Perceived threat puts MU building on alert

Thursday, August 19, 2010

A building housing several University of Missouri offices was placed under heightened security this morning after employees became concerned about an Internet message from a former employee that some interpreted as threatening.

At the Quarterdeck Building on LeMone Industrial Boulevard, employees were restricted to accessing the facility through the front entrance by using a swipe card to prevent unknown visitors from entering.

Jack Watring, chief of the University of Missouri Police Department, said the decision was the result of a message written by a former employee that some people interpreted as a threat. He categorized it as not specifically threatening violence.

"Some people had interpreted what he was saying on a Facebook or a webpage as a threat," Watring said. "I looked at it, and I didn’t see anything that looked like a personal threat or anything like that. But we’re just doing this as a precautionary measure. With everything else going on around the country, we wanted to make absolutely sure."

The building holds offices for development, information technology and purchasing for University Hospital.
Newborn Babies Steal Pets' Spotlight

I read a very interesting article over the weekend, one about newborns and pets. A study was done in Indiana and it showed that people with children spent less time with their animals and took them to the vet less often. However, this less-sentimental view toward pets tends to shift back after the children grow up. Empty nesters often reported that relationships with their pets were stronger after the children left the house. Another interesting tidbit was how people look at animals as pets differently. Which type are you? You can find the original article on the LiveScience website.

~Stephanie

Move over, Fluffy. Baby's on the way.

Pet owners often swear that a new baby won't change how they feel about their cat or dog. But a new study of pet owners in Indiana finds that parenthood does affect the way people think about and treat their domesticated furballs.

The study involved survey questions about how much time people spent with their animals, what they did together, and how often the pets got medical care. The last question was a proxy for how well the animals were cared for.

"In all cases for dogs and cats, except for cats going to the vet, children adversely affected the animals," study researcher David Blouin, a cultural sociologist at Indiana University South Bend, told LiveScience. "People with children spent less time with their animals and took them to the vet less often."

That's not to say that parents neglected or mistreated their pets. It just turns out that the way we view our pets depends a lot on our social context, Blouin said.

Pet Nation

Pet ownership is incredibly common in America, with over 60 percent of households claiming at least one pet. The way people interact with their pets has also shifted over time, Blouin said, which made him wonder what other factors make a difference in how people see their relationships with a pet.
To investigate, he mailed surveys to 1,900 dog and cat owners in Indiana. Almost 600 people, 307 dog owners and 271 cat owners, responded. The results showed that, for the most part, people really love their pets. Almost 93 percent of dog owners and 77 percent of cat owners took their animals to yearly veterinarian appointments. Fewer than 1 percent of dog owners and 4 percent of cat owners admitted to never taking their animals to the vet.

Pet owners also reported spending lots of time with their animals. Over 80 percent of dog owners and 67 percent of cat owners said they spent more than two hours a day interacting with their pet. All but a few percent of people spent at least some time with their pets each day.

**Defining the relationship**

To find out more about how people felt about their pets, Blouin arranged in-depth interviews with 35 dog owners. He found that people reported intense emotional attachments to their dogs; often, the dogs would sit on the owner's lap throughout the interview.

"It was moving at times to see how attached people were and how much they did get from their relationships," Blouin said.

Blouin's previous research has found three types of pet owners: Dominionists, who are fond of their pets but view them primarily as useful animals, not companions; Humanists, who see their pets as practically human; and Protectionists, who see animals as separate beings that humans have a responsibility to help and protect. The last group includes many people who take in foster pets or volunteer to care for abandoned animals.

He found that people who live in rural areas tend to hold more Dominionist attitudes, while those in cities are slightly more likely to hold a Humanist view. He also found that people with children reported that their attitudes changed with the birth of their child. Before the birth, he said, people reported feeling like their pet was their child. After having a kid, they were less likely to hold that attitude.

The findings could explain, in part, why people with kids spent less time with their pets, Blouin said.

"Part of it is time and money, perhaps just not having the resources," he said. "But also part of it is about definition."

Fortunately for fluffy companions everywhere, this less-sentimental view toward pets tends to shift back after the children grow up. Empty nesters often reported that relationships with their pets were stronger after the children left the house.

**Walking the dog**

*Even if you view your pet more as a useful animal than a fuzzy child, it may be wise to not set your cat or dog aside when a new baby comes along. Pet ownership can be enormously beneficial, said Rebecca Johnson, a professor of nursing at the University of Missouri and*
director of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction. Studies have shown multiple benefits to interaction with companion animals, from lowered blood pressure to increased survival after heart attack.

Johnson and her team have studied the health effects of dog-walking on people over 60. They've found that people who walk with a dog from an animal shelter increased their walking speed by 28 percent, compared with no significant increase in people who walked with a human companion. Part of the reason for the difference may be in the dose of doggie enthusiasm, said Johnson, who was not involved in the current research.

