MU noted for energy efficiency
EPA honors school for renewables use.

By JANENE SILVEY
Wednesday, June 23, 2010

The University of Missouri has been recognized by the U.S Environmental Protection Agency for using a variety of alternative energy sources to power its campus.

MU was one of three universities to receive the agency's 2010 Energy Star Combined Heat and Power award. Although MU has been recognized in the past for energy efficiency, this is the first time the school has received this specific award, said Karlan Seville, spokeswoman for Campus Facilities.

"We're really pleased," she said. "We're proud of our track record. We're trying to be environmentally friendly and lessen our use of coal."

MU now uses 5 percent to 10 percent biomass sources — mostly wood waste and used tires — along with coal to heat and cool more than 13 million square feet of university-owned buildings, including MU Health Care facilities. The use of biomass is expected to increase to as much as 25 percent when a new biomass boiler goes online in 2012, replacing one coal-fired boiler.

Researchers at the university also have experimented with switchgrass and corn cobs at the power plant.

Five university boilers have the capacity to burn some biomass fuel but still require coal, keeping MU from being a coal-free campus for now.

Another roadblock is supply, Seville said: There aren't enough biomass sources in Mid-Missouri to meet the plant's demands.

To help boost supplies, the university's Department of Forestry plans to start a university-owned grove of fast-growing trees to supply more wood biomass supplies. Researchers expect to establish the 10-acre, two-row grove next year, growing short-rotation crops such as willow, cottonwood and silver maple trees, said Hank Stelzer, an associate professor and state forestry Extension specialist. The trees will grow in two- to three-year cycles, producing about 24 green tons per acre, he said.

Although that will supply only about 1 percent for the new biomass boiler, the grove will double as a demonstration site at the university research farm in New Franklin, Stelzer said.

Local land, especially bottomlands damaged in the 1993 floods, has suitable conditions for growing these short-rotation trees, he said.

The demonstration grove will be funded with a Mizzou Advantage grant.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Scholars explore new terrain
Students learn how to navigate campus.

By JANEESE SILVEY

She struggled to push uphill, slid downhill on one occasion and ended up smashing her finger in the wheel.

"It is a real eye-opener," said Kristen Kelly, a high school student from Marshall, who was trying to navigate the University of Missouri campus in a wheelchair yesterday. "It really shows how much we take for granted."

Kristen joined about a dozen other high school students during a wheelchair tour as part of the three-week Missouri Scholars Academy. The 26th annual academy has brought about 330 academically gifted students to the MU campus until July 3. During the camp, students live in residential halls, select majors and minors and attend courses aimed to challenge them beyond their regular school curricula.

Angela AuBuchon, a faculty member at the camp and a doctoral student at MU, created the wheelchair activity for the first time this year to not only give students empathy for those with disabilities but also to show them how classroom lessons can have real-world applications.

Students, for instance, calculated the force needed for a wheelchair to navigate up the 16-foot-long, 14-inch-tall ramp leading into Swallow Hall. And Gerald Morgan, a construction manager for MU Campus Facilities, explained how campus meets certain accessibility standards.

Julia Epplin-Zapf of St. Louis opted to study policy and politics during the Missouri Scholars Academy, so she was interested in hearing what Chet Savage thinks about private businesses that don’t have handicapped accessible facilities. She had a discussion in an earlier class about that subject and found herself in the minority of students who think businesses should be required to meet American with Disabilities Act requirements.

Savage, a graduate student who uses a wheelchair, said he was fine with private businesses not being accessible to him but said he and his friends would simply not visit that business.

Emily Mauch baby-sits a boy in a wheelchair in her hometown of Warrenton, so she hopes getting a chance to navigate in a chair herself will help her become a better caretaker.

"I didn't realize how hard it is," she said, noting that every bump or dip in the sidewalk matters.

AuBuchon said she hopes the students saw firsthand not only what people with disabilities go through on a daily basis but also that other professions affect those experiences, from the planners who design the pathways to the makers of wheelchair tires.

"There's more to it than just pushing the wheelchair," she said. "These are easy problems that can be solved, and there are careers beyond social workers."
The Missouri Scholars Academy provides lots of eye-opening experiences, said Kyndal Marshall, a spokeswoman for the program. “It really gives them a chance to come and expand their horizons and learn about a number of things they don’t get a chance to do at their schools back at home,” she said. “At home, it’s not nearly as challenging. And they’re coming to a place where it’s OK to be smart.”

The future of the camp for gifted students, along with a sister arts camp in Springfield, is up in the air. The camps are operating on $259,000 from the state, down from $750,000 last year, and the Columbia academy for the first time charged participants $500 tuition this year. Next year, funding has been scrapped altogether. Marshall said it's too early to say whether organizers will try to raise donations or charge higher tuition to keep the academy going.

