Missouri loses money on bowl

Deficit could be as high as $20K.
By Dave Matter

Wednesday, January 6, 2010

For the second year in a row, a bowl trip will leave Missouri’s athletic department in the red, making Thursday’s Texas Bowl a losing endeavor in more ways than one.

When the last of MU’s travel and hotel expenses are paid, Missouri projects a deficit of $10,000 to $20,000 for its trip to Houston, Senior Associate Athletic Director Mark Alnutt said.

That’s a modest loss for playing in one of the league’s least lucrative bowls, but it comes on top of the damage suffered in the game itself, a stunning 35-13 defeat to Navy.

“When it’s all said and done, that’s not a huge deficit,” Alnutt said. “Our goal was to break even, but given the economic indicators and what we’re dealing with by going to a Tier 3 bowl, I think we did a tremendous job trying to get that number even.”

Missouri lost $30,000 on last year’s Alamo Bowl trip and broke even on the Cotton Bowl two years ago.

The most significant fallout from Missouri’s latest bowl trip won’t manifest itself until next season, should the Tigers be bowl-eligible for a sixth straight year. Already battling a perception that its fans stay home for bowl games, Missouri sold 6,500 of the 11,000 tickets provided by the Texas Bowl, MU and bowl officials confirmed. That’s roughly the same amount Missouri sold from its allotment for last year’s Alamo Bowl, Alnutt said.

Texas Bowl General Manager Chris Keeney estimated that another 2,000 to 3,000 Missouri fans purchased tickets outside of the school’s allotment.

Approximately 1,200 of the tickets Missouri sold through its pool were purchased and donated to Houston-area charities — an idea MU lobbied fans to consider after the bowl matchup was finalized on Dec. 6. MU Coach Gary Pinkel even sent a letter to fans via e-mail encouraging them to donate tickets if they weren’t planning to attend the game in Houston.

“There’s some degree of satisfaction,” Alnutt said. “Obviously, for any bowl game you want to reach your allocated minimum, but a lot of times you can’t obtain that. When you look at the fact that a lot of those” tickets “were donated, I think people rose to the challenge in terms of making our numbers turn out well.”

Although all seven of the Big 12’s other bowl teams exceeded Missouri’s ticket sales — including four that doubled MU’s total — Alnutt said it’s too early to presume how it might impact the Tigers’ bowl
appeal next season and beyond. The bowl games affiliated with the Big 12 are free to choose any eligible conference team, regardless of standings or head-to-head records and usually base their selections on drawing power.

"For the situation that we were in, I don't think that's going to hurt us in the future," Alnutt said. "Our fans bought tickets and traveled to Houston to help support us, and I think they did a phenomenal job."

"We'd love every school to travel more people, but I don't think anyone was disappointed at all," Keeney said of Missouri's traveling contingent to Houston.

Navy, a service academy with just 4,400 students but a national fan base, requested an allotment of 18,000 tickets and sold them all, Keeney said.

"That's one of the nice things about having Navy, frankly." Keeney said. "They make those kind of commitments and then deliver."

The 4-year-old Texas Bowl officially set an attendance record of 69,441 for last week's game, but a large portion of the seats in Reliant Stadium were empty. Keeney acknowledged that some corporate sponsors bought a chunk of those unfilled seats but said other factors contributed, too.

"It was a mix of all different kinds of people who didn't use all their tickets," Keeney said. "The time of day might have been an issue, and that was the first time we've ever played on Dec. 31."

As for the 4,500 MU tickets that went unsold, the Big 12 picks up the unpaid bill — not Missouri.

"The school itself is not on the hook." Big 12 Assistant Commissioner Bob Burda said yesterday from Pasadena, Calif., site of tomorrow night's BCS National Championship Game between Alabama and Texas.

However, when the conference pools together the payouts from all its bowl participants — a total that will push $30 million this year — the amount the Big 12 paid for those unsold tickets is taken from the pot before it's split 12 ways among league members.

Among the other Big 12 bowl teams, Iowa State fell short in selling its entire allotment for the Insight Bowl, selling 8,000 of its 10,500 tickets, the school confirmed. Team spokesman Tom Kroeschell estimated at least 15,000 ISU fans attended the game Thursday in Tempe, Ariz.

