KBIA picks up 'Pepper'

Canceled TV show finds home on radio.

By Janese Heavin

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After 40 years on the small screen, Paul Pepper will make a radio debut in October.

Pepper

KBIA, a University of Missouri-licensed public radio station, announced yesterday it will host a new, 10-minute version of "Pepper & Friends" at 8:50 a.m. weekday mornings starting Oct. 5. The segments will be recorded at the Reynolds Journalism Institute, and station's Web site will have videos posted for download after each show.

KOMU, a university-owned television station, announced in May that the station is canceling "Pepper & Friends," with the last show scheduled Sept. 18.

Pepper said he expects a radio segment to be similar to the hourlong television program, even though he will not be joined by co-host James Mouser, who instead will pursue an art-related career.

"I'll be doing pretty much what we're doing here," Pepper said. "I'll have music and interviews featuring all of the people in the community."
KBIA General Manager Mike Dunn said he has directed Pepper to focus on the arts and profile local agencies.

"There are a lot of lively things going on in the community that I think a lot of people would like to know about," Dunn said. "And there are service organizations, the Voluntary Action Center and a variety of other people who need a place to get their message out."

Dunn said the adding the show is a response to listeners who have requested more community programming. After making the announcement yesterday, Dunn said he has received positive feedback, including a call from a company asking to be the show’s first sponsor.

Pepper signed a six-month contract with KBIA, which gives both parties a chance to review the show’s success, Dunn said. "We both think this is going to be successful," he said. But having the contract expire "gives both of us the opportunity to say if it’s not doing what we wanted."

Efforts are still under way to save the “Pepper & Friends” television show on KOMU. A Facebook group dedicated to the program has scheduled a town hall meeting about the show’s cancelation for 7 p.m. Aug. 5 in Room 113 of the Arts and Science Building at MU.

Pepper stressed that neither he nor Mouser is involved in that effort, but “it just continues to amaze me how passionate so many people are about keeping this show on the air."

If KOMU were to keep broadcasting “Pepper & Friends”, Pepper said he would still do a program for KBIA as well.

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Today's Question: Paul Pepper moves to KBIA

By Jenn Ballard
July 28, 2009 | 3:35 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Paul Pepper signed a contract with radio station KBIA/91.3 FM Monday, bringing his community content from television to the radio.

In May, after 27 years, KOMU announced the “Pepper and Friends” program would air for the last time on Sept. 18. Marty Siddall, KOMU general manager, said budget issues were the reason for the show’s cancellation.

The KBIA version, dubbed “Radio Friends with Paul Pepper,” which is to debut Oct. 5, will air Monday through Friday during Morning Edition in a 10-minute slot instead of its previous television allotment of one hour.

However, it will feature much of the same subject matter as its predecessor.

“We talked to Paul about concentrating on two things: the arts community and what we call the service community, which is all the different organizations around the city that provide services to people,” said Mike Dunn, KBIA general manager.

Columbia resident Dan Peek said a town meeting in response to KOMU’s decision to cancel the show is planned for Aug. 5 in the Arts and Science Building at MU.

Although Pepper said he was sad about losing "Pepper and Friends," he also said that he was looking forward to continuing to highlight the community on KBIA.

"I feel very good about that because at least we will be able to do some of the segments from 'Pepper and Friends' on KBIA," Pepper said. "I think it's wonderful for the community because what KOMU did by canceling our show was simply silencing a voice in our community. I think KBIA has had the foresight to see that there really is a need
for organizations and community. That doesn't mean that I don't feel sad about the end of 'Pepper and Friends.'"

Pepper's contract is for six months, which Dunn said would give both parties a chance to try out the partnership.

In addition to the radio segments, the show will be videotaped and placed online for viewers.

What do you think of Paul Pepper's show switching from KOMU to KBIA?
Fake Mizzou Web address has some laughing, others seeing crimson

By Janese Heavin

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

University of Missouri officials aren’t laughing about a virtual prank that uses its nickname to lead visitors into rival territory.

The Web address www.mizzou.us takes users to the official University of Kansas Web site.

MU administrators became aware of the address last week, spokesman Christian Basi said. “We’ve asked the individual to stop using the Web site address because it infringes on a federally registered trademark,” he said.

A Collegiate Licensing Co. spokeswoman confirmed that a letter has been sent but could not disclose details.

A search of the domain name leads to an “L. Jeffries” of 501 E. Nifong Blvd., Suite 311, in Columbia, a UPS Store location. It’s against federal regulation to disclose information about mailboxes, so owner John Kadlec could not verify whether the 311 mailbox exists.