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia schools not expected to feel impact of MOREnet budget cuts

By Ettie Berneking/ June 23, 2010 | 6:07 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Cuts to Missouri’s largest provider of Internet service for schools, universities and libraries are not expected to make a significant impact on Columbia schools or MU.

The Missouri Research and Education Network, or MOREnet, is a unit of MU that provides 14 members in Columbia with Internet service, including MU, Columbia College, Stephens College, Columbia Public Library and Columbia Public Schools.

MOREnet started the 2010 fiscal year with $14 million in state appropriations, but a series of cuts capped off by a recent $300 million reduction to the state’s education budget have dropped MOREnet’s funding completely.

“This definitely creates a challenge,” MOREnet Executive Director John Gillispie said.

The recent cut represents one-quarter of MOREnet’s budget. Gillispie said MOREnet has identified $1.5 million in budget cuts to help it cope.

“We’re going to have to slow down spending substantially,” Gillispie said. “So we won’t be replacing equipment or filling resignations.”

The drop from $14 million in state appropriations to zero also means MOREnet will have to increase the fees its members pay. Gillispie said the organization is still working to figure out how much prices would rise; he added that fees for public schools would likely rise by a minimum of 35 percent.

“They could be much higher,” he said.

The revised fees will be announced July 1, Gillispie said.
The district is already working around budget cuts and is paying $23,000 in membership fees, Deputy Superintendent Nick Boren said. A 35 percent increase would mean $8,050 in additional fees.

"We don't know if the fees will double or just be a couple more thousand dollars," Boren said.

The district's budget is around $209 million dollars, and Boren hopes the fee increase would not force the school board to make amendments to the fiscal 2010-11 budget, which it passed June 14.

"Really, the only choice we have is to absorb that additional cost," he said. "It just means we may have to be more conservative."

Other Columbia MOREnet users said they are unsure how the higher fees would affect them until the final numbers are released in July.

Kevin Palmer, chief information officer with Columbia College, said MOREnet's new rate wouldn't affect student tuition or fees. Palmer said because Columbia College is a private university and has never receive state funding to offset the cost of MOREnet membership fees, the increase would have a limited affect on the school.

But public schools around the state that have previously relied on state funding to cover a portion of their Internet costs will be affected to a greater degree now that that money is gone.

Still, officials from universities in Columbia that use MOREnet say they aren't too worried.

The University of Missouri System — including its four campuses and health care system — is MOREnet's largest member. UM spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said the school wouldn't see any impact as a result of the new fees.

Even with the possible 35 percent fee increase, Columbia universities and the public school district plan on staying with MOREnet for their Internet service.

"MOREnet provides a quality resource to the community," Boren said. "It is an essential service to the school district."
Awbrey: Tradition threatened in embarrassing Big Ten bid

A sports adage holds that the ideal football coach is someone smart enough to understand the game but dumb enough to think it's important.

In the recent fracas over the future of the Big 12 Conference, Gov. Jay Nixon and University of Missouri leaders decided that football was indeed important - enough so to justify shredding century-old rivalries, belittle other conference members and seek to join what they feel is a classier sports league.

Sorry if that sounds mean-spirited, but the governor and Mizzou officials almost destroyed a core element of my self-identity - and that of millions of other Midwesterners - in their quest to leave the Big 12 Conference for the supposedly financially flush pastures of the Big Ten. Mizzou's humiliating comeuppance - rejection by the Big Ten, groveling back to the Big 12 - was justice well served.

Through its many metamorphoses, the Big 12 conference has been a constant in my life, fashioning my sense of place as a person of the midlands, the plains, the nation's heartland. My story is common: My mother graduated from Kansas; my father from Missouri. I graduated from KU; my wife has two graduate degrees from Mizzou. My father's best friend was a fanatic Sooner; growing up, the Nebraska-Oklahoma game was as much a part of my Thanksgiving as cranberries. I formed strong professional friendships with Mizzou journalism-school colleagues partly on our shared memories of Allen Fieldhouse and Faurot Field.

All that was placed at risk by Missouri and Nebraska wanting to join the Big Ten for larger football payoffs and what officials in both states claimed would be an upgrade in conference prestige and academic stature.

The Big Ten picked Nebraska, a school comparable to Mizzou except for a famous football program that generates huge piles of cash and large television audiences.

You can argue endlessly about the merits of various members of the Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific-10 and other major athletic conferences, but all of them - except for privates like Baylor and Northwestern - are in the mold of flagship state universities. For the typical undergraduate seeking the Big U experience, they are pretty much interchangeable.

What makes these universities special has nothing to do with football polls or scientifically bogus magazine ratings of the nation's schools. The great ones concentrate on educating their state's future decision-makers.

