

RU opens air quality station

By Carol Butrico

TARGUM CORRESPONDENT

The nation's first permanent air monitoring station designed to track wind and weather conditions and to determine air quality was unveiled last Wednesday at Cook College's vegetable farm No.3.

The station is a result of a public-private partnership involving the University, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Environmental Protection Agency, Public Service Electric and Gas Company and Jersey Central Power and Light Company.

Both PSE&G and JCPLC provided the funding and equipment needed for operation.

The station, known as PAMS, Photochemical Assessment Monitoring Stations, is intended to better monitor the air quality conditions and the smog problem in New Jersey, especially around New York City and Philadelphia.

Rod Sharp, Cook's dean of research, said he feels this joint project to protect the environment will be a national model.

"PAMS represents a partnership between academics, industry and government in the state, and Rutgers is proud to take part in this research," Sharp said.

William Hunt Jr., director of the EPA's technical support program, feels PAMS will contribute valuable data which can be used to better assess pollution problems.

"The partnership has taken a major step in the right direction by not only sharing resources and funding, but talent, to achieve a better understanding of air pollution," he said.

The data retrieved from the PAMS equipment will be used for further development and evaluation of pollution emissions estimates and the exposure affects on the population, allowing states to determine if their current efforts to are sufficient.

Hunt said, "As we get closer to achieving the federal standards regarding the pollutant concentrations in the air, we hope to find better approaches to controlling this problem and keeping the pollutants under the federal standard."

On Feb. 12, 1993, Congress developed new regulations for the monitoring of ozone and other pollution problems in the air which call for the use of PAMS.

According to experts, there are six spe-



Allison Greene/ The Daily Targum

This antennae, part of the new PAMS air quality station on the Cook campus, will allow researchers to assess the amount of pollution in the atmosphere above the New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania tri-state area.

cific air pollutants — ozone, carbon monoxide, particulates, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide and lead — that when present in test results, are used as indicators of air quality.

As of 1993, ozone was above the allowable health standard instituted by federal regulations, while the other pollutants remain slightly lower than the standard, reported the EPA.

Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection Robert Shinn Jr. said he views the Cook College station as an affirmation that cooperative efforts can benefit many.

"This is an environmental benefit that can be achieved by working together to make the air healthier to breathe, while complying with the federal health standards," he said.

Ron Lacy, manager of environmental

affairs, said the station's significance will be that it will emphasize the importance compiling precise information.

"We recognize accurate data is necessary to aid in making the best decisions possible," Lacy said. Pete Landrieu, vice president of PSE&G, said because New Jersey is a major polluter of fossil fuels in the Northeast, it should take a leading role in cleaning up the environment.

Landrieu said he is also happy his company is involved in the Cook project.

"Clean air is essential to everyone in our nation. The station in New Jersey will encompass the Northeast, putting forth a regional answer," he said. "In order to solve the problem, we all must focus our efforts on what needs to be done here."

Nathan Reiss, chair of the meteorology department at Cook College, said PAMS and the air quality station represents something the faculty at Rutgers has dreamed about.