“I think it’s pretty funny, though,” Kadlec said, referring to the site. “I’m a big KU hater, but it’s clever.” Kadlec is the son of Tiger broadcaster John Kadlec, but he said he didn’t think that had anything to do with the choice of mailbox site.

Jill McIntosh, president of the Mizzou Alumni Association, also gave the site owner “kudos for creativity.” But she fears students searching for MU information will accidentally land in enemy territory.

“To me, it seems like an unfortunate, but not entirely unexpected, prank,” she said. “If it was the other way around, I probably would laugh.”

On online forums, some have attempted to track down the site owner. Some have pointed to Owl Software, a Columbia business with a mailbox at the UPS store. Owner Ann Roland said there’s no connection between the site and her company, which writes software for the food industry.
KU just became aware of the fake address and is not responsible for it, spokeswoman Jill Jess said. But the university hasn't taken steps to ask the owner to remove it. "We can't control what the greater Jayhawk nation does on the Internet," Jess said. "Sometimes they can get a bit overzealous."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Misleading Web site linking MU to KU home page disappears

By Danielle Rodabaugh
July 29, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – A misleading Web site that linked an MU trademark to the University of Kansas homepage disappeared Tuesday afternoon.

Linda Gilbert, MU Licensing and Trademarks Office program administrator, became aware of mizzou.us last week, said Christian Basi, MU spokesman. Although the address listed an MU trademark, "Mizzou," visitors were directed to the KU site, Basi said.

He said the Collegiate Licensing Company sent a letter Monday asking the owner to deactivate the account because of trademark infringement.

The site was still active at about 3:45 p.m. Tuesday afternoon. But the Missourian received word of the site's disappearance from MU Tiger's Lair webmaster Kevin Valliere shortly after 4 p.m. "I tried going to the Web site, and it just leads me to a GoDaddy filter page," Valliere stated in a Facebook message.

The top of the site now reads, "This Web page is parked FREE courtesy of GoDaddy.com," and also offers a listing for other MU-related sites.

The Collegiate Licensing Company could not be reached to confirm whether the site's disappearance was directly related to Monday's letter.
Swine flu present in Boone County; MU students affected abroad

By Emily David
July 29, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Although only one Boone County case has been confirmed through testing, an epidemiologist said Tuesday that the swine flu is here and is making people sick.

"If someone has influenza-like symptoms right now, it's most likely this bug," said epidemiologist Eddie Hedrick, emerging infections coordinator for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. "What people don't understand is that we don't confirm every case."

According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 99 percent of people who have tested positive for an influenza virus right now have the H1N1 strain, Hedrick said.

As of Thursday, there were 80 confirmed and probable cases in the state, one of those in Boone County and three in Callaway County, according to the Department of Health and Senior Services.

Meanwhile, four of 40 MU students who traveled to South Korea to take part in an English teaching program in the Jeonnam province have been quarantined. Since their arrival on July 19, the students have been diagnosed with the H1N1 flu virus, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

"The other individuals who were not showing flu symptoms voluntarily quarantined themselves," Basi said.

The students are due to return to the U.S. on Aug. 19 or 20 and do not expect the situation to delay their return, Basi said.
Valerie Insinna, one of the students currently in South Korea, said on her blog "Going Mobile" on Monday that her most recent swine flu test was negative. But the other two students who were tested were positive. She went on to say that they are taking Tamiflu.

"Tamiflu won't prevent swine flu, but for those who have it and haven't shown symptoms, it will help fight the virus quicker. Most of us have decided to take Tamiflu, and we all will be tested for swine flu in five days," she said on the blog. The students were unable to participate in their first “camp” because of the quarantine, according to the blog.

They’re not the first MU students to learn they have the swine flu after leaving the U.S. In May, a student flew home to China to get married but was quarantined upon his arrival with H1N1, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Hedrick said some countries are testing to try and contain the disease, “but it doesn’t work because people there already have it,” Hedrick said.

Still, he acknowledged the inconvenience for travelers who could leave home not knowing they’ve been exposed. “I would be very cautious when going to other countries where they are testing more strictly,” he said.

Health officials are not testing everyone with flu symptoms to determine whether they have H1N1 because “continuing to test plays no major role in this," Hedrick said. “As of July 24, (the World Health Organization) told countries to shut down testing because it's a waste of resources and significantly underestimates the amount of virus that is out there.”

