Kids settle in at hospital
17 patients taken to renovated site.

Shayden Talbert, 7, tosses a ball after moving into his room at MU's new Women's and Children's Hospital. Shayden, who was diagnosed with leukemia in January, was one of 19 patients who were moved to the new facility.

By JANESSE SILVEY
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Shayden Talbert, 7, didn't say much as he settled into his new room at the University of Missouri's Women's and Children's Hospital this morning, but his mom, Sarah, was looking forward to having some extra space.
Jessica Johnson, 17, a Rock Bridge senior, is helped out of an ambulance Tuesday by Cannon Ingalls, left, and Dan Lund while moving to her room at the hospital.

“It’s nice,” Shayden said of the fifth-floor room. “It’s much bigger.”

Shayden was one of 17 patients taken today from University Hospital to the newly opened Women’s and Children’s Hospital, formerly Columbia Regional.

“We’re so excited to know we have this service to offer to kids and families,” children’s hospital Director Timothy Fete said as he waited for patients to arrive.

Today’s move-in day has been in the works for more than a year, and hospital administrators were on-site near the emergency room entrance to make sure patients were moved without a hitch. T.J., the Children’s Hospital tiger mascot, was on hand to greet patients.

The new hospital is the result of a $12 million renovation project that converted the 36-year-old Columbia Regional into a state-of-the-art, family-friendly medical center. The facility features a child-themed lobby, a playroom and game room and 43 private patient rooms complete with flat-screen TVs, Wii gaming systems and DVD players.

Shayden “was getting pretty bored at the other place, so it will be nice for him to have something to do,” Sarah Talbert said.

Talbert said she’s mostly looking forward to the new roll-out bed. Sarah and Shane Talbert took turns spending the night on a chair in their son’s old room at University Hospital, where Shayden has spent the past week and a half with fevers. Shayden was diagnosed with leukemia in January.

Jessica Johnson, 18, has been hospitalized with asthma and pain since Thursday. She’s hoping to be released tomorrow, but today she said she liked the new, larger hospital room — even before she knew it came with a gaming system.

“Don’t get me all excited,” she said, scanning the room after a reporter asked her how she liked the idea of having a Wii during her hospital stay.

Although transfers from University Hospital helped fill the new hospital today, the first patient to arrive was transferred from Scotland County in northeast Missouri. It served as a signal that the state’s first women’s and children’s center is up and running.

“I think that shows that Mid-Missouri and rural Missouri know we’re open and ready for business,” Fete said.

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Wal-Mart Stores is the target of an unlikely alliance between a labor union and farmers and ranchers who say the world's largest retailer is using its power to hold down prices in the agriculture industry.

The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which has tried unsuccessfully to unionize Wal-Mart's employees, is urging the Obama administration to broaden its antitrust inquiry into meat, dairy and seed businesses to include the retailer. Wal-Mart's defenders say its policies benefit consumers, ensuring them low prices.

The viewpoint of the union, the UFCW, is echoed by such groups as the National Farmers Union, a 190,000-member organization. Until recently, farmers and ranchers had mostly been directing their ire at meat producers such as Tyson Foods and Smithfield Foods. Now some are saying Wal-Mart, whose motto is "Save money. Live better," is unfairly cutting food costs at their expense.

"We've got to really join forces if we're going to win against this abusive market power," Mike Callicrate, a rancher based in Colorado Springs, Colo., said.

Wal-Mart's critics said they anticipate, after years of government reluctance to regulate farming, that President Obama will inject more competition into the food-producing business. Those concerns were at the forefront of an Aug. 27 public meeting in Fort Collins, Colo., with Attorney General Eric Holder and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack.

The event was the latest in a series of workshops held by the administration to air competitive and regulatory issues in the agriculture industry. Grocers such as Wal-Mart will be a focus of the final workshop on Dec. 8 in Washington. A spokeswoman for Kroger Co., the largest U.S. grocery chain, declined to comment on its pricing or supplier policies.

Wal-Mart's goal is to streamline its supply chain for customers' benefit by working with, not undercutting, farmers, said Lorenzo Lopez, a spokesman for Bentonville, Ark.-based Wal-Mart.
"We look at ways to develop efficiencies so we can offer affordable choices by building strong relationships" with local farmers and growers, he said.

The retailer's actions are governed by market conditions, said Dave Warner, a spokesman for the National Pork Producers Council, an Urbandale, Iowa-based trade group.

"Wal-Mart is responding to consumers," Warner said. "They're meeting the demand, and the demand is setting the price."