Nebraska needed only a few days to sell its entire allotment of 11,000 tickets for the Holiday Bowl, NU's Keith Mann said. Oklahoma spokesman Kenny Mossman estimated that OU sold 8,000 of its 8,400 tickets to the Sun Bowl. Texas A&M not only sold its entire base of 12,000 tickets for the Independence Bowl, it also received another 2,000 from its opponent, Georgia, and sold those tickets to Aggie fans, too, A&M spokesman Alan Cannon said. Oklahoma State sold 13,500 tickets for the Cotton Bowl — 1,000 more than the school was originally allotted — spokesman Kevin Klintworth said. Texas Tech exceeded its allotment for the Alamo Bowl by 3,000 tickets, selling 14,814, Tech's Chris Cook confirmed. And Texas quickly sold its pool of 20,900 tickets for tomorrow's title game, UT's John Bianco said.
As for Missouri, to adjust for the reduced traveling expenses allocated for the Texas Bowl, MU cut costs by lopping two days off its stay in Houston, delaying its arrival until Dec. 26 and leaving immediately after the game, a decision Alnutt said saved close to $50,000 in hotel and catering costs.

Missouri shortened the stay for Marching Mizzou, bussing band members to Houston on Dec. 30 and bussing them back to Columbia after the game.

Also, MU saved money by slashing its official traveling party of campus administrators, alumni and donors. For past bowl games MU booked a charter flight for 125 to 200 special guests, Alnutt said. This year, only 25 such guests were flown — and on a cheaper commercial flight.

Reach Dave Matter at 573-815-1781 or e-mail dmatter@columbiatribune.com.
'Best Value' public colleges include three from Missouri

Three Missouri universities are included on the Kiplinger's magazine list of the 100 best values in public colleges.

Truman State University was ranked the highest, at 26th. The University of Missouri-Columbia was ranked 57th, followed by Missouri University of Science and Technology at 94.

No public institutions from Kansas made this year's Kiplinger's list, which appears in the magazine's latest edition out this week.

The magazine reviewed more than 500 public four-year colleges and universities. Ranking criteria included academic quality including admission and retention rates; student-faculty ratios, four and six year graduation rates; and of course, cost and financial aid.

Topping the list this year is the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, followed by the University of Florida and the University of Virginia.

For the complete 'best value' list, click here

Submitted by Steve Rosen on January 5, 2010
Missouri apologizes to Navy over band issue at bowl game

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — University of Missouri administrators have apologized to the U.S. Naval Academy for what appears to have been a misunderstanding during band performances at the Texas Bowl game last week.

MU's marching band has been taking heat on blogs and online news forums for continuing to play the MU fight song as the Naval Academy band began to play its "Blue and Gold" anthem. A Facebook page dedicated to the Texas Bowl also is laced with comments from people saying Missouri should "be ashamed."

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said Missouri's band didn't realize the Naval Academy had begun playing and that there was never any attempt to disrespect Navy tradition.

"Given our great respect for the Naval Academy and all those serving in our country in the armed forces of the United States, we greatly regret the misunderstanding," she said.

Representatives of MU and the Naval Academy agreed during a pregame meeting that the losing team's band would perform first, Banken said. After Missouri's loss in the Texas Bowl, MU's band began playing its typical sequence, MU band Director Tom O'Neal said. That includes playing the fight song, singing the alma mater and finishing with another round of the fight song.

The Naval Academy's band apparently began performing before MU's band had completed that sequence, he said. And MU's some 300 band members did not hear the academy's 50 performers start playing their own alma mater from the opposite corner of the field, he said.

Richard Johnson, executive vice president of the U.S. Naval Academy Foundation, said he finds it hard to believe that was the case. He attended the game and said he watched MU band officials looking over their shoulders as the Naval Academy began to play.

"I'm not sure this isn't revisionist history going on," he said. "I think Navy fans were disturbed by it. It was an embarrassment for Missouri. Whether or not it was intentional, that's the way it came across."

MU has an "outstanding band," he said, but the performance went "on and on and on."

The Naval Academy considers the issue to be a misunderstanding, according to its public statement. "We do not believe there was any intent to show disrespect toward the Naval Academy," the statement read.

Over the past few days, Missouri officials have been apologizing to the academy. O'Neal has been in contact with the Naval Academy's band director, and MU Chancellor Brady Deaton contacted his counterpart at the academy to apologize, Banken said.
MU Athletics Director Mike Alden issued a public apology for "any unintended perception of disrespect" the incident caused.

"It was and is the intention of the University of Missouri to always respect and honor the rich and proud traditions of our opponents, even more so the United States Naval Academy and the men and women who so proudly represent our country," Alden said.

O'Neal planned to post public apologies and the Naval Academy's response Wednesday on the band's website at www.mubands.missouri.edu.

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This week, around the country, state and federal legislators returned to their seats to initiate, argue, reject and pass laws that will affect all. Missouri is no different.

Missouri permits proposed legislation to be filed starting Dec. 1. I chose a few based on one criterion – these are subjects deemed important enough for students to give speeches.