To demonstrate top-tier credentials through serving this state's unique educational and cultural needs, Mizzou should nurture the customs, habits and regional quirks that define Missouri. That includes college sports. And that means the MU-KU game, a gridiron metaphor for the defining struggle of American history, part of the social fabric of two states. It's tradition.

"I'm happy the Big 12 is staying together," said Thomas Robinson, a Kansas basketball player. "There's stuff we don't want to miss out on like the rivalry games ... I've been here a year and see how much it means to the fans."
Former UM interim chief heads to UCM

WARRENSBURG (AP) — A former college official has been named to assist the University of Central Missouri through a leadership transition.

The Warrensburg school says Gordon Lamb has agreed to serve for one month as interim president, beginning July 1. After new president Chuck Ambrose begins work Aug. 1, Lamb will work as needed in a temporary advisory capacity.

Lamb is the former interim president of the four-campus University of Missouri system. He also has served as the interim chancellor at the system’s Kansas City campus and was president of Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago for nearly a decade.

Central Missouri is changing presidents after its governing board voted late last year not to renew Aaron Podolefsky’s contract. It expires next Wednesday.
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Central Missouri is changing presidents after its governing board voted late last year not to renew Aaron Podolefsky's contract. It expires June 30.
Summit showcases links
University sells corporate ties.

By JANESI SILVEY

A group of corporate recruiters are on the University of Missouri campus today learning how they can better collaborate with schools and colleges to prepare tomorrow's work force and snag undiscovered talent.

The first Employer Summer Summit is bringing together 102 representatives from 61 businesses, the bulk of which are Fortune 500 companies, said Timothy McIntosh, assistant director of business career services at the Trulaske College of Business.

"We're trying to showcase what type of value Mizzou has as a collaborative partner for a lot of corporations," he said. "There are a lot of opportunities for Mizzou to strategically align itself with corporate partners."

Although many of the visiting corporations — such as Hallmark, Monsanto and Proctor & Gamble — already recruit MU graduates, the summit aims to show them how they can partner with MU beyond offering summer internships or hiring graduates.

Companies also can work with schools and colleges to fine-tune curricula or sponsor class projects, allowing students to solve problems and giving businesses inexpensive labor, McIntosh said.

"Students are getting hands-on education, and organizations are getting cost-effective opportunities," he said. "We want to make sure we're doing everything we can to provide opportunities for students."

Already, students spend some 150,000 hours a year volunteering as part of service learning courses, Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies, told the group.

And MU has shown a commitment to aligning curricula and programs with corporate needs, said Rashel Kelly, who received her master's degree in business administration from MU in 2006 and now works for Cerner Corp. in Kansas City. She pointed to a partnership program between Cerner, MU, high schools and community colleges that supports students who have the potential to become engineers. The pilot program began from discussions about how to offset the country's engineering shortage.

"If you're willing to step up, the University of Missouri is there with you," Kelly said.

Those collaborations also give companies a chance to find talent first, she said. Five weeks ago, for instance, the university sent a group of undergraduate students from the engineering and business schools, as well as from various diversity programs, to Cerner to visit the company. Kelly spotted one talented young student and asked an adviser about her. That adviser not only knew the student and
her background but sent Kelly her résumé and two others the next day, allowing Cerner to quickly fill an internship spot.

“This is not the type of talent that just stumbles into your opportunities,” Kelly said, noting that the larger visit allowed Cerner to look at students from a variety of backgrounds.

The Employer Summer Summit is an idea born out of the MU Career Services Council and funded through donations from various colleges.

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Highlights from the Farm to Table Fest

By MARCIA VANDERLIP

Wednesday, June 23, 2010

The first Farm to Table Festival at the University Club, June 12 and 13, offered a full buffet, and also food for thought. As many as 700 people strolled through the farmers market tent and attended seminars, cooking demonstrations, tastings, buffet luncheons and dinners.

Here are just a few highlights:

A Area health experts, chefs, educators, parents and promoters of local food engaged in conversation with Ann Cooper as she held forth on how to get better food into Columbia’s public schools. Participants included Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Chris Belcher and Laina Fullum, director of nutrition services.

Cooper, director of nutrition services at Boulder Valley School District, revamped school lunch in Berkeley, Calif., and is now doing the same for Boulder. She said marketing healthy food to children might prove even more difficult than fundraising.

Among her marketing tools: a colorful calendar goes home with all district students. It offers school menus, recipes and healthy-eating tips. Menus include nachos, hamburgers and pizza. "So what's different?" asked panel participant Eduardo Crespi, of Centro Latino.

"None of it is processed. All made from scratch ... we have salad bars in every school. We serve non-fat and 1-percent milk — local and organic — no flavored milks, no high-fructose corn syrup, no sat fats. Almost all whole grains ... and we don't serve desserts." These details don't appear on the colorful calendar, but they make all the difference in nutrition, said Cooper.

