MU to open pet cancer center in Wentzville

The University of Missouri-Columbia College of Veterinary Medicine will open a cancer care facility in Wentzville in the spring of 2011.

Mizzou Animal Cancer Care will offer advanced care for veterinary cancer patients. The University Board of Curators on Monday finalized the purchase of a building at 1092 Wentzville Parkway, which will house the cancer care facility.

The center's services will include diagnostic and treatment options, such as computed tomography and radiation therapy, for dogs and cats that are referred by their regular veterinarians.

Neil Olson, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine, said the new center will make cancer treatment more convenient for pet owners in eastern Missouri, southeast Iowa, southern Illinois and even Kentucky who have, in the past, brought their pets to the college's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital in Columbia.

"Pet owners increasingly choose a level of intervention for their animals' care that is comparable to that available to people," Olson said in a release from MU. "Aggressive cancer therapy for dogs and cats sometimes requires radiation treatment over several days and sometimes even weeks and months. Spending a long time in a vehicle is hard on any animal, harder still on sick pets, but owners may not want to leave their animals behind at the teaching hospital in Columbia to drive home. This new care center will facilitate our ability to deliver state-of-the-art cancer intervention therapy while making it easier for both the patients and their owners."
MU research shows breast cancer patients still need post-treatment support

By Daniel Longar
October 29, 2010 | 12:51 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Lori Taube was diagnosed with breast cancer on July 22, 2009.

Her immediate response was not "Why me?" It was "Why not me?"

Of course, it caught her off guard, but a key strategy throughout the ordeal was to accept reality and find support to help her through treatment.

She joined the Mid-Missouri Breast Cancer Awareness Group in early 2010. Nearly a year after chemotherapy ended, she is still active in the organization.

A recent study of breast cancer patients by MU researchers confirms that long-term support pays off with a higher quality of life.

Stephanie Reid-Arndt, assistant professor of health psychology in the MU School of Health Professions and one of the researchers, also found that patients living in urban areas reported a higher quality of life than survivors in rural areas.

One reason is that urban residents have more access to consistent, professional help, which boosts the quality of life.

"Rural areas have a lot of social interaction and community support, but they have less access to services, such as a mental health facilities," she said.

The study asked 46 breast cancer patients living in rural areas to use a five-point scale ranking their quality of life after treatment. The 44-item assessment measured, for
example, physical, social, family and emotional well-being; type of symptoms; and relationships with doctors.

Even with strong social networks in rural communities, support often begins to diminish after the cancer patient has finished treatment, Reid-Arndt said. However the ordeal is not over for the cancer survivor.

The Mid-Missouri Breast Cancer Awareness Group provides an outlet for survivors to interact with one another long after they have finished treatment and offers a place for newly diagnosed patients to speak with other women who have been through the same experience.

"It's nice to be able to talk with other people who have gone through the same thing ... chat about your symptoms," Tauhe said. "It's nice to know that it's not just you."

Taube's family and close friends also helped pull her through treatment. Her husband saved his vacation time for her mastectomy, and her mother took her to medical appointments.

Co-workers at the Rusk Rehabilitation Center donated money to assist her family and offered to help with chores around the house.

"I had a great support group through my family, and my co-workers were just amazing," Taube said.

Kathy Windmoeller, a founder of the Mid-Missouri Breast Cancer Awareness Group, is a cancer survivor who decided in 2000 to provide a lifeline to patients during treatment and beyond.

One woman in the group went through treatment 15 years ago, and others traveled from Boonville until they started their own group.

"You're never really done with breast cancer," Windmoeller said. "It never goes away."

Finishing treatment can lead to a period of panic and fear of being alone, she said. It's not easy to return to normal life.
"Breast cancer support groups offer the chance to talk with women who have been through treatment, survived and are doing well and enjoying life again," Windmoeller said.
MU's review of programs due to state
Possible degree cuts not finalized.

By JANESIE SILVEY

Of the 75 so-called "low-producing" degree programs at the University of Missouri, more than 30 won't be touched, another 30 or so could be redesigned and a handful are on a potential chopping block.

Today is the deadline for the university to submit to the state explanations for degree programs that produce, on average, fewer than 10 bachelor's degrees, five master's degrees and three doctoral degrees per year. The Missouri Department of Higher Education required public colleges to undergo that review and make recommendations for how administrators would address low-producing programs.

Provost Brian Foster would not disclose which programs are up for possible elimination, saying he has yet to discuss the report with faculty. The state's short timeline prevented administrators from having time to get to all departments, Deputy Provost Ken Dean said, but they plan to meet immediately with faculty members potentially affected.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken stressed that the university's report simply met the higher education department's requirement and that any recommendation to a program isn't a final decision.

