A-B sells black-and-gold "Fan Can" near MU

By Kavita Kumar
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The University of Missouri-Columbia is one of the campuses where "Fan Cans," have begun to pop up. The cans of beer, part of an Anheuser-Busch InBev special promotion sold in the markets around 27 college campuses nationwide, do not include the campus' logos or names, but do use the colleges' colors.

While some campuses have been complaining to A-B — and the brewer has agreed to drop the promotions in those cases — MU is not raising objections, said university spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken.

The university's trademark licensing person checked out some Wal-Marts around Columbia where the new cans are being sold and confirmed that none of the university's trademarks were being used. The staffer also made sure that the cans were not being placed nearby Mizzou's official merchandise sold at the stores.

"We'll continue to monitor it and look at the displays," Banken said. "But there is no way it could be perceived that Mizzou was supporting the purchase of beer in black and gold cans."

Still, the university's health services folks, who see a spike in emergency room visits by inebriated students on home football weekends, aren't happy with the Fan Cans.

"I'm not pleased with them," Kim Dude, director of the University of Missouri Wellness Resource Center, told the Columbia Daily Tribune. "I don't know if they will necessarily entice people to drink more, but they add to a culture of drinking often related to sporting events. I wish it wasn't happening. We work so hard to get the culture to be a positive and safe one, this just doesn't help. It creates another obstacle."

The Grade is the St. Louis region's premier blog on education and child welfare. To read other recent posts, go to www.stltoday.com/thegrade.
Spirit or scandal?

Some cry foul over beer cans.

By Janese Heavin Wednesday, August 26, 2009

This Bud’s for you, Mizzou.

But the new Bud Light cans sporting University of Missouri colors are leaving some at the school with a bad taste in their mouths.

Anheuser-Busch’s limited-edition black-and-gold cans have debuted at some retailers in Columbia, tempting Tigers fans to pay a buck more for a case of the school-spirited spirits. The so-called “fan cans” are part of a marketing plan that offers 27 college color schemes nationwide, just in time for the start of football season.

“I’m not pleased with them,” said Kim Dude, director of the University of Missouri Wellness Resource Center. “I don’t know if they will necessarily entice people to drink more, but they add to a culture of drinking often related to sporting events. I wish it wasn’t happening. We work so hard to get the culture to be a positive and safe one, this just doesn’t help. It creates another obstacle.”

The number of students taken to the University Hospital emergency room because of alcohol doubles during home football weekends, said Susan O’Neill, a psychologist at the MU Student Health Center.

“The Bud Light campaign suggests that fan cans are ‘made for game day,’ ” she said. “Alcohol advertising that pairs support of college athletic teams with alcohol consumption is concerning from a public health perspective.”

Carol Clark, vice president for corporate social responsibility at Anheuser-Busch, said in a prepared statement that the product is intended for those 21 and older and that the marketing plan aims “to connect with fans of legal drinking age in fun ways in select markets.”

MU senior Dieter Kurtenbach said he expects the black-and-gold cans to be a hit in this market.

“I guarantee they’re going to be big sellers for tailgating specifically,” he said. “People are going to want Mizzou colors with their Saturday game day experience.”
Kurtenbach said he doesn't think the cans will cause people to drink more but they might tempt some to opt for Bud Light. Plus, it might smooth over any hard feelings that Anheuser-Busch was purchased by Belgium-based InBev last year, he added.

"People are upset about the fact that it's not an American company," he said. "So for a Missouri brewery to have Missouri pride and represent the state's school on their cans — even though it's a national campaign — is a smart idea."

Some colleges are asking the company to take its bright idea elsewhere. At least 25 colleges have asked Anheuser-Busch not to offer fan cans in their communities, the Associated Press reported. The Federal Trade Commission also has gotten involved because of concerns that the cans are being marketed to college students, many of whom are underage.

Some colleges have cited trademark concerns, even though the cans do not have logos or school names on them. School color schemes can be protectable rights, said Tricia Hornsby, a spokeswoman for The Collegiate Licensing Co. The licensing agent, which represents MU, sent a letter to Anheuser-Busch expressing concerns that school colors might mislead customers to think a school endorses or sponsors the product, she said.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said the university trademark's office is aware of the campaign but isn't taking any action because the packaging does not depict MU logos.

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This article was published on page A12 of the Wednesday, August 26, 2009 edition of The Columbia Daily Tribune.
UM System seeking spokesperson

By Janese Heavin

Want to be the official mouthpiece for the University of Missouri System? Here's your chance.

UM has unfrozen its Director of Media Relations position, which has been vacant since Scott Charton left last April. Right now, assistant director Jennifer Hollingshead has been doing the job on top of the marketing gig she was originally hired to do.

The position pays $71,635 to $88,000 and reports to Cindy Pollard, associate vice president of strategic communication.

Last month, there were four communications jobs open on the MU campus. The Columbia campus alone -- not counting the health system -- had some 40 "information specialists" on the payroll as of last November (the latest salary data I have) and about a dozen marketing specialists.

UPDATE: I was reminded after I posted this that Pollard was actually supposed to be Charton's replacement, only with a new, fancier title. That makes this media relations job a new position, not one that's been vacant.
The Front Burner

Picnic with a purpose

By Marcia Vanderlip  Wednesday, August 26, 2009

In April, Eric Cartwright decided that big school picnics should be greener, as in less wasteful. So he did something about it. Cartwright is the executive chef for the University of Missouri’s Campus Dining Services, which covers about 22 food facilities on campus. After making some contacts in the community, Cartwright found solutions to this problem:

How do you throw a picnic for 3,400 incoming students without loading up the landfill with paper and Styrofoam trash?