Local programs connecting children to farmers and to local food are important, Cooper said, but ultimately, you must have "support from the school district." In addition, "You can't switch from chicken nuggets to real food without a chef in the kitchen."

By July 1, thethelunchbox.org website will include the tools needed for schools to make a transition, Cooper said. To make change less scary, the site will offer a template for change including case studies, curricula, menus and other resources. If you missed it, last week the school board agreed to raise the price of school lunches by 35 cents for students and 50 cents for adults to help pay for higher-quality meals.

Even some grocery chains are going regional. Self-described "foodie" Kathy Gottsaker, director of food education and culinary arts for Schnucks stores, acknowledged that the company is growing an urban salad garden at its corporate office. But "the vision on a larger scale" includes hiring farmers to farm for the store and buying from regional artisans. "We have to protect our farmers," she said.
Jean Gaddy Wilson of Missouri Food 4 Missouri People said her company is connecting Missouri farmers with the local Hy-Vee grocery stores.

"Lamb is the new pork" for chefs and home cooks, says Chef Timothy Grandinetti of Overlook Farm in Clarksville. He advocates using the whole animal — including tongue and sweetbreads. "I love that what is old is new again. Lamb is versatile; it makes great barbecue, lamb burgers and moussaka ... It is a wicked-healthy wholesome product, raised by more than 70,000 farmers in the U.S."

"Some beers are "sessionable, all about sociability," says O'Fallon's co-founder, Tony Caradonna. Examples of sessionable beers are O'Fallon's lighter-style wheat or the 5-Day IPA, which also "cuts through the cheese on a burger and is good with sausage," says Chef Dan Wehner of Westside Local in Kansas City. Other heavier, darker (if less sessionable) are fabulous in barbecue sauce. Next week's food section will feature a recipe that incorporates O'Fallon's Porter Smoke into a sauce. P.S.: Beer is even good in ice cream; Wehner makes a caramel-icious ice cream from a Boulevard brew. I'll soon offer a recipe in a "cooking with beer" story.

I'll be sharing other tips and stories inspired by Farm to Table presenters in the weeks and months to come.

Marcia Vanderlip is the Tribune's food editor. Reach her at columbia.tribune.com or 815-1704.

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Teaching the public about growing berries

BY ERIN SCHWARTZ/ June 23, 2010 | 5:52 p.m. CDT

Patrick Byers, horticulture specialist for the University of Missouri Extension, explains to participants in the berry growing and marketing workshop sponsored by the Beginning Farmers Program the difference between the way various kinds of blueberries grow. He focused specifically on the ratio of leaves to flowers - and eventually fruit - in order to balance yield with retention of the plant for the next season.
Tech group offers networking opportunity

By DANIEL CAILLER

What do you get when you fill a room with tech-sawy entrepreneurs, executives and other business types? A new Columbia group hopes the answer includes fruitful collaborations in technology.

Last night marked the first gathering of the Columbia Tech Network. About 70 people, including Mayor Bob McDavid, attended the 90-minute informal gathering at ABC Laboratories in southeast Columbia.

“The theory is if you put a bunch of smart people together, they are going to figure out ways to work together,” event organizer Sean Spence said.

Representatives from several major businesses, including Commerce Bank, Columbia College, CenturyLink and Vangel Communications, were present. Small-business owners also attended.

Mike Bellman has been operating Bellman Computer Repair out of his home for 12 years. Because of his somewhat isolated — albeit cost-efficient — business model, he said, there are lots of people in the tech world he doesn’t know.

“I need to redefine my model, redefine what it is I do with regards to interacting with other people,” Bellman said.

The largely unstructured event had two presentations by innovative businessmen on the agenda.

Tariq Shah is commercial director for PetScreen, a U.S. subsidiary of a Britain-based animal health care company. He talked about how a strong market for pet care in the United States led to PetScreen establishing a branch at the University of Missouri’s Life Science Business Incubator. “We are a company that wanted to set up in America, settled on Columbia and have done it,” Shah said. “We are a showcase because obviously there is a drive for Columbia to bring in new businesses.”

Keith Politte, manager of the Technology Testing Center at the Reynolds Journalism Institute, discussed the merging of technology and journalism and some successful projects to come out of the institute.

A date hasn’t been set for the next Columbia Tech Network meeting, Spence said. The hope is to have gatherings every one or two months with speakers who are “doing new, exciting things in technology.”

The Tribune is a sponsor of the network.

Russel Newton, vice president and CEO of Educational and Psychological Consultants Inc., said he is not a high-tech person, but like many others present, he was there for one reason. “You have to rub shoulders with some high-tech people to get a sense of what’s going on,” he said.

Bellman agreed. “Regardless of what your business is, you’ve got to have technology involved with your vision, mission and values to stay current,” he said.