SB 616 – "Enacts provisions relating to faith-based community health centers." For the most part, the bill is a good idea, allowing qualified non-profit health providers who offer fee-for-service care for individuals and low-income families to operate without being considered insurance companies. The bill will exempt 501(c)(3) organizations and medical professionals working for non-profits from "civil damages for acts or omissions unless the damages were occasioned by gross negligence or by willful or wanton acts or omissions by such health care provider under this section in rendering such treatment."

The problem? Proposed section 358.315 appears to exempt volunteer medical professionals only if services are provided at a "nonprofit faith-based community health center." It's a clear violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

SB 658 – "Creates a state and local sales tax exemption for sales of farm products made at farmers' markets." This is a good thing. Only one thing appears to be missing from the list. The bill includes livestock products, which I assume are beef, lamb and pork, but says nothing about poultry other than shell eggs. Specify poultry and this bill works.

HB 1473 – "Revises the grade point average requirements for renewal of Access Missouri Scholarships." I am a proponent of the Missouri Access Scholarship program. I am not an advocate that standards for eligibility be lowered. This bill will lower the grade-point average from a 2.75 to a 2.0 for part-time students. If anything, the bar needs to be set
higher. Raise the standard to a 3.0 out of 4 points, a B average, for full- and part-time students to be eligible.

House Joint Resolutions (HJR) 52 and 53 – Proposed Eminent Domain Constitutional Amendments. HJR 52 adds a substantial portion to Section 28, Article I of the state Constitution, as well as adding defining language for Sections 26 and 27. Overall, these amendments protect the landowner and prevent transfer of land by the government to a private venture, as happened in New London, Conn. These are good changes.

HJR 53 is not. The change of Section A, Section 21, Article VI of the Missouri Constitution appears to take the power of eminent domain away from cities and counties. It would allow cities and counties to enact ordinances to impose liens on the property if the owner does not resolve any “public nuisance” violation and the city or county pays to remedy the situation. Though these liens would be enforced as a tax lien, this appears to take away an important and timely remedy from the city’s or county’s arsenal.

As of this writing, there are eight House and Senate proposed bills that deal with ethics rule changes. Though there are two proposals to limit political “robocalls” that will receive a lot of attention, SB 648, “to enact ... four new sections relating to campaign contribution limits,” will prove to be controversial.

The question being brought to the House and Senate floors will not be the actual dollar limitations proposed but the idea of limitations. Should individuals and corporations who have seemingly unlimited resources be allowed to contribute any amount they want? Or should all, regardless of wealth, be restricted to donating to a maximum amount and how much should that amount be? Is this a restriction of First Amendment rights, or does it create fairness in candidate and issue campaigns to be on an equal and uncompromised financial footing?

I am not sure which is the right answer, but I can assure you that this will be a strictly partisan issue.

Is there a topic I have not touched here in which you are interested? Look it up on the state’s Web site and tell me your opinion: supportive, opposed or just plain confused. I am curious.

David Rosman is an award winning editor, writer, professional speaker and college instructor in communications, ethics, business and politics. You can read more of his commentaries at Inkandvoice.wordpress.com. He welcomes your comments at ProfDave1011@netscape.net.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Cancellations, traffic accidents mark winter storm's arrival

MU mention on pg. 2

By MISSOURIAN STAFF
January 6, 2010 | 1:24 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Columbia Public Schools canceled evening activities and Thursday’s classes, churches called off services and choir rehearsals, and snow plows began scraping streets as the city dug in Wednesday for a major winter storm.

Snow began falling at about 2 p.m., and by rush hour, the slick streets were already causing multiple minor accidents around town.

As of 5:30 p.m., numerous fender-benders had been reported in the city, but none produced life-threatening injuries, Columbia Fire Department spokesman Steven Sapp said.

Chief Gale Blomenkamp of the Boone County Fire Protection District said most accidents occurred at low speed, and a few required transports to hospitals.

Wednesday evening, Columbia Public School officials announced that schools would be closed on Thursday. Earlier, school officials had canceled most of Wednesday’s after-school activities.

The snow was just the latest entry on the list of winter weather events this week.

Below-zero temperatures settled into the city during the first part of the week and are predicted to return this weekend.

Today’s forecast calls for blustery winds and drifting snow. Friday through Sunday, wind chill readings are expected to be well below zero.

On Wednesday, the city’s Public Works Department dispatched all 17 snowplows to tackle priority routes, said Mary Ellen Lea, the department’s operations manager.
If more than 4 inches of snow fell, the plows were to move into subdivisions.

The temperatures are so cold that salt is not really effective, Lea said.

The city canceled residential trash and recycling collections for Friday because of the predictions of wind chill temperatures of minus 30 degrees.

Commercial trash will still be collected on schedule, and the landfill will remain open.

