Work progressing on campus computer network; fiber optic backbone to be in place by fall semester

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INTERNET. Software. Network. Multimedia. What do all these terms mean? Perhaps little or nothing to those people who don't read magazines, watch TV, or shop at grocery stores. Could be that they only sound like big words to confuse people. Actually these words define the very backbone of our daily lives. Technology is advancing rapidly.

Almost every aspect of our daily routine involves some sort of exposure to technology. Luckily for students at Chowan College, the school is expanding its network, which will provide hundreds of opportunities for students to move ahead in life. Not only will students be able to drive your new car, they may even be able to tell you how to fix it.

Chowan College will begin the fall semester '96 with a newly installed fiber optic network backbone. The network will provide a path to interconnect all buildings on the campus of the college to a main file server and the Internet. Faculty offices, computer labs and classrooms will have access to shared resources on the network.

To accommodate the needs of the network system, a new administrative department was established. Dr. Andrea Eason was appointed the new Executive director of Information Technology. Sherry Duncan will serve as the Database Administrator and Bobby Futrell will serve as the Network Administrator.

As executive Director, Dr. Eason will be responsible for all aspects of academic and administrative computing, networking, multimedia instructional development, media services, automation of the library and computer laboratories, hardware and software support and faculty/staff training and development of applications.

Sherry Duncan will be responsible for tasks ranging from management of the administrative information system to providing help-desk support for users.

As the Network Administrator, Bobby Futrell will be responsible for managing the network servers, the print servers and desktop nodes throughout the campus, as well as maintaining security of the LAN, updating the network of operating system, trouble shooting and supervising student workers in computer labs.

Chowan started with a small 50-user network which seemed to accommodate the school's needs rather well. But as technology began advancing quickly, Chowan saw the need to upgrade the computer system.

"The Internet wasn't a big deal four years ago," said Bobby Futrell. "As far as that goes,

The network will provide a path to interconnect all buildings on the campus to a main file server and the Internet.

CD's were only audio CD's and now they are the media of choice." Technology training will be provided for faculty and staff.

The project began in 1994, when a committee of faculty and staff members was appointed to study the possibility of designing an enterprise-wide network. After seeking bids on a network design, ZIPCOM, a company in Cary, N.C., that provides solutions for local and wide-are networks, was chosen to implement the new computer network.

The fiber is being installed under the direction of Johnny Brock, director of the physical plant. The final termination and testing of the fiber connections will be done by ZIPCOM.

One of the main components of the network will be a new file server. The file server will have two Pentium 133 MHz processor boards, 128 MB of RAM, and three 4.3 Gbyte fast wide SCSI-2 disk drives.

In addition to providing a client/server environment for the educational program at the college, Chowan will set up a web server, a mail

Johnny Brock gives directions to the backhoe operator as to where to begin digging a new trench for the fiber optic cable.

server, and dial-in access for faculty and staff.

The new network has a 100MB switchable hub with several segments to provide increased handswitch. "Chowan is seeking a highly reliable and available network," said Dr. Eason. "We believe the network solution we have chosen will be a sound one."

The college has selected the Bay Networks suite of products as network backbone components. All switches and concentrators in the various campus buildings have been selected to provide fault tolerant networking equipment. The connections to each building are managed by a network management module and, upon fiber connection failure, will re-route traffic to a separate interface to assure network integrity.

Software provides network management down to the individual port level for all network host modules. In addition, the Chowan network administration staff will be able to monitor and upgrade all hubs, routers and switches automatically through software.

The network project is being completed in phases. The first phase includes the installation of the fiber to connect every building on

Chowan becoming one of the most advanced technology centers among small private colleges

Members of the Chowan maintenance department, under the direction of Johnny Brock, director of physical plant, prepare the trenches to carry fiber optic cable under walkways and into the campus buildings.