Hedrick said that of 43,771 confirmed and probable cases in the U.S., 302 deaths have been reported by state and local health departments. But the first figure substantially underestimates the prevalence of this flu because not everyone is tested.

“For the most part, the only tests that are being done is if there’s a camp or an outbreak somewhere and they want to diagnose exactly what’s wrong,” Hedrick explained.

Hedrick is to speak on the current status of H1N1 at a school safety conference in Columbia on Friday. Department officials are meeting with all groups involved with education throughout the state about the latest recommendations and guidelines.
Hedrick said he is keeping an eye on the flu's progress in Australia because it is winter there. "They are having a fairly robust (flu) season, meaning that they have this new virus on top of what normally circulates," he said.
Missouri, Kansas colleges boosting efforts to beef up graduation rates

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
The Kansas City Star

In fall 2001, nearly 1.5 million students started college at four-year schools across the country. By 2007, fewer than six in 10 had earned a diploma.

The average in Missouri and Kansas was no better.

Now schools in those two states are cranking up efforts to help students adjust quickly to campus life, hang in there, get good grades and graduate.

Low graduation rates among full-time, undergraduate students at U.S. colleges and universities represent a crisis, according to the American Enterprise Institute, a public policy research group.

U.S. graduation rates are low compared with Norway, Britain, Japan, Korea and Netherlands.

The other side of the coin: This country gives more diverse populations access to college and offers more second chances for dropouts to go back and get their degrees later in life, said Mark Schneider, vice president at the American Institutes for Research and an author of the national report.

And the ratings do not correct for transfers in or out of a school.

While the numbers worry national educators and economists who consider future work forces and skill levels, parents also should care about them.

"If you have kids, you are going to take out thousands and thousands of dollars in loans, pack them up, drop them off at the dorm, and get a big bill, and they may not ever even graduate from that school," Schneider said.

"Whether your kids graduate depends, in part, on where they go to school."

Another fact: Unemployment disproportionately affects workers without a degree.

The average graduation rate — which cuts off success or failure at six years — for Missouri state schools is 51.8 percent. The average in Kansas is 46.7 percent. The states' average rates include private schools.

At the University of Missouri-Kansas City, the rate is 43 percent.

"As a university, our goal is to move our graduation rate up to 50 percent," said Mel Tyler, vice chancellor for UMKC student affairs. "A lot is going into that effort."

By that, Tyler means a lot of brick and mortar.

Construction crews at UMKC are building a new soccer stadium, renovating the library, and erecting a new student union and a new residence hall, the third in the last six years. The stadium and the residence hall will open this fall.

"We want a more vibrant campus environment. That has a lot to do with students' ability to connect with their university," Tyler said. "All the research shows that the more connection students have to the campus, the more success they have academically."

At the University of Missouri in Columbia, the graduation rate over the last 20 years has risen to 67 percent, said Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management.

She pointed to the Student Success Center, which offers tutoring, career and academic advice, and a freshman housing program that groups new students on the same degree course in the residence halls.
When University of Kansas' new chancellor, Bernadette Gray-Little, was hired June 1, she emphasized improvement of the graduation rate as a top priority.

Since 2002, KU's graduation rate has been on a slow climb, one to two percentage points each year. Currently, KU is at 60 percent, two points over Kansas State University.

Pat Bosco, K-State's vice president of student life, said there has been improvement.

"We have put more money into scholarships for returning students; maybe this has helped," he said.

In an attempt to improve graduation rates, Missouri and Kansas educators are trying to come up with a profile of the student who drops out at their schools, and figure out why that student leaves.

"We understand that for some students, the University of Missouri is just not the right fit," Korschgen said. "But what we are concerned about is when MU could work for a student but they don't stay to graduate."

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Congress Introduces Bill To Ensure Continuous Domestic Supplies Of Common Medical Isotope

29 Jul 2009

SNM and a coalition of eight other organizations have issued a white paper urging Congress to take steps to maintain adequate supplies of Molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), a radioactive substance that is the basis for a common medical isotope used in more than 80 percent of all nuclear medicine procedures.

The coalition jointly issued the paper to ensure that patient care is not compromised by a worldwide shortage of Mo-99 and measures to curtail the use of high-enriched uranium (HEU) in radionuclide production as a non-proliferation strategy. In response, U.S. Representative Edward Markey (D-Mass.) introduced legislation (H.R. 3276) reflecting many of the coalition's concerns. The coalition has endorsed the legislation.