Eliminating a degree program doesn't happen overnight. The university has to continue to offer the coursework and degree for students currently enrolled, and in doctoral programs that can take years. The university also has tenured faculty in those departments, meaning administrators cannot simply terminate employees if they discontinue a program.

Those same issues will have to be considered when reconfiguring low-producing degree programs. In some cases, Foster said, reconfiguration could mean combining departments or merging several degrees into one. The latter is not uncommon: The biological sciences degree, for instance, used to be zoology, botany and biology degrees.

There are several reasons administrators aren't considering changes to roughly 32 of the 75 programs. In about half of those cases, a master's program doesn't produce high numbers of graduates in areas of study where a doctoral degree is vibrant. In those cases, eliminating the master's program but not the doctorate wouldn't make sense and wouldn't save money, Foster said. In other cases, administrators won't change low-producing degrees because they're central to general education. Not a lot of students major in statistics, for instance, but students from a variety of majors must take statistics courses.

Gov. Jay Nixon prompted the statewide degree review in August as part of a four-part plan to address higher education issues. Nixon has expressed concern about colleges creating new programs without eliminating any, adding costs to an already cash-strapped higher education system.

At MU, 12 new degrees have been added in the past decade, but 12 other degrees have been eliminated or reconfigured during that period, Dean said. And degrees that have been added
haven't necessarily cost the university. A new film studies major, for instance, added a couple of courses but mostly pieced together existing classes from other disciplines.

Eliminating or reconfiguring low-producing degree programs won't result in immediate savings but will allow the university to address some of the fallout from recent budget cuts, namely the hiring freeze that has left many support staff positions unfilled, Foster said. In some cases, he envisions departments that merge would share existing support staff, boosting efficiency.

Although the state-mandated review has come with tight deadlines that have caused some angst on campus, the conversation is beneficial, Foster said.

"It's a starting point for a discussion we had to have," he said. "We were going to have to do this anyway."

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
MU has new strategy for hall renovations

By JANISE SILVEY

When they're finished, Tate and Switzler halls on the University of Missouri campus won't just re-open with new classrooms, they'll also become models for how college campuses can best deal with aging academic buildings, MU's facilities director said.

Both historic buildings have been completely gutted and are expected to open next year with more classroom and faculty office space.

The projects are unique for several reasons, said Gary Ward, associate vice chancellor for facilities. First, they're both academic buildings that don't directly generate revenue and didn't snag donor support. Most recent construction projects at MU — such as new residential halls, the recreation center and the new student center — have been paid using revenue streams such as housing or student fees. Other projects, such as the Reynolds Journalism Institute and the athletic complex, had donor support.

MU has more than 30 academic buildings that need renovations totaling some $500 million, Ward said. Last year, UM System President Gary Forsee successfully petitioned the Board of Curators to issue bonds for academic projects by dedicating a portion of the existing maintenance budget to pay down the debt. MU received $19 million in bonds for Tate, Switzler and some miscellaneous upgrades.

Ward has been finding ways to keep costs down since. First, he revamped the process used when hiring architects. Instead of sending bulky paper requests for proposals, he first electronically contacted architects around the state to narrow competitors based on qualifications and their workloads. What typically would have been a nine-month process was whittled down to a few weeks, he said.

The university also tapped a construction manager early in the process to allow them to work side by side with the architects. That's critical when renovating old buildings, Ward said, because typically there are unexpected technical snags that construction managers might foresee better than architects.

Next, Ward chose the same color and design schemes for both buildings to allow the university to buy in bulk and save money. The carpeting and other building materials are basic, too: No fancy marble or granite needed.

"There's nothing in there that would make a taxpayer or dad who's paying tuition say, 'You guys are not good stewards,'" Ward said.

The no-frills designs ensure space in both buildings will be maximized, he said. In Switzler, a four-floor addition on the south side plus a reconfigured interior will add 180 classroom seats and seven faculty offices to the building. Switzler Hall originally opened in 1872, making it the second-oldest building on campus. It cost $50,000 to build back then compared to the renovation price tag of $6.5 million, project manager Robert Young said.

At Tate, the $8 million renovation project will result in 90 new classroom seats and 23 offices.
The thriftiness of the projects should set an example for how future academic halls are renovated, Ward said.

Too many facilities managers "get stars in their eyes," he said. "They should be worried about the educational goal. I’m not interested in making the University of Missouri the university with the best pipes. I want the University of Missouri to be the university with the best academic programs."

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MU won't press charges against Faurot Field rushers
By RUDI KELLER

Updated October 29, 2010 at 1:33 p.m.

Under pressure from fans, alumni and a state senator, University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton backed away from pursuing charges against 30 people arrested and ticketed for trespassing on Faurot Field after the Homecoming victory over Oklahoma on Saturday.

In a release from the MU News Bureau, Deaton said the university still considers the safety of athletes, coaches and fans to be a priority.