In the last six days, the city crews have handled 150 calls about frozen pipes or lack of water, said Connie Kacprowicz, a city spokeswoman.

At the same time, crews replaced 40 frozen meters, the majority in unheated buildings, she said.

The city is running four crews during the day and two crews at night, she said.

Keith Lanig, a driver for Rick's Taxi, said he had frozen pipes this week at his Columbia home.

"The water had frozen up at my house, and I unthawed it with a blow dryer," he said. "It took me three hours to melt it."

**With temperatures staying well below freezing, even people who have never had a pipe freeze could have problems, David Hedrick said in news release from MU Extension.**

**Pipes in exterior walls are at greater risk of freezing, said Hedrick, the director of MU Extension's Fire and Rescue Training Institute.**

"**Opening cabinets under sinks allows heated indoor air to warm the pipes, according to Hedrick. A shielded conventional light bulb near pipes can also help prevent freezing.**"

"**If pipes freeze, thaw them slowly using a hair dryer or light bulb. The objective is to melt the ice at the same rate it froze.**"

"**Never use an open flame to thaw pipes because it can ignite combustible material in the area,**" he said.
Expert tips to prevent freezing pipes, thaw frozen pipes

Wednesday, January 6, 2010
seMissourian.com
COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Temperatures hovering near 0 degrees could mean problems with frozen water lines. Homeowners should take precautions to prevent pipes from freezing and know to how to thaw frozen pipes safely, according to University of Missouri Extension experts.

"With temperatures staying well below freezing, even people who have never had a pipe freeze could have problems," said David Hedrick, director of the MU Extension's Fire and Rescue Training Institute. "Any pipes that run along an outside wall may be at additional risk."

Water lines in outbuildings without a heat source also could experience freezing, he said. Hedrick suggests adding extra insulation to prevent the pipes from freezing. If that's not feasible, there are several measures homeowners can take to prevent problems, he said.

Opening cabinet doors below sinks will allow heat to get in the pipes. A heat source such as a shielded light bulb placed near water pipes also can be effective. Hedrick cautioned that the light bulb should not come in contact with combustibles, which could ignite a fire.

One method Hedrick warns against is allowing water to run from the faucet.

"That could create problems with water pressure and storage water in public water systems, which could affect the available water for firefighting purposes," he said.

If water pipes do freeze, Ronn Phillips, MU associate professor of architectural studies, cautions homeowners to proceed cautiously.

"The object is to thaw the pipe at the same rate that it froze, so it doesn't damage the pipes," Phillips said. "Nothing damages a pipe faster than dislodging the joints on a soldered connection. The joints are the weakest point."

Phillips said the first step is to relieve the pressure in the line by turning on the faucet.

Next, apply heat to the frozen section of the pipe. "Something as simple as a light bulb will work," he said. Hedrick said a blow-dryer works equally well.
The heat source should thaw the pipe slowly, Phillips said. "Blowtorches or kerosene and propane heaters heat up too quickly and could cause the pipe to break.

Hedrick noted that any kind of direct flame increases the risk of setting surrounding materials on fire.

Phillips urges homeowners to be especially careful with plastic pipes, which have a lower melting point than copper pipes. He added that plastic pipe will become brittle and rigid at low temperatures.

"Plastic is renowned for busting before copper," he said.
New FAFSA makes it easier for students to apply for aid

By Mary Beth Marklein, USA TODAY
WASHINGTON — Torrin King's older sister warned him that filling out federal forms for college aid would be a two-hour ordeal at best. He's happy to update her.

"I can tell you she was wrong," says King, 17, a senior at Banneker High School here. It took him just 20 minutes to complete his portion online. His mother also found her parts easy to fill out, and "she's not computer-literate," he says.

That unscripted moment is music to the ears of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, who told students here Tuesday that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) "used to be really, really, really tough" to fill out; he hopes a new, simplified version will encourage more to apply. An estimated 1.5 million low-income students probably are eligible for federal aid but don't apply, in part because they find the process so daunting.

The new FAFSA, often used by states and colleges to determine aid amounts, was launched Friday for the 2010-11 academic year. More than 90% of families apply online, and technology is responsible for most of the changes so far:

• Fewer questions. "Enhanced skip logic" lets students skip questions that don't apply.

• Friendlier navigation. Student and parent sections are marked and color-coded, and screens include an easy-to-find "help and hints" section.

• More information. Students who express interest in particular colleges now get an instant estimate of Pell Grant and loan eligibility and links to graduation rates and other information.

• Less duplication. Later this month, families applying for aid for this spring can import tax data from the IRS for up to 18 questions. That feature should be available by summer for 2010-11.

Congress also is considering a proposal to remove other financial questions, including several about assets, so families could apply for aid using only financial information from their tax returns.