsheets, using graphics and desktop publishing, and using the Internet.

Computer training and use of the computers are free. The center will be open Monday through Friday

*Fifteen computers
are in place at the
Frederick Douglass
Community Center.*

day from 3 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays from noon to 3 p.m. Users will include members of youth organizations, churches, social service agencies, and adults in high school diploma programs.

"The importance of this center cannot be overstated," Mayor Carty Finkbeiner said at the ribbon-cutting Friday. "We cannot allow the lack of a computer in the home to jeopardize the future employability of our young people as well as those adults who seek new job skills."

To launch the center, ONYX teamed up with the Toledo Chapter of the national Black Data Processing Associates, a group of volunteers employed as computer professionals. The volunteers designed the facility and organized computer and software purchases.

Ameritech provided a three-year, \$150,000 grant to pay for equipment and staff. The project is one of 14 community computer centers in the state slated for low

that Ameritech will fund.

The program falls under an agreement negotiated by Toledo and other customer groups in 1994 when the telecommunications company was deregulated. A second center will be located in Toledo, but a sponsoring organization has not been chosen.

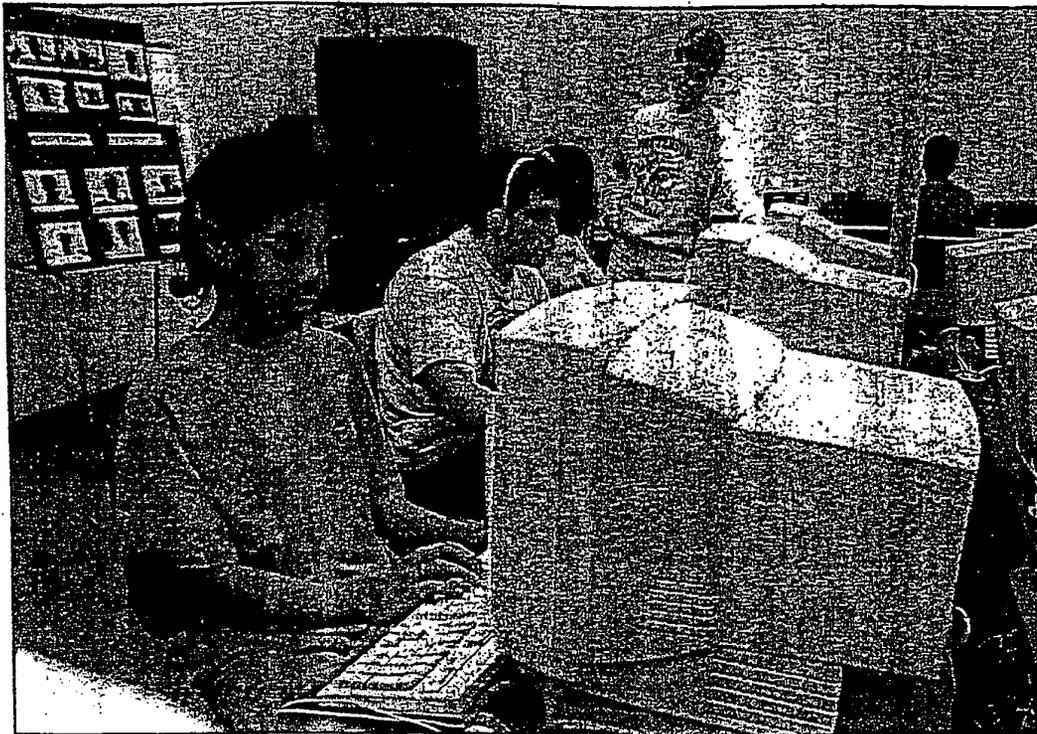
Sixteen-year-old Brittany Norwood, who started tapping on a keyboard shortly after the press conference, said she hopes to serve as computer trainer at the center on weekends.

The high school junior uses a computer at home to do research for science projects and scan for information on colleges and careers, but computers at the center offer more online services.

"You need to be informed about computers because that's what the future is about," she said. "You might as well start learning about them when you're young."

Ameritech officials say they are glad to aid that learning process.