"The football game against Oklahoma presented officials with unique circumstances," Deaton said in the statement issued yesterday. "After careful review, the university will not forward the summons for trespassing on the field at the MU-OU football game to the city prosecutor."

Deaton said law enforcement agencies that took part in the arrests "performed admirably. Fans violating our rules were warned that they faced arrest and subsequent sanctions. While we were fortunate that few injuries were reported, one individual did suffer a broken leg.

"Our fans must conduct themselves with honor and respect for the values of the university, even during the euphoria of a big win," the statement said. "We have high expectations for many more wins and must insist on orderly behavior in an effort to avoid any injuries. At the same time, university officials recognize that safety and law enforcement officials cannot be expected to enforce the letter of the law in circumstances that involved thousands of people."

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, who met with Deaton and other campus officials to urge the move, said he was satisfied.

"It is nice to know the university has a soul," Schaefer said. "I think it is good to know the university can take a situation like that into consideration and make a reasonable decision."

The move reversed a stance taken earlier in the week that the university would not interfere with the prosecution. Mary Jo Bankert, head of the MU News Bureau, said she mistakenly believed when she made that statement that all the paperwork for the charges had already been sent to the city municipal prosecutor.

"At the time I said that, it was my understanding that the paperwork had already been turned over and up to them to press charges," she said. "We wouldn't ever ask the city prosecutor not to press charges. I was wrong. The paperwork had not been turned over from law enforcement. Given that, the chancellor made the decision to ask the law enforcement officers to not forward the paperwork."
Schaefer's actions to prevent the prosecutions also drew criticism from some area legislative candidates, who called it interference with internal campus affairs. He defended his call for the university to refrain from pressing charges.

"When I get calls from alumni, student and parents about the university in my district and what they think is reasonable or unreasonable, I am absolutely going to listen, and I am going to respond. I find it unbelievable that candidates would say they are not responsive to the needs of their constituents," he said.

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University drops Faurot Field trespassing charges

MSA passed a resolution encouraging the dropping of the charges.

By Kelly Oleinik

Published Oct. 29, 2010

An MU fan slides off the Faurot Field goal post after the students and fans stormed the field following the Tigers’ upset win against the Oklahoma Sooners. Amnesty has been granted to the the 30 students who were being tried on trespassing charges following the game.

MU has dropped all charges against the 30 persons who were arrested after rushing the field following Missouri’s 36-27 victory over the Oklahoma Sooners on Oct. 23, Chancellor Brady Deaton said in a statement Thursday.

According to the news release, the football game against Oklahoma presented officials with unique circumstances. After careful review, the university will not forward the summons for trespassing on the field to the city prosecutor.

A Facebook page entitled “Free the Faurot Field Thirty” had more than 2,260 fans as of press time. Additionally, Wednesday night, before MU dropped the charges, the Missouri Students Association passed a resolution to encourage the university to do exactly that. MSA President Tim Noce said the resolution was sent to MU administrators Wednesday night.

All 30 fans were originally charged with first-degree trespassing, MSA Senate Speaker Evan Wood said.
"It's the student body taking a stance and having it on record," MSA Senator Matt Sheppard said in an e-mail. "It's showing those arrested that the students of Mizzou are behind them in their fight and want to help."

Sheppard said the resolution specifically offered solutions rather than arrest rather than give the non-threatening MU fans a criminal record.

"Fans must conduct themselves with honor and respect for the values of the university, even during the euphoria of a big win. We have high expectations for many more wins and must insist on orderly behavior in an effort to avoid any injuries," the news release stated.

"From a liability perspective it is a safety concern," Wood said. "But it is hypocritical to advertise photos of students on the field and sell photos through the athletics department."

Wood said he had received an MU e-mail earlier this week with the dominant photo depicting students covering the field in celebration of MU's win. The university did not condemn the action of rushing the field in the e-mail.

The university selling and profiting off field-rushing photos was the drive behind the MSA resolution, Wood said.

"When the officers are being employed by athletics to charge individuals on the field with trespassing then go and markets, for a profit, the pictures taken of students on the field while pressing charges against them at the same time is completely unethical," Sheppard said.

It is important to note that our police force performed admirably, the release stated. Fans violating the rules were warned that they faced arrest and subsequent sanctions.

MSA had plans to meet with the university to discuss the future of the 30 fans arrested, Wood said. Those meetings are no longer necessary.

"Every student that rushed that field is Mizzou and we are not going to make a few people pay for what we all did together in celebration of making Mizzou history," Sheppard said. "We will not let a few cops ruin that historic moment for some of my Mizzou family members."
Who's behind the curtain on MU game decisions?

