SPECTRUM

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NEW PHONE SYSTEM MAKES DEBUT AT CITY CENTRE

The introduction of a new half-million dollar telephone system at Vancouver Community College is now under way with the opening of new lines for City Centre on Monday, September 16, 1991.

This new, "state of the art" system allows direct dialing to all campus phones, much like the system already in place at Langara Campus. The new system will also alleviate the delays and difficulties that plagued the old one.

Steps toward a new system began about a year ago. Changes were required throughout the campus to meet increased demands on the system. "The old phone system at City Centre had been in place since 1978," explains **Fiona Macdonald**, the System Designer from **MiTel** who oversaw the project. "There were troubles with service and maintenance, and it had become unreliable at times. Basically, the college has more or less outgrown the capability of the old system."

Here are the changes at City Centre:

- **All phones are now accessible by direct dialing. This allows dialing outside of regular hours without going through the central switchboard.**

- **All new numbers are prefixed by 443-___ WITH THE EXCEPTION OF the previous general switchboard number (681-8111) and the two FAX numbers (681-4558, 682-3342) which will go unchanged, at least for the time being**

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- Shared phones have been eliminated from most areas

- New handsets with greater capabilities are in use

- Specified lines have a Call Accounting feature that allows for long-distance dialing

- A new switchboard has also been installed

- For those who still require the assistance of the central switchboard, there is a support answering service that gives the caller a message followed by music while they wait for an operator

The introduction of the system to City Centre went "amazingly smooth", according to Macdonald. "We were prepared for the worst, considering the state of things," she says, "but it's been relatively trouble-free." Support staff spent time in training sessions the week prior to the start date.

The system is proceeding right on schedule. The next stage calls for King Edward Campus to come on line, and that should happen October 21, 1991. At that point, City Centre and KEC staff will be able to network using their four-digit local. Langara is scheduled to join the network on November 12, 1991.

The system also includes Voice Mail capabilities. That stage is likely to go forward in December or January, says Macdonald.