

Piedmont College performing arts/communications center

\$13 million building is 'phenomenal'

By JEFF GILL
The Times

DEMOREST

Sandi Tatum of Piedmont College had one word for her new academic digs: amazing.

"Considering where we were, this is phenomenal," the 20-year-old student and editor for the student magazine,

Pause, said of the college's new Swanson Center for the Performing Arts and Communications.

"We were literally stuck in closets around campus," she said, referring to previous instructional space.

The \$13 million center — opened this academic year — is on the college's property across Demorest Lake. Connecting the Swanson Center to the rest of the school is a wooden pedestrian bridge.

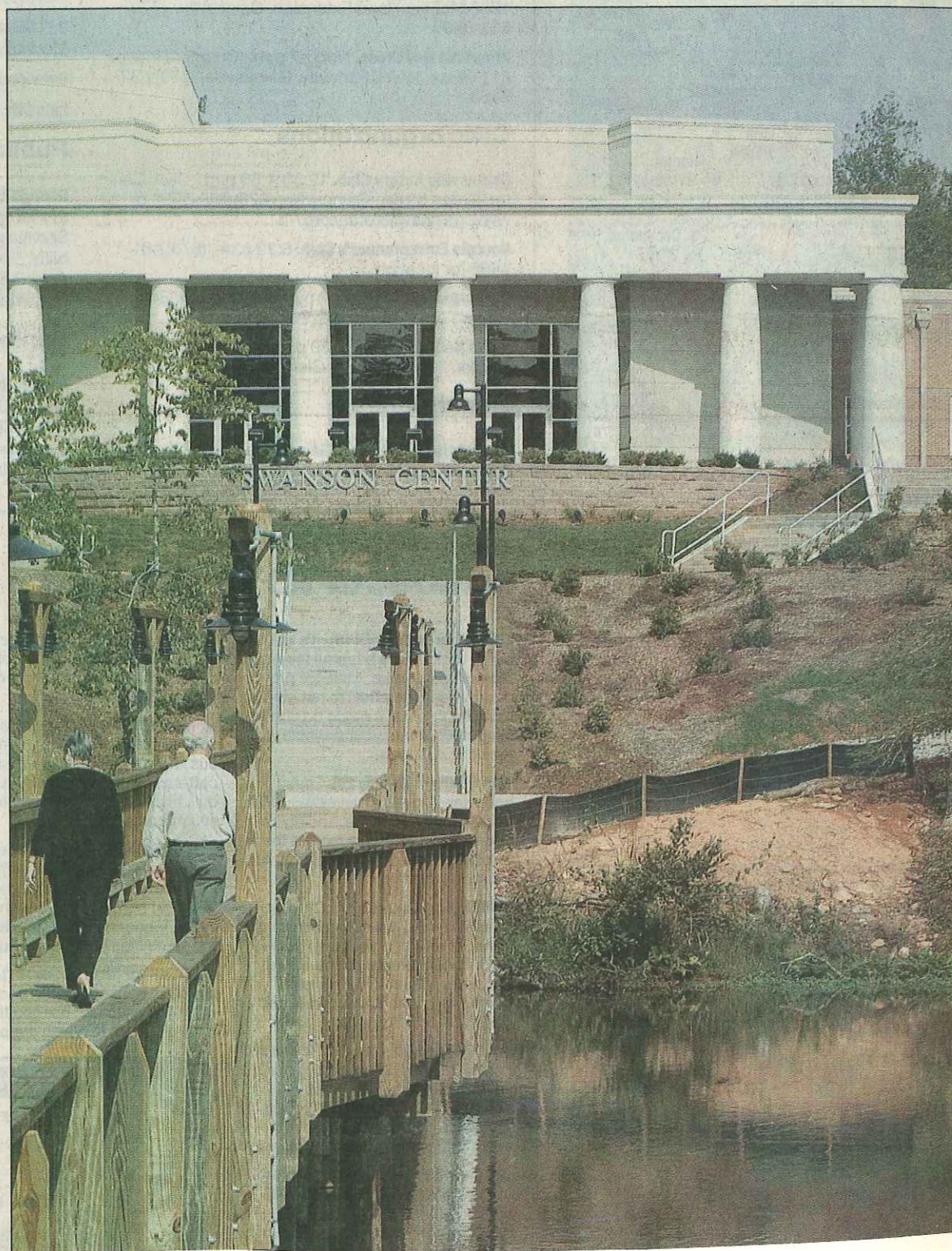
The building, which has about 45,000 square feet of usable space, features two distinct operations.

The mass communications department houses a TV studio with a newsroom as a backdrop, as well as rooms for the campus radio station and a Georgia Public Broadcasting affiliate.

The theater department houses a 360-seat theater with a four-story stage, a catwalk lighting system, dressing rooms, a wood shop, a costume room and an actors' lounge.

"I may have a problem with people living here," said Richard M. Rose, professor and chairman of the theater department, as he gave a walking tour of the new space Friday.

Both departments have classroom space in the new building, but often the real instruction takes place in a studio or theater.



On the Net

For more information about Piedmont College, visit www.piedmont.edu.