Editor, the Tribune: An article in the Wednesday Tribune titled "Field rushers' arrests questioned," by Rudi Keller, was interesting but glaringly incomplete. It noted at least four decisions someone made after the game: to arrest 30 people, that the university could not or should not drop charges against these people, to sell pictures of the crowd on the field to the general public, and later not to sell those pictures. Nowhere, however, did the article say who made these decisions or what the reasoning behind them was. Who decided? Was it the police? Was it the university "spokeswoman"?

The person or people who made these decisions should be identified. Collectively, they were ridiculous and an embarrassment to the University of Missouri. Who decided?

Tom Vernon

1115 Ridge Road
Accreditation raises the caliber of MU’s new public health program

By Megan Cassidy
October 30, 2010 | 3:53 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — As soon as MU’s first Master of Public Health graduates accepted their degrees, program officials began vying for accreditation. This week, their efforts came to fruition.

The master’s program was initiated in 2007, and was eligible to apply for accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health immediately following the graduation of its first class. This week, the program announced its recognition by the council, and has received the maximum allowed accreditation, a five-year term, valid until December 2015.

Graduates from MU’s and other public health programs work to set up health-related programs on the local, statewide and national levels rather than helping individual patients. Hagglund said that public health is interdisciplinary and practitioners may work in a variety of sectors, including with public health departments, senior services, and outreach and education initiatives.

A master’s degree in public health does not require that one graduate from an accredited program to work in the field, and programs are not required to be reviewed by the council. However, program director Kristofer Hagglund said receiving accreditation helps to substantiate the caliber of MU’s degree.

“It’s a recognition of the quality of the program,” Hagglund said. “We’re committed to addressing the core principals of public health and improving the health and well-being of its communities.”

MU’s Master of Public Health is the second accredited program of its kind in Missouri, and the only one at a public university. Saint Louis University’s program is accredited, Missouri State University is considering applying for accreditation, and the Brown
School of Social Work at Washington University is in the process of applying, Hagglund said.

Lise Saffran, associate director of the program, said graduate public health programs have recently been sprouting up around the country because of their intrinsic value.

"People are beginning to recognize that health issues are economic issues," Saffran said. "In general, preventing health care problems is much more cost effective than treating them."

Graduates who work in public health in Missouri have their work cut out for them, Saffran said. Not only is the state’s public health workforce aging, but a number of public health indicators such as chronic diseases, obesity and tobacco usage aren’t faring well on a national level. Missouri is one of nine states with an obesity rate of more than 30 percent, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

"There is a lot of need, but also a lot of opportunity for people who want a career in public health," Saffran said.
Master of Public health program accredited

It's the only public school program in Missouri to receive the recognition.

By Travis Cornejo Published Oct. 29, 2010

The MU Master of Public Health program received accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health, according to a statement released Thursday.

"I am delighted, but not surprised, that the MPH program was awarded full accreditation," said Kristofer Hagglund, MPH program director and School of Health Professions associate dean, in a news release.

The program will have accreditation throughout December 2015. Five years is the maximum term a program can receive. The program is the second accredited program and the only accredited program at a public university in Missouri.

"The program’s students, faculty and staff are dedicated to learning and to enhancing the health and well-being of our community," Hagglund said. "The program has outstanding support from the university and from its many community partners. This support allows us to provide high-quality coursework, excellent research and community service in Missouri and around the world."

At MU, more than 143 students are studying public health. The program began in 2007 with 58 students. Currently, the program is home to students from across the U.S. and various countries.

The program’s mission is to advance the health and well-being of citizens of Missouri and other places through excellent teaching, discovery and service in public health.

Dual degrees are offered with both the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Harry S. Truman School of Public Affairs. In the future, the program plans to offer a dual degree with the School of Journalism.

According to the news release, the program encompasses the academic strengths of MU in veterinary medicine and policy analysis and development to meet the needs of the population.

"The accreditation process reflected the unique structure and strengths of MU’s MPH program, including the commitment to excellence in research, teaching and service," MPH Associate Director Lise Saffran said in a news release. "This exciting news was the result of the interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration that is at the heart of public health."

The U.S. Department of Education recognizes the Council on Education for Public Health as an agency that can accredit schools and programs of public health.
Letter to the Editor: LBC: Diversity course would offer necessary cultural exposure

By The Legion of Black Collegians

Published Oct. 29, 2010

Greetings Maneater and Readers,

Today the Legion of Black Collegians comes to you in regards to the various publications presented by The Maneater on the Diversity Course requirement. We are delighted to see that faculty and staff, as well as students, have taken an interest in this pressing affair. The Legion would also like to commend The Maneater on its initiative to provide students with the latest updates concerning this matter. Please keep in mind that The Legion remains a strong advocate of a diversity course requirement and will continue to do everything in our power to make sure it passes. We would like to express our gratitude for the three-part series on diversity, as well all our disheartenment with a personal opinion piece.