"Youths have to adjust their sights to compete in a world that is no longer what it used to be," said James Dennis, director of external programs for Ameritech. "They have to move down the information highway. Perhaps this computer center will fill in the chuck holes and straighten out the hair-



Mike Menden/Dispatch

Kimberly Price, 12, of Columbus works on a school paper at the computer center at the former North High School, 100 Arcadia Ave. Computer users of every skill level are invited to the center Monday and Wednesday evenings.

Free Ameritech computer center gives users quick trip to Internet

■ *Volunteers show initiates how to use the top-of-the-line equipment, while veterans can go it alone.*

By Mary Mogan Edwards
Dispatch Schools Reporter

Every Monday and Wednesday evening, a window to the world opens at North Education Center for anyone who wants to get online.

The Ameritech Community Computer Center has open-access night 4-9 p.m. Anyone, from the most keyboard-impaired neophyte to the seasoned bytehead who wants to use better stuff than he has at home, can link up with a sophisticated computer network with the help of volunteers.

Kimberly Price, 12, lives near the center in the former North High School at 100 Arcadia Ave. and is a major fan.

"I come here every Monday," Kimberly said recently as she tinkered with lettering styles and page design on a story she was writing for a school project. "First, I do my homework, and then I play games when I'm done."

Kimberly and her sister Tiffanie, 10, walk to the center from their home a few blocks away.

The girls said they enjoy taking pictures and videos of themselves

atop a computer terminal. Playing on the computers also pays classroom dividends.

"We get extra credit for having things typed out," Kimberly said.

The center is one of three in Columbus and 14 statewide. Ameritech agreed in 1994 to spend \$2.2 million on the centers as part of a pact with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio that resulted in lower phone rates and less regulation of Ameritech in providing new telecommunications services.

The city of Columbus chose the local sites. The North center opened in January, the others more recently at the Columbus Urban League, 788 Mount Vernon Ave., and Volunteers of America, 379 W. Broad St.

"The idea is to ensure access to technology for low-income and disadvantaged people," said Leslie Steinau, director of community education for Columbus Public Schools.

Most days, the center is reserved for use by adult education classes and community programs, but on Monday and Wednesday evenings anyone can use the equipment with the help of a coordinator paid through the federal VISTA program, as well as volunteers.

Software written for those age 4 and older is available. Twelve IBM-compatible computers with Windows 95 are tied to a network that records user names and passwords; two of those are connected to the Internet.

Another five Macintosh computers run a variety of stand-alone pro-

grams are there for simple word processing or typing lessons.

Robert Thomas, 51, read about the center in a North High School alumni newsletter. He has a computer at home, but it doesn't do much more than word processing.

"I'm kind of exploring what the possibilities are," said Thomas, a former teacher.

Sitting next to 16-year-old James Wolfinger, a computer center regular and dedicated player of the urban-planning simulation game Sim City, Thomas quickly got interested.

Richard, 20, who didn't want his last name used, is a native of a Russian republic who is in the United States to study English. Through e-mail, the center allows him to exchange messages with his brother back home — both quickly and free.

"I come every Monday and Wednesday," he said. "I usually have mail. Not tonight, though."

COMMUNITY CENTER

Neighborhood gains computer edge

► The EdgeNet Community Computer Center gives Edgemont residents public access.

By Derek All
DAYTON DAILY NEWS

Access to the information superhighway becomes a reality today for residents of the Edgemont Neighborhood as the community celebrates the opening of

the EdgeNet Community Computer Center.

An open house and ribbon cutting will be held at the computer center, 919 Miami Chapel Road, 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. today.

EdgeNet is the first of Dayton's two grass roots community computer centers funded through Ameritech's \$2.2 million Advantage Ohio Program. Organizers of the Otterbein United Methodist Church's computer center are still putting their center together.

Linda Broadus, executive

director of the Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition, said EdgeNet allows people in the community to use computers who would otherwise have no access.

Residents will be able to use the center's eight computers freely through the summer, but technical assistance will be available. In the fall, structured instruction and courses will be offered.

The Edgemont Neighborhood Coalition has received \$60,000 so far from Ameritech for comput-

ers, software, operating expenses and support services. Eventually, Edgemont will receive a total of \$150,000. The city provided \$140,000 to expand the Edgemont Market Place to accommodate the computer center.