"If treadmills provided the kind of reinforcement that dogs do, we wouldn't have the obesity epidemic that we do," she said.

Even better, she said, the dogs that participated in the walking program were more likely to be adopted and less likely to be euthanized -- just the kind of result to make a Protectionist smile.

By Stephanie Pappas
LiveScience Senior Writer
MU reps take on challenge to define airport plan

By Daniel Cailler

Thursday, August 19, 2010

An effort to create a new strategic plan for Columbia Regional Airport is getting a boost from two expert volunteers from the University of Missouri.

At the airport advisory board’s June meeting, Chairman Greg Cecil told fellow members he wanted to develop a strategic plan that would make the board more cohesive and better strengthen its position. However, there was no money to hire a professional, and Cecil hoped someone would come forward to volunteer his or her services.

That call was answered by Steve Wyatt, MU’s vice provost for economic development, and Jim Gann, director of technology business development with the University Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

“We are happy to support the board in achieving its mission,” Wyatt said. “It’s very important, I believe, for the economic viability of the core region. It would be wonderful to have this be the preferred location for departures in Missouri.”

At yesterday’s airport board meeting, Wyatt and Gann led the board through the basic steps needed to lay the foundation of a strategic plan. Wyatt said the board would first need to agree on what the airport’s vision, mission and values are.

Board members had different takes on what those might be. Vice Chairman John Riddick said he thought the airport’s mission was to enhance the quality of life of the people of the region through air travel and aviation opportunities.

Gene Allen, the board’s Fulton appointee and a certified public accountant, said the mission is to make money. “Most airports make money. This one doesn’t. It sits idle most of the time,” he said. “If you were running a business, would you want it to be idle most of the time?”

Gann suggested the board research other comparably sized airports as a reference. “We have to understand the airport as an entity, understand the competition,” he said. “All those things go together toward developing a vision and a mission to develop a competitive advantage.”
After the presentation, the board voted unanimously to commit the time and energy needed to work on developing a plan. Members will begin researching airport finances and business models used by other airports before the next meeting.

Though all members voted for the plan, opinion on its potential was varied. Board member Matthew Jenne said he was concerned with how much the board will be able to “move the ball” with its limited resources. “Our mission as a board is to advise, which limits us to what we can do,” he said.

“I think the airport has been floundering and directionless,” Riddick said. “I think this could really help us out.”

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Police to set up DWI checkpoints

Thursday, August 19, 2010

The Columbia and University of Missouri police departments will each conduct sobriety checkpoints this weekend, coinciding with the start of a new school year.

City police were to conduct a checkpoint sometime between today and Saturday, during the hours of 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. That effort is funded through a Missouri Department of Transportation’s Highway Safety Division grant.

University police will conduct a DWI checkpoint near campus sometime between tomorrow and Sunday, during the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.
MU’s music committee showing signs of revitalization

By Pete Bland

Thursday, August 19, 2010

Katie Bickley’s threatening to single-handedly revive the reputation of the University of Missouri’s College Music Committee, which has been one of little more than utter incompetence in recent years.

Today, tickets for the Oct. 6 B.o.B concert I wrote about last week — yes, it will be at Jesse Auditorium — go on sale, but that’s just the beginning for what the Department of Student Activities’ senior chair for college music has planned for 2010-11.

The MU junior also revealed that tickets for a Dec. 8 show at The Blue Note featuring Philadelphia’s Chiddy Bang — with local support from BWAHA — will be available today, too, and that contract details for another key Jesse Auditorium concert scheduled for mid-November soon should be finalized.

Bickley was especially excited about securing Wichita, Kan.-based hip-hopper XV as support for B.o.B.

XV, whose moniker — his real name is Donavan Johnson — reflects the age at which he began creating music, is a fast-riser who recently signed with Warner Bros. Records. He has worked closely with fellow Wichitan and producer Michael “Seven” Summers, a vital cog in the regional-to-international success stories of Tech N9ne and Mac Lethal.

In addition to the above events and Saturday’s free welcome-back concert on Hitt Street in front of Memorial Union featuring St. Louis’ Ludo and local act FDR’s Revenge, students and residents alike can look forward to much more from the energetic and enthusiastic Bickley and the CMC.

Among the highlights is a new concert series — Mizzou Lunchtime Talent — that will take place from noon to 1 p.m. every other Wednesday beginning Sept. 1 in the new student food court. Yesterday and this upcoming Wednesday were set as trial runs for MLT, with sessions running from noon to 2.
Entertainment during MU’s Family Weekend, earlier Mizzou Idol auditions and a possible international music showcase in the spring still were in the works.

I’ll fill you in as Bickley finalizes the details, which, if the early returns play out, should come fast and furious.

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