We genuinely thank The Maneater for its continued coverage on both sides of the diversity course requirement. This discussion deserves more exposure than solely the Legion of Black Collegians and Four Front. We are grateful that the leading student source for campus wide information (The Maneater) decided that this issue was worthy of recognition. It is our hopes that this three part series has reached and positively impacted the masses. Without your help, a significant portion of our students may have remained uninformed of the changes that were taking place regarding their future. We like to believe that issues affecting minority students are important at all times, and not just during times of turmoil. This series has shown us that the endeavor to implement the diversity requirement is not forgotten. It is because of your dedication to provide students with relevant information that goals such as ours are met.

Though we are not surprised to hear an opposing voice on the topic of a diversity course included in our required curriculum, we are disappointed to hear Megan Robert's lack of knowledge regarding the diversity requirement, and her reasoning for dissent in her opinion piece. For Robert to insist, "a diversity course requirement would provide students with no tangible life skills," is an opinion without proper research to support such a statement. Diversity, Inclusion and Acceptance are no longer qualities to be strived for but qualities that are admired and praised. Exposure to different cultures makes students more accepting of people who have different cultures, traditions and identities. Roberts is right when she says, "compulsory actions do not equal virtue," however, education on a subject can prevent ignorance before it becomes disrespectful or result in unwanted actions. The students in the cotton ball incident admitted to "not knowing" it would cause such uproar, because they did not understand the upsetting background that came with cotton and African American history. Perhaps a diversity class would have enlightened them to that fact that they disrespected and hurt so many of their peers (minority or not) on this campus. Yes, only open minds will embrace diversity, but there is an
opportunity for closed-minded or uninformed people to make better decisions on diversity. In closing, a diversity course is an opportunity for the University of Missouri to create a community of people that are able to find understanding in the differences of others. Students can apply these skills and lessons during their time on campus as well as after they graduate.

We hope that you have openly taken our comments and understand that the latter part of this message is not a rebuttal. The Legion of Black Collegians simply wanted to address the discussion regarding an issue that we feel so connected to. If anyone has any further questions regarding our letter or our efforts in the progress of the diversity course feel free to contact us at lbc@missouri.edu.
Health policy summit focuses on fallout of reform

By T.J. Greaney

It's a time of transformation in the health care industry. And yesterday speakers at the eighth annual Missouri Health Policy Summit focused on some of those changes and the ways Missouri agencies are staying on their toes to adapt.

In a panel discussion at the Hilton Garden Inn, state health leaders gave reports to the audience that was made up of physicians, nurses and insurance providers. Panelists discussed the state's progress in meeting guidelines laid out in federal reform known as the Affordable Care Act.

John Huff, director of the Missouri Department of Insurance, said his agency is working in overdrive between now and 2014 to ensure that the Missouri's insurers adopt the new rules. "This will be the fastest 27 months we will ever see," Huff said, "at least in an insurance regulator's life."

On Sept. 23, the first major provisions in the Affordable Care Act were rolled out. Patients were given a raft of new protections including requirements that insurers offer coverage for dependent children up to age 26, mandatory coverage for children with pre-existing conditions, access to preventive care without a co-pay and an end to the caps on lifetime benefits to patients.

And though many patients already are benefiting from reform, it is also having "unintended consequences" on the insurance market, Huff said.

One such consequence is that state insurers have mostly ceased to offer "child-only" policies in response to the new rule that forbids insurers from denying coverage to any child with a pre-existing condition. Huff's department is working to rectify that.

"It is an issue where we'll have to show flexibility at the state level," Huff said.

Huff said his department fielded 27,000 phone queries last year from consumers asking questions about their insurance.

The Department of Insurance also will be charged with enforcing new rules about the medical loss ratios reported by insurers. New federal law requires insurers to spend at least 80 cents out of every premium dollar they collect on medical care. For group plans, the requirement is higher: 85 cents out of every dollar. This is designed to prevent insurers from spending large amounts of money on executive salaries, advertising and other overhead costs and passing those expenses on to consumers.

The new guidelines for reporting medical loss ratios will begin in 2011. If insurers fail to meet the threshold next year, they'll be forced to issue refunds to customers in 2012. Huff said he is optimistic that this will be a tool that controls rising premiums in Missouri.
"It's a big win for us, I think," Huff said.

Similarly, Department of Social Services Director Ron Levy said the state is making great strides in building a secure health information exchange. This network will allow patients and doctors access to electronic health records, meaning a patient seeing a doctor in one part of the state could instantly retrieve health information from a hospital, lab or surgeon in any other part of the state. By 2015, DSS plans to have the exchange completely up and running.

The process, Levy said, is occurring on an aggressive timeline and a state advisory board is receiving extensive input from six working groups studying the process.

"We haven't missed a single deadline," Levy said.