Edgemont and Otterbein are among 14 Ohio communities to get computer centers under Advantage Ohio. The plan was the result of a 1994 settlement that would allow Ameritech to set its own prices for certain services in return for freezing basic

phone rates and providing other services.

Ameritech has continued the program despite a March Ohio Supreme Court ruling that struck down Advantage Ohio. Ameritech Spokesman David Kandel said the case was thrown out on a technicality because Ameritech asked the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for a decrease in phone rates, but Ohio law only allows for increases. The court ruled PUCO failed to strictly follow state law when it

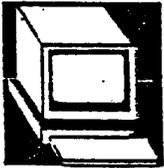
approved the Ameritech plan in November 1994 and remanded the case back to PUCO for reconsideration.

Kandel said a bill introduced in the Ohio House of Representatives on Tuesday would change the law and allow Ameritech to decrease rates.

Meanwhile, Kandel said, "Ameritech has maintained its commitment during this interim period that we are seeking a solution that would put Advantage Ohio together again."

Main library set to dedicate community computer center

■ The library becomes an access ramp today to the information superhighway.



YOUNGSTOWN — A community computer center was to be formally dedicated today at the main branch of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County.

Mayor Patrick J. Ungaro, Bishop Thomas Tobin, and library, Ameritech and PUCO officials were expected to attend today's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Joint project: The center is a joint project of the library, Ameritech and the Ohio Community Computer Center Network.

Ameritech has provided \$60,000 in start-up funds for the center, which is designed to provide an opportunity for hands-on computer orientation and skill development for low-income, inner-city residents.

"Low-income residents can use the center's computers to learn skills which will enable them to participate in today's information revolution," said Theresa A. Trucksis, library director, in a prepared statement.

The mayor said the center offers "opportunity for exposure to information and technology to those who have no other access."

His assistant, Edna D. Pincham, said the center is especially beneficial "for those who are disenfran-

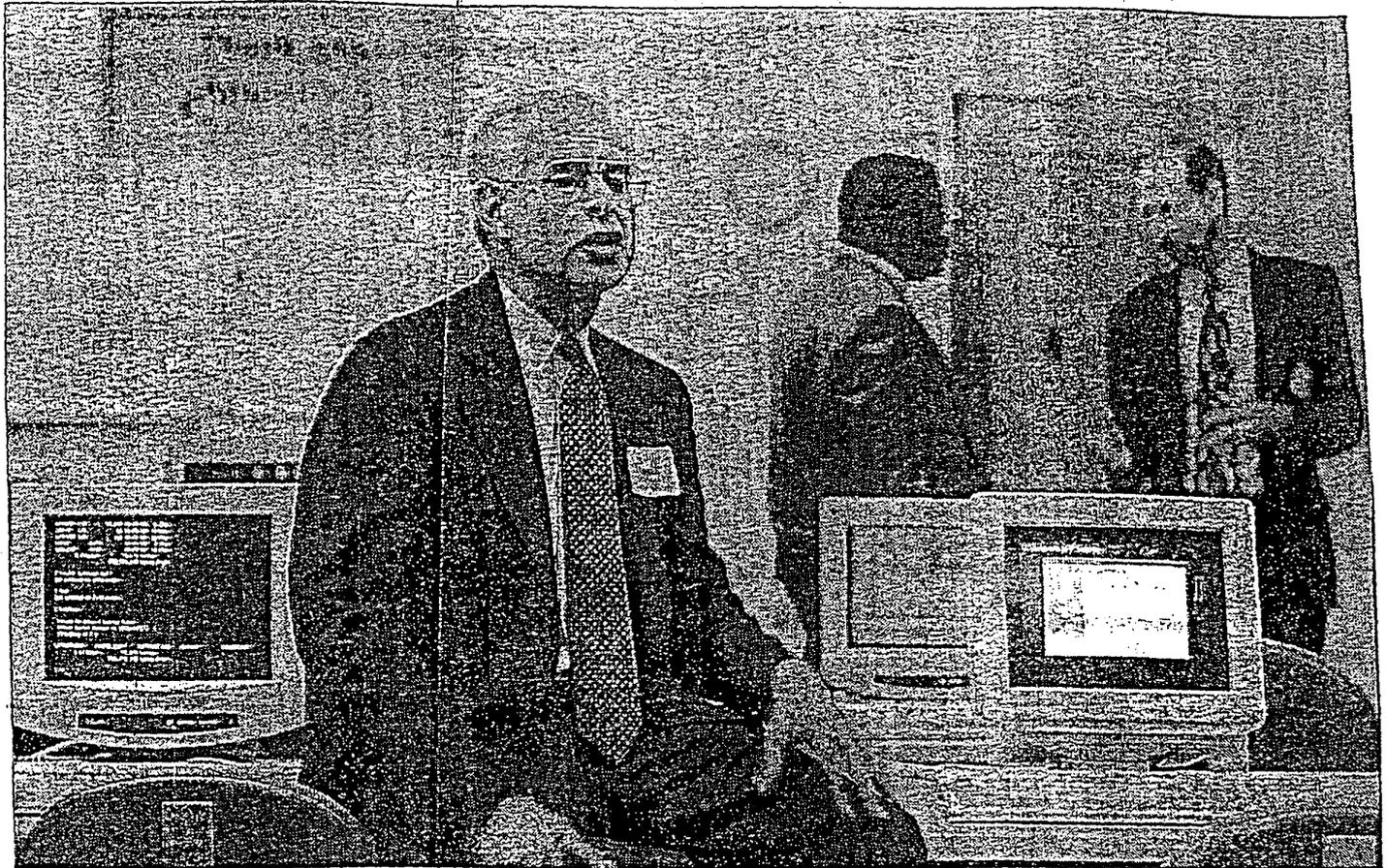
chised and sometimes left out of the system."