In additional to SNM, the coalition includes the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), American College of Radiology (ACR), American Nuclear Society (ANS), American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC), American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), Council on Radionuclides and Radiopharmaceuticals (CORAR), Health Physics Society (HPS) and Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI).

"Recent closures of nuclear facilities abroad are putting a severe strain on our ability to meet demand for this critical medical isotope," said Michael Graham, M.D., Ph.D., president of SNM. "Congress should take steps to boost production domestically and to ensure that the transition away from using highly enriched uranium in medical isotope production does not further strain supplies. We applaud Congress for taking up this issue and urge the government to act without delay."

Mo-99 decays into Technetium-99m (Tc-99m) - a medical isotope used in approximately 16 million nuclear diagnostic imaging procedures annually in the United States. These noninvasive procedures are essential for accurately diagnosing and treating patients with potentially life-threatening conditions such as cancer, heart disease and neurologic conditions.

Currently, more than 90 percent of Mo-99 is produced in aging nuclear reactors located in Canada, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and South Africa. Concerns about medical isotope supplies have mounted in recent years as scheduled and unplanned shutdowns of overseas reactors have interrupted production. Most recently, the National Research Universal reactor in Ontario, Canada - which supplies about 40 percent of the world's Mo-99 - has been shut down until later this year because of a heavy water leak following a power outage.

Further complicating the situation are recent recommendations to curtail the use of HEU in radionuclide production because of potential security concerns. However, the conversion to the alternative low-enriched uranium (LEU) to produce medical isotopes is still years away. Before such a transition can take place, large-scale commercial facilities must be planned, converted and demonstrate efficacy.
To address these concerns, the coalition's white paper recommends that the government explore a public-private partnership to speed the availability of Mo-99 and ensure continued diagnostic imaging for patients. It is imperative that domestic sources of Mo-99 be developed to guarantee a reliable supply.

The paper identifies two potential domestic sources of Mo-99 as the most viable: the University of Missouri Research Reactor Center (MURR) in Columbia, Mo., and the collaborative effort between the companies Babcock & Wilcox (B&W) and Covidien to build a reactor running strictly on LEU. MURR could meet approximately 50 percent of the U.S. demand for Mo-99 with little change, the paper notes, and it could also help fill gaps in supplies during planned shutdowns of other reactors. B&W and Covidien estimate that a new reactor technology could be operational in about five years and supply half of the U.S. demand for Mo-99. Together, these two sources could eventually meet 100 percent of the U.S. demand for Mo-99. The coalition urges the government to speed approvals for these facilities and support the Markey bill, which provides federal funding for the projects.

Finally, the organizations stress that any requirement to transition from HEU to LEU in the production of medical isotopes must ensure that supplies of Mo-99 are sufficient and that patient needs are not compromised. Adequate time must be available for research and development to guarantee that the technology and equipment are robust and reliable.
Student loan subsidies a corporate scam

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

The following appeared Wednesday in the New York Times.

The federal college loan program that pays private lenders a generous subsidy to make loans that are guaranteed by the government is an enormous waste of money that has long served more to enrich lenders than to help students.

Nevertheless, the Republican leadership in Congress is opposing a House bill that would save the country nearly $90 billion in the next decade by ending this program and allowing students to borrow directly from the government through colleges.

The subsidy program was created when lenders were showing little interest in the college loan program and was intended to make sure that young people could get loans when times were tough. This expensive strategy failed outright during the credit crunch, when the federal government had to buy outstanding loans to keep new loans available to students. The direct lending system, which was already known to be cheaper, needed no such rescue.

A bill introduced by Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., would end the unnecessary private lending subsidies and plow the savings into important education programs. The bill, for example, devotes $40 billion to the all-important Pell grant program, which has allowed millions of poor and working-class students to attend college.

It would spend $8 billion on early-education programs and $10 billion on an initiative aimed at strengthening community colleges. It sets aside $4 billion for a school modernization and improvement program.

The consolidated program proposed in the bill would in no way expand government. The loans would be handled through colleges. They would be serviced and collected by private companies and not-for-profits that are already lining up to get the work. By forcing the companies to compete and to undergo periodic re-evaluations, Congress could get a good deal for taxpayers and better service for borrowers.

The arguments for passing this bill and ending the subsidy program are powerful. But the Republican leadership has distorted the debate by describing the bill as a plan for pushing private capital out of student lending. It would be more accurate to describe it as a plan for pushing corporate welfare out of student lending.