Census office ready for '90, opens doors

stelf writer

Officially, the U.S. Census will be taken April 1 of 1990.
In practice, the headcount of America's 50 states and territories takes 2½ years of preparation and two more years of analysis.
"Our undercount has been deellning," said a pleased Ross Forbes, a 26-year veleran of the decennial count. He is assistant manager of a Regional Census Center in Southfield which will serve Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia.

THE PUBLIC —

The census office is hiring, too.
"The bulk of our staffing starts a year to a 1% years in advance," said Forbes.

satellite of the downtown Detroit headquarters, where a permanent staff conducts continuing surveys on health, income, Jobs and crime.

Ten years ago, the prep work done by Dean, Forbes and Robert Petersen, another assistant manager, also was done in Detroit.

But the Eleven Mile site was picked because the map-making and address list Jobs are bigger and less centralized.

"THIS IS ONE of 13 census centers in the U.S.," Forbes said. "There are a total of 43 district offices in those three states.

"This is the management center. We do all of the map preparation. We train all the management level staff (7-10 per office), a total of about 300.

"We find space for the district officer.

"We find space for the district or-fices. All the payroll work comes from this office. We're the computer center for all." At the peak, 125 workers will staff the regional center,

BECAUSE 95 percent of Americans will reply to the census by mail, the bureau must have absolutely accurate addresses and maps.

Those facts are stored on comput-

er tape and updated, updated, updated. Two or three shifts of geogra-

phers, computer specialists and elerical people will do this work.

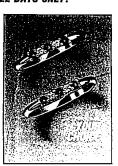
The census folks are consclous not only of public relations but local governmental relations. Population figures are translated into congressional and legislative representation — and into a horde of federal grant programs. There have been lawsuits over alleged undercounting in the past.

"Local communities will have a "Carbon Market of the many and the properties of the many and the properties of the many and lists.

AS THE DISTRICT offices are added, the Census Bureau will have a deed, the Census Bureau will him to allow the many and the ma



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