In an interview, Karen Edison, director of the Center for Health Policy at MU, said some of the most significant provisions of federal health reform don't take effect until 2014 but will impact the lives of hundreds of thousands of Missourians. For instance, in 2014 Medicaid will be offered to families with incomes up to 133 percent of the federal poverty level. Currently, families must make less than 42 percent of the poverty limit to receive Medicaid in Missouri.

The federal law also will provide new tax credits that will allow families with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level to buy private insurance on newly created insurance marketplaces known as "exchanges." A study by the health advocacy group Families USA found that 500,000 Missourians will be eligible for the new tax credits in 2014.

"That's huge," said Edison. "Nationwide we'll have 32 million more people covered; half of them under Medicaid and half of them through these exchanges."
Sixth suspect in Hobson death turns himself in

Published October 30, 2010 at 11:22 a.m.

The sixth suspect in the shooting death of Aaron Hobson turned himself in Friday in St. Charles.

Columbia police spokeswoman Officer Jessie Haden said 24-year-old Anthony J. Carr was in the Boone County Jail as of yesterday morning. A warrant was issued for Carr on Tuesday for second-degree murder and second-degree robbery in the Oct. 23 shooting death at Break Time, 110 E. Nifong Blvd. Haden said Carr declined to make a statement regarding the incident.

Alleged triggerman Daron Peal, 23, and his brother Darris Peal, 21, were taken into custody Wednesday in Jennings near St. Louis. Investigators have said they believe Daron Peal shot Hobson around 1:15 a.m. Oct. 23. Both brothers are charged with second-degree murder and second-degree robbery.

Three men previously were charged: Tony L. Lewis, 27, of Boonville; Leo D. Roland, 19, of Columbia; and Deshon Houston, 20, of Columbia. Each was charged with second-degree murder and second-degree robbery.

Aaron Hobson was the cousin of Trey Hobson, a defensive back with the Missouri Tigers football team, and he was in town Oct. 23 for the Homecoming game against Oklahoma.
The Globe and Mail

Ottawa conference seeks global consensus on risks of bisphenol A

By Martin Mittelstaedt
From Monday's Globe and Mail

WHO symposium will bring together world's leading experts in an effort to reach a consensus on whether food containing the widely used compound is safe.

MU mention page 3

When it comes to human exposure to bisphenol A, the lowly tin can packs quite a punch.

Practically everyone eats canned food; the main reason that more than 90 per cent of Canadians carry detectable levels of BPA in their bodies - tiny bits of the compound leach into food from the epoxy liners on the insides of cans.

Health authorities have always believed these trace exposures were harmless. But the question of whether eating canned food entails any health risks because of BPA, a compound that mimics the female hormone estrogen, is about to receive one of its most thorough reviews.

The World Health Organization has asked experts on the chemical to come to Ottawa this week for a five-day symposium that will help it evaluate the potential risks from BPA. Much of the attention will be focused on the migration of the compound from cans into food and beverages, and whether there are subpopulations, such as pregnant women and their fetuses, more at risk from these exposures.

The WHO meeting is being held in Canada, in part because it is the leading jurisdiction in the world on BPA regulation. The federal government was the first in the world to add the man-made chemical to a national toxic substances list last month, after having earlier banned baby bottles made from the compound, another international first.

The intense scrutiny of tin cans is a new stage in the ongoing safety debate over BPA, a key material in the manufacture of many plastics.

Worries about the chemical have already led several major food companies serving the Canadian market, including organic food purveyor Hain Celestial and ketchup king H.J. Heinz, to publicly commit to eliminating BPA.
The WHO gathering is supported by two heavyweight international regulators, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which is currently conducting its own review of BPA, and the European Food Safety Authority, which recently concluded food exposures aren't a concern.

The goal of the meetings "is to bring together some of the foremost experts in the world to review the most recent scientific information available on BPA and try to establish an international consensus on the safety of BPA, with a particular focus on food applications," Health Canada says.

Studies by academic laboratories have linked low-levels of BPA to such conditions as prostate enlargement and skewed mammary gland development in test animals indirectly exposed during fetal development through doses given their pregnant mothers. Adverse outcomes have been observed at exposures well below Health Canada's current safe level, but research funded by the plastics industry hasn't detected these effects.

Health Canada says it banned BPA baby bottles as a precaution for infants, but isn't worried about exposures to mothers and their fetuses. They aren't at risk as the amounts ingested by adults are "well below levels" that could cause harm, Health Canada said in response to written questions from The Globe and Mail.

Health Canada also says it is continuing to study the issue, however. Back in 2009, the federal agency launched an investigation into in utero exposures to BPA, and the potential effects of the chemical on fetal development. The results aren't expected to be released until June, 2011.

There is also growing evidence that BPA has impacts in the wider population. A study published last week in the journal Fertility and Sterility of workers in Chinese factories who used BPA linked the chemical to poor sperm quality among those with the highest exposures. Earlier this year, another study of typical Americans, found those with the most BPA had a 45 per cent higher risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

These kinds of findings are having huge reverberations in the food industry.