Chris MacAvoy, a lawyer at Howrey LLP in Washington who represents food suppliers, distributors and retailers, agreed. "To the extent Wal-Mart, or any other so-called power buyer, is using its efficiency to get lower prices for consumers, that's a good thing," he said.

Antitrust investigators usually are concerned about rising, not falling prices, which are a cornerstone of Wal-Mart's business strategy, said Andrew Gavil, a law professor at Howard University in Washington.

Wal-Mart's detractors argue that the retailer's power is so great it can underpay for goods, threatening suppliers. In the past, antitrust officials haven't seen Wal-Mart's actions as a problem, Gavil said.

"So much has been written about Wal-Mart and whether there is anything that they do in pressing for lower prices that is an antitrust violation," Gavil said. "So far, the answer is no."

While the administration hasn't decided how it will proceed, there are no plans now to single out Wal-Mart, Vilsack said last month.

"I don't think it's a matter of taking anybody on," he told reporters at the Fort Collins meeting. "It's a matter of making sure that the marketplace is fair."

The Justice Department is still listening to comments and isn't going to "prejudge" what it should do, agency spokeswoman Alisa Finelli said.

Some rancher activists said proposed U.S. Department of Agriculture rules that would put limits on meatpackers signal the administration's intent to rein in agricultural companies.

The proposed regulations, which are opposed by industry, would bar meatpackers from buying animals from one another and restrict the companies' exclusive contracts with large livestock suppliers.

The administration must do more to combat the harm caused by big retailers, and Wal-Mart in particular, said Fred Stokes, executive director of the Organization for Competitive Markets. The Lincoln, Neb.-based group favors more government action to stop anticompetitive efforts in the industry.
Pressured by supermarkets like Wal-Mart to cut costs, the meat companies in turn force ranchers and farmers to sell their livestock at lower prices, said Bill Heffernan, professor emeritus of rural sociology at the University of Missouri.

"The processors and the packers still have enough power in the whole system to keep their revenues, so they push it all the way back to the farmer and the worker," he said in an interview. "The buck stops there."

In 2009, the grocery stores' share of each dollar consumers spent on beef was 49 cents, while ranchers and farmers got 42.5 cents and meat packers 8.5 cents, according to the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.

That compared with 60 cents for ranchers and farmers in 1990, 32.5 cents for retailers and 7.5 cents for the meat companies.

In 29 U.S. markets, Wal-Mart controls more than half of the grocery market, according to a September report by the UFCW, which represents 1.3 million food-processing and retail workers. In some states, the retailer has more than 30 percent of the market in every major region, the UFCW said. Wal-Mart spokesman Lopez said the company didn't participate in the research and declined to disclose its own market share figures.

Warner, the pork producers group's spokesman, said the retailer is a victim of a campaign by a union trying to recruit its employees.

Wal-Mart's opponents want "equal outcomes, not equal opportunities," he said. "What you get out of that is mediocrity."

Stokes said farmers are looking for a fair marketplace.
MU stands by blue-light emergency phone system

The 214 emergency phones are stationed throughout campus.

By Jimmy Hibsch

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With the rise of cell phone use and a recent California college's decision to do away with its emergency blue-light phone systems, many colleges, including MU, are facing the same question: Is the service worth the cost?

Dispersed throughout campus, MU’s 214 blue-light phones will remain a facet of the emergency response system, Campus Facilities spokeswoman Karlan Seville said in an e-mail.

According to a report from Inside Higher Ed, the Contra Costa Community College District removed emergency call boxes from its campuses due to their high maintenance costs.

Missouri Students Association President Tim Noce said, at MU, the blue-light phones are strategically placed throughout the campus.

"Anywhere you're at on campus, you should be able to see a blue light," Noce said. "You have the opportunity to have that kind of safety feature there and ensure that you can get a hold of some kind of authority figure at any given time."

MU Police Department Capt. Brian Weimer said the police respond to every blue-light phone call.

"When the button is pressed, an officer will respond to address whatever the problem or issue is," Weimer said. "The phones simply just provide one more way for individuals in our community to contact our department if they need assistance."

The campus' emergency phone system, which includes emergency phones in elevators, residence hall buildings and parking structures and the blue-light system, has been used in 1,634 situations since July 2005, according to data from MUPD.

Of the calls, three resulted in filed reports. The most recent report was filed April 27 and the remaining two were in 2008.

Charles Gibson, chief of the Contra Costa Community College District police department, said in the Inside Higher Ed article that there has not been a verified emergency call in his five years at
Contra Costa. Most uses of the phones came from people calling to report flat tires or ask for directions.