Thursday’s welcome picnic for students marked the first time in the picnic’s history that 98 percent of all the trash was composted or recycled after the mass gathering in the campus recreation center. Cups, plates, utensils, trash bags and even food scraps were composted. The only items that weren’t reusable or compostable were the latex gloves used by servers and the plastic wrap on the burger buns.

The first step, Cartwright said, was finding someone to take all the stuff — including the food waste. Cartwright hit pay dirt when Richard Weiman, solid waste utility manager for the city of Columbia, agreed to transport all of the matter — including the food — as part of a pilot project “to see if the material will all decompose,” Weiman said. Weiman explained that while the city does not have a license to compost food at the landfill, he agreed to help with this one-time experiment to help MU study the feasibility. The city plans to look at composting food in the future, Weiman said. “Columbia isn’t ready yet.”

Meanwhile, other businesses are already on board: Main Squeeze Natural Foods and Cherry Hill Market & Café regularly compost food materials for gardens.

On a larger scale, Campus Dining Services got into food composting in the fall. After leftovers were processed in a food pulper, volunteers from Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture picked it up. Students on bikes with trailers hauled the scraps from Rollins Dining Hall. The daily “take” generally weighed from 150 to 350 pounds, said Adam Saunders, who directs the not-for-profit group. The food-scrap pulp is mixed with horse bedding from the Stephens College horse stables, which serves to heat up the process. After several months, the compost-rich soil is added to the Sustain Mizzou Research Farm to grow fruits and vegetables for the next season. The food pickup program will begin again this fall when the dining hall opens, Saunders said.
Cartwright also is looking to local sources for fresh food. A couple of months ago, he met Rex Roberts, a farmer and board president for the Columbia Farmers Market. Roberts hooked him up with some local growers, including Angela and Rob Hemwall of Pierpont Farms and Mark Mahnken of Missouri Legacy Beef. Tomatoes and cucumbers from Pierpont went into salads for Thursday's student picnic.

Other local products debut in other student dining operations this fall, Cartwright said. Mahnken will supply 10,000 to 12,000 pounds of beef for burgers this year for the Pavilion at Dobbs, a residential dining facility on the southwest corner of the MU campus.

Meanwhile, over at MU's University Club, Executive Chef Daniel Pliska is looking to add more local products to the menu. His menus include local honey, nuts, trout and goat cheese.

These local connections are new and developing, Cartwright said. "I hope we can continue making steps to bring fresher ingredients," on campus, he said. "Sometimes local food is more costly, but sometimes the prices are more competitive. We look at this as an investment in our customers. Local produce has longer shelf life. It hasn't been sitting on a truck for weeks."

Overall, the sustainable student picnic was a success and "a good way to start off the year," Cartwright said. "We want to stay on this path."

Looks like the beginning of a sustainable relationship.

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This article was published on page C1 of the Wednesday, August 26, 2009 edition of The Columbia Daily Tribune.
MU focuses on preventing sexual assault

Residence hall staffs were given additional prevention training this year

Pape has trained 99 Residential Life student staff members so far and is trying to get the rest trained as soon as she can. But finding time can be tough.

Residential Life typically has one week to train part-time student staff to deal with a wide range of needs. Any additional training is scheduled later in the semester on an as-needed basis, which often falls after the period the Justice Department identifies as most dangerous for freshmen and sophomores. The study called into question the value of rape prevention programs that begin later in the school year.

"Freshman women are the most vulnerable within the first few weeks here," Pape said. She has spent three years working with sexual violence survivors at The Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault while volunteering for the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center at MU.

"If everyone around them knew how to step in, then this violence wouldn't be happening at the rate it's happening now."

DANICA PAPE
Co-coordinator at MU's Rape and Sexual Violence Prevention Center

While working as a Residential Life staffer for the last four years — and as a hall coordinator for the final one — Pape identified a need for more intense training.

"I would train my own staff for two, two and a half hours because that would allow them to process how to have conversations (with survivors) more effectively," she said.

The training staffers previously received included a general overview of sexual violence with some role-playing, though most staffers only watched the exercise, Pape said. Now more staff get to role-play conversations with fellow staffers posing as sexual assault survivors.

Residential Life staffer Kate Miller said that with a fellow staffer — who might also be a friend — the role-playing "was a little more realistic, and it caught you in a position of, 'Oh my God, what did this person just say to me, and how can I help them?'"

Pape's training also includes sexual violence definitions and statistics and a discussion of alcohol and predatory drugs. Staff are also instructed on what to say — and what not to say — and taught about the ways survivors cope.

While the training previously focused on the survivor, Pape's new training for returning staff members is focused on the community — the "outsider's role," Miller said.

"It's such a small percentage of people who perpetrate these crimes," Pape said. "If everyone around them knew how to step in, then this violence wouldn't be happening at the rate it's happening now."

Pape's efforts to train campus staff represent just half of the high-wire act. Administrators face every semester: how to adequately prepare a student body for the realities of sexual violence without creating an atmosphere of caution-induced paranoia.

"As educators, it's a hard balance," said Kristen Temple, associate director for residential academic programs. "You want them to be cautious enough, but not too cautious that they don't get this fantastic experience of being a college student."

Safety tips

Five ways friends can help prevent sexual violence

1. Watch your friends and watch their drinks. Make sure everyone gets home safely.
2. Talk about plans for the night beforehand.
3. Offer to walk home with a friend. Walking in groups greatly reduces the chance that violence will occur.
4. Check on your roommates if they don't come home.
5. If you see a situation that doesn't look right, follow your instincts and find a way to intervene directly, indirectly or by distraction.

Sexual violence survivors can call two 24 hour hot lines, 573-875-1370 or 800-548-2480, for information, emotional support and safety planning.

Source: Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center