"We are seeing some serious momentum in the food and beverage industry to address BPA in can linings," said Emily Stone, a shareholder advocate at Green Century Capital Management, a U.S. mutual fund company that has reviewed food company responses to the BPA controversy.

Officials at companies seeking to replace BPA say they're responding to consumer demand.

Hain Celestial, for example, expects to have BPA-free containers next year. "What you're doing is giving the consumer an option, whether they elect to buy a product that's in BPA-free packaging or not, that really is their decision," said Gerald Amantca, Hain Celestial's vice-president of technical services.

To avoid BPA, the industry is looking at such techniques as shifting chunky, acidic foods normally found in cans, such as tomatoes, into Tetra Paks. Another technique under investigation
is applying a thin polyester liner on top of the BPA to prevent the chemical from coming into contact with foods or beverages, an approach that has been used in Japan.

The Japanese cut BPA levels in people by about 50 per cent after they adopted different canning techniques, a reduction that is "very significant," according to Fred vom Saal, a biologist at the University of Missouri and one of the experts the WHO has invited to the Ottawa meeting.

As common as can be

Practically all canned food contains minute amounts of bisphenol A.

A Health Canada survey released in June found detectable levels in 77 of 78 cans purchased at supermarkets. Can liners contain BPA, which accounts for how it gets into food.

Flaked light tuna in water had the most, followed by condensed soups. There was huge variation, with some types of tuna having about 500 times more than tomato paste, the item with the least. The full survey is available here [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/pubs/securit/bpa_survey-enquete-can-con-eng.php].

Health Canada says the amounts aren't a worry because a person weighing 60 kilograms would have to eat 20 cans of the most BPA-laden tuna a day to exceed its safety limit.
Los Angeles Times

Rooting for the Big Tree

People have partied, prayed, proposed, politicked and had their ashes spread under a revered 90-foot bur oak. Now it's dying.
October 31, 2010 | By Eva Dou

Folks around here simply call it the Big Tree.

The towering bur oak surrounded by fields of soybeans needs no other name.

It's safe to say it's the only thing in the tiny village of McBaine (population 17) with 6,000 Facebook fans.

People look at the Big Tree with respect. They come to north-central Missouri from miles away, even from other states, to sit in its shade and run their fingers over the ridged bark. There's the feeling there must be something special about a tree that sprouted back when English settlers were still establishing their colonies on the East Coast.

It has survived 9-foot-high floods, a tornado that demolished neighboring barns, lightning strikes, fire. Believed to have taken root around 1660, the Big Tree stands 90 feet tall, with a symmetrical canopy stretching 130 feet across. But even this tree — considered Missouri's largest and oldest bur oak — cannot survive forever.

"It's in decline," says Chris Starbuck, a plant science professor at the University of Missouri. "It's dropping a lot of branches."

Last year, he and other local arborists gave the tree a spring cleaning in an attempt to slow its decline. They clipped off dead limbs and aerated the soil that had been packed down by the parked cars of countless visitors.

John Sam Williamson, the farmer whose family has owned the Big Tree since 1835, says he's heard from people who want him to fence off the tree to prevent damage from visitors. He's against the idea.

"People call it our tree, but we don't look at it like that," Williamson said. "It's part of the community."

The two-lane road running beside the tree has taken the name of "Burr Oak Road," albeit spelled incorrectly with two Rs. A local politician launched his campaign under the tree a few years ago.
Hearts carved in the tree's bark and scattered bits of beer bottles testify to the countless late-night trysts and college student parties that have taken place at the Big Tree.

People come in more solemn moments, too.

On a recent Thursday, Brien Muench, 20, slipped a diamond ring on 21-year-old Julie Schunk's finger under the tree. Muench said the old oak was one of the first places he took Schunk when they met, so it was natural for him to return to propose marriage. She said yes.

Minutes after they left, a Dominican friar, Father Simon Felix Michalski, came to pray.

"It's very, very peaceful," he said. "I saw a praying mantis and a hawk, which are good signs."
Bitter political climate unlikely to change soon

By DAVE HELLING and STEVE KRASKE

MU MENTION PAGE 2

Hey! You! Yeah, you!

All this crazy election stuff driving you nuts? The verbal slugfest? The anger, the in-your-face politics?

Relax. It all ends Tuesday night.

Of course, it all starts again Wednesday morning.

“No one I know thinks that Nov. 3 will bring a new day of peace and bipartisanship,” said Norman Ornstein, a longtime congressional observer. “The climate is going to get more nasty and brutish before it gets better.”

It may be hard to believe our fierce, knotted-brow political brawl could get nastier. At a campaign event in Kentucky last week, supporters of Senate candidate Rand Paul actually came to blows with a liberal activist, who got her head stomped on.