Hours: The center, in which computers may be reserved in advance, will be open from 9 a.m. to 8:50 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 5:20 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. Patrons will be limited to two hours per day of computer use.

The center offers eight computers and a variety of software and printers. Basic instruction will be available to help computer users get started.

"Ability to access the information highway is becoming a necessity for the success of our young people. We need to expand opportunities like those offered by this community center," said Craig Glazer, PUCO chairman.

COMPUTERS



BILL REINKE/DAYTON DAILY NEWS

Nick Colaricci, director of the second community computer center, speaks about its usefulness at Otterbein United Methodist Church in the Twin Towers neighborhood. The first center opened in the Edgemont neighborhood:

2nd center opens

► Dayton residents can enhance their job skills at the Ameritech-funded center.

By Jim Dillon
DAYTON DAILY NEWS

In Dayton's Twin Towers neighborhood, where job skills and incomes often lag, there is a new place where residents can boost their computer literacy and their chances of excelling in the electronic age.

Dayton's second community computer center opened Thursday in the former Boy Scout meeting room at Otterbein United Methodist Church, 111 Xenia Ave.

The first center opened May 16 in Dayton's Edgemont neighborhood. Both were funded by \$150,000 grants from Ameritech Corp. The grants cover start-up costs and expenses for

three years.

Ameritech agreed two years ago to provide \$2.2 million for 14 such centers throughout Ohio in exchange for less stringent oversight by state regulators.

The church's center has 10 personal computers loaded with work-oriented word processing, spreadsheet and database software. Educational games and other software will be added, said Nick Colaricci, the center's director.

The computers also are linked in a small network so they can share files, Colaricci said.

The center will be used to teach neighborhood residents the basic computer skills necessary to succeed in today's job market, Pastor Harvey Smith said.

"All of us know that computers are so important in our lives today. If you don't have some skills, you're in trouble. You may not be hired," Smith

said.

Colaricci called the center a "community data center" where individuals can walk in and learn how to use different programs and access the Internet or other computer networks.

In addition, neighborhood churches, schools and businesses can send people to the center to get supervised computer training from volunteers, Colaricci said.

Dayton City Commissioner Abner Orick praised Ameritech for funding the center. Such efforts help reduce the technological disparity between poorer neighborhoods, where "the Internet is a rumor," and wealthier neighborhoods, where "people get aggravated when the Internet doesn't work fast enough for them."

The center will be open to neighborhood residents Monday through Friday from 3 to 9 p.m. and to special interest groups from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.