

Brevard County Purchases IBM 1620 for a Quarter of a Million Dollars

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Article/Picture Contributed by Frank LoPresti (Stepson), June 2015



Ray Parker Operates New Computer System

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Brevard

Complete State News

County, Schools to Benefit

Computer Is a Triple-Bargain for

By **BILL DuPRIEST**
 North Brevard Bureau Chief

COCOA — The quarter-million-dollar computer rented by the county school system promises Brevardians a triple bargain in education:

SCHOOL CHILDREN will get a better quality teaching and more individual attention.

THE COUNTY school administration will be more efficient, saving countless taxpayers' dollars.

WE'LL HAVE one of the few schools in the country

offering the much-in-demand associates degree in data processing.

A chronic complaint of teachers at every level is that they spend too much time with records, not enough with children. As one example of computer-saved teacher time, consider report cards:

Each nine week grading period, the average teacher spends five hours figuring grades and copying them. There are 1,600 teachers in Brevard.

That's 6,400 more hours for better planning and more personal attention, points out H. H. McAshan.

McAshan, director of research for the county school system, said the IBM 1620 model computer moved into Brevard Junior College July 1 is being used for payroll calculations, reproducing data cards, updating summary cards, bookkeeping, and vendor accounts.

Incidental fact-finding that used to take weeks can now be handled in moments. McAshan offered an example:

"If the county wants to know how many hours of sick leave a teacher has accrued at any time it will save hundreds of hours of checking."

Andy Beaudoin of BJC recalled: "Once we needed to find the number of students that graduated from a high school in a certain year. We were faced with 8,000 student records. The machine isolated the information in a matter of seconds."

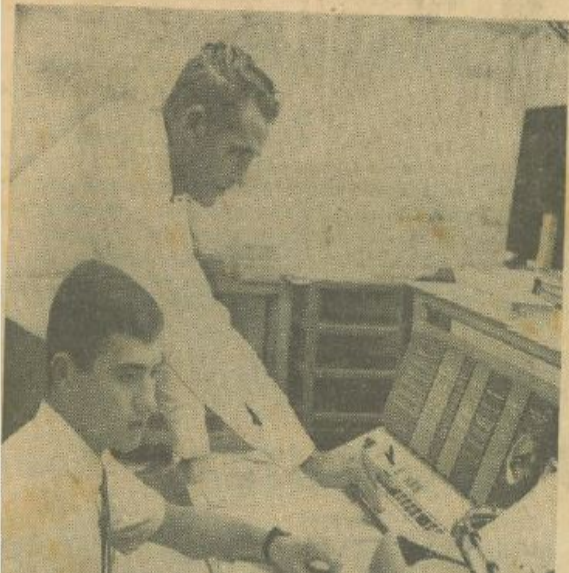
About 22 hours of the computer's busy week is taken up by instruction at BJC under the direction of Ray Parker, supervisor of data processing.

Jim Whitney, registrar of the college, said the two data processing courses offered now are slated for expansion to a full-fledged two year program leading to an associates degree in data processing.

"There'll be a total of eight courses, two a semester. The overall goal of the program will be to train students to set up and operate the machine."

Industry pays \$7-14,000 for qualified data processors. From that job they advance to programmers, the people who decide what information is to be fed into the machines.

Eventually, the data processing courses will be offered in secondary schools in the county, McAshan said.



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to prepare high schoolers for advanced training or jobs as trainees.

"IBM says there'll be 500,000 jobs for people trained in data processing by 1970," he noted.

The computer usually rents for \$2-4,000 monthly, according to Marty Finklestein of IBM, a part-time instructor at the college. But thanks to a discount arrangement for education systems, the county only pays \$800 monthly.

The future of the county's compact computer is chock-full of new uses.

Next year, all student records will be stored in "disc files," three discs stacked like phonograph records will contain three million bits of student information, all available in seconds.

The discs can be updated or erased. Information can be added at any time, in any place. And other disc files can be substituted in case the county needs three million storage spaces in another field.

Other uses for the computer are legion. "You're only limited by the imagination and accuracy of the user," said Finklestein.