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## \$3 million-plus home showcased at business park

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard  
08/31/2005

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The new \$3 million-plus home of 73 employees of the Fayette County Mental Health/Mental Retardation office at the Fayette County Business Park was showcased Monday during an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Lisa Ferris-Kusniar, MH/MR administrator/CEO, said she learned a lot about buildings during the construction process, but added that everyone leaving the event should remember that the building is not merely bricks and mortar, but rather the staff and the services provided.

Ferris-Kusniar said staff provides a key central point of service and delivery for MH/MR patients. Ferris-Kusniar said the annual budget of the department has grown from \$17 million in June 1985 to more than \$43 million today.

MH/MR employees used to be spread out between the second floor of the Fayette County Health Center and on the second and eighth floors of the National City Bank building, Ferris-Kusniar said. She said being in the new building makes everything more efficient.

Ferris-Kusniar said everyone has been working as one cohesive team since the move. "This is our new house," she said. "It is a beautiful building."

Fayette County Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites said it is a real advantage to have everybody under one roof. Vicites said with the new building, the agency now has one of the finest facilities in the state of Pennsylvania for MH/MR.

The 22,500-square foot building features a 2 1/2-story open lobby with a large atrium space and a glass skylight in the

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entranceway. The architect for the project was Michael A. Molnar.

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Charmaine Sampson, administrative assistant for Commissioner Joseph A. Hardy III, said having the entire staff in one site would make for better productivity, and make the county look much better.

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During a tour of the building following the ribbon cutting, Ferris-Kusniar said since the building was in the planning stages three years ago, staff has expanded by 15 people. She said the building has capacity for 79 employees.

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MH/MR provides family, adult and children mental health services, including outpatient psychiatric services, advocacy/support programs, crisis intervention and early intervention.

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