"The blue phones might make people feel good, but if I'm a bad guy, I'm not really deterred by that phone," Gibson said.

Gibson said he expects most emergency calls to come in from cell phones.

Despite the low number of reports filed at MU as a result of the blue-light phones, Noce said the system is worthwhile even if it helps one person.

"Even if it just saves one person from being held at gunpoint for their wallet or something like that, it's definitely worth the money," Noce said.

Each emergency phone costs $25.25 per month to operate, Telecommunications Infrastructure engineer Mike Anderson said. This puts the operating cost for the system at about $64,842 annually. Anderson said he is unsure of the electrical cost for each blue-light phone, but guessed it was minimal.

Seville said maintenance on the blue-light phones is conducted frequent.

"Telecom services the telephones and the MU Police check to make sure the telephones are working," Seville said. "Campus Facilities has evening maintenance employees who check all outdoor lighting in parking lots, along pathways and emergency lights."

One of former MSA president Jordan Paul's goals in office was to post additional blue-light phones in Greektown.

"We commissioned a Greek Safety Survey to gauge what the safety issues and concerns were in the Greek community, and the blue-light item came back over 75 percent in favor of expanding blue lights," Paul said. "I don't know that there was a glaring need for more blue lights on any area of campus, but one area that did concern us was Greektown because so many students live there."

Because of these results, two new blue-light phones were added to Greektown in 2009.

According to Maneater archives, in 2009 the Student Fee Capital Improvement Committee rejected a funding request for additional emergency phones in Greektown due to the devices' infrequent use.

"We didn't see enough of a usage in present emergency phones for actual emergencies," then SFCIC Chairman Bryan VanGronigen said.

VanGronigen, who is a former Interfraternity Council president, said the majority of calls were false alarms once police officers got to the phone.

Although Noce said he would like to see more blue-light phones on campus, he said MSA has been looking into a new safety measure similar to the blue-light phone system.
"There was another emergency phone service that we were looking into that has to do with having something on your cell phone that tracks it down," Noce said. "I don't know much about the new program since it's so new, but it essentially squeezes an entire emergency blue-light phone into your cell phone."

Noce said this would be beneficial to improve safety on campus, but it is unlikely to happen anytime soon because of financial issues.

"I definitely think that is a pretty viable option, but the problem is that it costs money," Noce said. "Budget times are pretty tight, and a lot of people aren't willing to spend money like they were a few years ago."
Editorial: Misinformation surrounds The Jungle tailgate

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Were you at The Jungle on Saturday? Yeah, we know you weren’t.

As a few lonely tents (sans the Law School tent — they were having a great time) sat in the parking lot, a steady stream of people ready to tailgate flowed down Maryland right past what was supposed to be the “official MU student tailgate.”

About 200 people in all came to The Jungle, said Ben Hansen, the director of the Department of Student Activities within the Missouri Students Association. Although it didn’t even seem like that many people attended, we’re going to take his word on that number. Still, it’s not a lot of people, and it’s not nearly what MSA was shooting for.

MSA is trying to stay optimistic, which we think is the right thing to do here. The Midnight BBQ only had about 80 people turn out their first event, and now there are thousands of people who attend every year.

However, MSA, you’ve got a limited amount of time to start marketing this right before the tumbleweeds start to roll through and it becomes a legitimate failure. The core differences between the Midnight BBQ and The Jungle — how often they occur, the amount of time they take and general nature of the event — are key in deciding its success.

The first issue lies in how the tailgate is marketed. At Senate, start talking about how you’re going to get the message out to your constituents, specifically the details regarding what’s up with the booze. A big problem deterring students is misinformation; whether they need to be 21 to attend and whether they’ll be carded when they attend are both concerns we’ve heard about. Whatever the rules are, they need to be getting out to MU students.

Another suggestion: allow anyone to rent a tent rather than limiting it just to student organizations. If groups of friends, or even families, could rent a spot and tailgate, there would be a better chance of people coming. If the bar on Greek Life isn’t lifted, groups of friends who just happen to be chapter members could congregate together for a tailgate. Rather than coming as a fraternity, just come as a fraternity boy.

We don’t want to give the impression that we think it’s a bad idea. On the contrary, we’d say it’s a good idea, which is why we care. There was free food from Sub Shop, and the people running the tents were up for some fun (and a few games of ladderball with The Maneater editorial board). The one thing The Jungle is lacking is solid attendance, and fixing that problem rests within MSA.