



Friday, May 23, 2003

New substation provides reliable power

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Two years' worth of upgrades to the electrical distribution system on Oakland University's main campus culminated May 20 when work crews switched the main source of campus power to a new Detroit Edison electrical substation.

The substation provides a higher quality and more reliable source of power for the main campus and also will meet the projected growth of campus power needs for at least the next 15 to 20 years.

"Prior to the switch, our main source of power was the Carter Substation (located near Walton Boulevard and I-75)," said Associate Vice President for Facilities Management Rusty Postlewate. "The main campus now has a better quality power source. The new substation uses underground lines as opposed to the overhead lines from the older substation. This makes the main campus less susceptible to weather-related outages, such as the ice storms we had last winter."

The Spencer Substation, a \$6 million facility, is located on the southern end of campus off Lonedale Road. It acts as a general-purpose substation, serving the surrounding community as well as OU. Construction of the facility began in September 2001 and was completed last fall.

Nearly 120,000 volts feed the Spencer Substation compared to 13,200 from the Carter Substation. Switchgear in the new substation reduces the 120,000 volts to 13,200 before being transmitted to university buildings. A separate substation, located off campus, supplies power to OU's east campus.

"The 13,200 volts are typically provided by overhead lines on telephone poles," Postlewate said. "The 120,00 volts are what you see on the big towers. Our lines, however, are underground."

To perform the switchover, a series of brief power interruptions were scheduled to shift each building among different power lines before the transfer to the new distribution network could be completed. The interruptions were scheduled over a one-week period from 6 to 8 a.m. to minimize disruptions, which began May 14.

"The Science and Engineering Building took a little more time to transfer, but most buildings were down only for two to three minutes," Postlewate said.

For more information on the switchover, contact Project Manager Dan Niezurawski at (248) 370-4438 or niezuraw@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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