

## NEWS

# Hoyer stresses telecommuting at BSU center



Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) talks to teleworker Venita Lane at the Bowie State University Telecommuting Center.



Hoyer discusses telecommuting at the center.



Hoyer speaks at the telecommuting conference while Bowie State president Calvin W. Lowe and Bowie State University Telecommuting Center director Joyce Twohig Larrick listen.

By Melissa J. Brachfeld  
Sentinel Staff Writer

With the average cost of a gallon of gas now over \$3, Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), visited the Bowie State University Telecommuting Center on Monday afternoon to meet with federal and private teleworkers from all over Maryland.

In 1993, Hoyer joined Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.) to steer the Treasury-Postal Appropriations Act through Congress, which included \$5 million in funding for three telecommuting centers in the Washington metropolitan area.

Joyce Twohig Larrick, director of the center, said the BSU facility was established in 1998 in partnership with the U.S. General Services Administration, and is currently filled to about 90 percent of its capacity. For a \$500 per month full-time membership, she said, employees have ac-

cess to scanners, copy and fax machines, a digital telephone system with voicemail, computers and other technology. The center is also open 24 hours a day.

"The BSU Telecommuting Center is one of 14 centers in the metropolitan area," Larrick said. "For the Bowie residents, it's an ex-

"There is no way that we in the Washington Metropolitan area can keep up with the highway infrastructure that is required and needed for people to get in a reasonable amount of time to and from the Washington-Virginia area," Larrick said. "We have got to learn how to take advantage of the Federal Telework Pro-

gram; how to actually learn how to use the technology that is available to have people work more efficiently and more effectively. The Bowie area in particular has a large percentage of federal workers, so teleworking is a really good option for them to consider."

Baltimore City resident John Tully, who works for the Depart-

ment of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration in Arlington, Va., said after commuting to Virginia five days a week for three years, he now works from the BSU center four days a week.

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**JOHN TULLY**  
BSU Telecommuting Center Patron

cellent opportunity for them to conserve gasoline and to learn how to use technology to work smarter."

She also noted that telecommuting offers area residents the chance to bypass the often-heavy Washington-Virginia traffic.

"I'm as productive here and maybe even more so because I can come in, I'm not wiped out from the long commute, I'm getting more sleep because I can get up later and get in here at about the same time," he said. "So I'm probably a little more productive."

Hoyer said he will continue to promote teleworking as a solution to long office commutes.

"Telecommuting answers the challenge of today's fast-paced workplace while allowing employees to work much closer to home," he said. "As Marylanders continue to face pain at the pump, I will continue to promote this viable and successful alternative."

benefit [for me]," he said. "My commute has been cut from an hour and a half a day to about 25 minutes. I still take mass transit, but it's closer to where I live in Baltimore City. Also, my government transit benefits cover the entire three-month transportation cost whereas before when I was going to headquarters in Arlington, Va., it only took me about halfway through each three-month period."

Hoyer noted that some companies and agencies worry about their employees' productivity levels, but Tully said he feels that he is more productive at the telecommuting center than he is at his Virginia office.