We’re not quite at that point around Kansas City, but we’ve argued angrily enough, like the rest of the nation — over stimulus and stagnation, taxes and tea, windmills and even witchcraft.

Candidates have been challenged to “man up” on health care and close down the border. They’ve been capping, trading, earmarking — and attacking, particularly House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who is apparently on the ballot in every state.

Even a Democratic candidate told President Barack Obama to “shove it.” Another Democrat fired a bullet at a bill in a TV ad.

Some of it is personal. In Kansas’ 3rd Congressional District race, Kevin Yoder says Stephene Moore wasted taxpayer money traveling to Europe; she wants to know if he docked a DUI. In Missouri’s U.S. Senate race, Roy Blunt’s immigrant housekeeper is an issue; so is a $107 million wind farm grant to Robin Carnahan’s brother.
All that mud costs money. By Tuesday, candidates and outside groups may have spent more than $2 billion — that’s right, with a “b” — on the campaign. Some estimates are even higher; and, because much of the cash has come from super-rich donors able to keep their preferences secret, campaign fundraising itself has made people mad.

The result? Americans appear likely to get what so many are asking for on Election Day: Another change in government.

But change may be the only thing in 21st century America that isn’t changing. Voters, after all, threw Republicans out of Congress in 2006 and put a Democrat in the White House in 2008. Now they’re mad at Democrats and want to bring Republicans back.

“This sort of frustration and instability is not just the last two years, not even the last four years. It’s been building,” said David Sirota, a liberal columnist and author of The Uprising, a book examining populist unease and the political reaction to it.

So — the faces on the morning TV shows will be different, but the frustration, the polarization, the disappointment?

Probably not going away.

“Politicians campaign in poetry, but have to govern in prose,” said Marvin Overby, a political science professor at the University of Missouri, paraphrasing former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo. “We allow ourselves to be deluded by these promises every year...and we’re going to see the same sort of disappointment.

“The system is bigger than any of them.”

...

There’s polling evidence that Americans are disillusioned with both major political parties, which may be provoking the frustration — as if that’s a surprise.

A Rasmussen poll released last week showed 43 percent of likely voters said “neither party in Congress is the party of the American people.” So we’re mad at everyone.

Are we on the right track? By an almost two-to-one margin, Americans say “no.”

“I don’t like socialism,” said John Close, an 87-year-old Overland Park resident and World War II vet about the direction of the Obama administration. “He’s shoved things down the American people’s throat that we don’t want.”

“Whether you’re a Republican or Democrat, there’s a vibe that something needs to change,” said William Moore of Lenexa.

Not everyone, of course, is furious with government.
“It’s a challenging time,” said Darcy Clymer after casting her advance ballot. “People are going to be frustrated, but we have to give our elected officials a chance.”

“I’m not mad...I don’t believe all the hype people are talking about,” said yet another voter, Jeanne Andrade. “It’s not as bad as some people make it out to be, but not as good, either.”

...Frustrated or not, deep-seated anger notwithstanding, the wheels of government will keep on turning regardless of the outcome Tuesday, and beyond.

But how smoothly?

Already a post-election congressional agenda is taking shape, one that assumes the GOP will win control of at least the House.

That would place Washington back in divided government territory, and some predict that means big, heaping buckets of gridlock.

“Early on, there’s not going to be much movement,” said University of Texas scholar Bruce Buchanan. “There’s going to be an entirely different climate.”

He said the GOP will be forced to deal with internal disarray as it seeks to incorporate tea party members into the fold. “That’ll slow things down for a while,” Buchanan said.

Democrats, meanwhile, will be set on stopping any measure they see as hostile to their interests, such as changes to health-care reform.

The era of sweeping stimulus packages, robust government bailouts, huge reform measures? Clearly over. Inexpensive, small-bore ideas are now in.

So look for an attempt at compromise on education reforms. Expect a push from Obama to shore up one of his political Achilles heels — reducing the $13.7 trillion national debt and burgeoning national budget deficit. Both parties may be inclined to make a few trade deals with the likes of South Korea or Colombia.

A scaled-back energy plan that emphasizes nuclear energy? Perhaps.

“There may be compromises in areas like trade, education, even energy,” Ornstein said. “They will be incremental, and even difficult to achieve.”

But job one is waiting in big, bold neon letters: Extending some, or all, of the George W. Bush tax cuts. Obama has stressed that he wants to extend the cuts only for joint filers earning less than $250,000 a year. Republicans want to extend the cuts for all taxpayers, including the wealthy.
"This will be a big test for the president and a sign of how he and Congress will get along in the future," said Linda Fowler, a professor of government at Dartmouth College.

A key question will be whether Obama can forge a bipartisan compromise. One idea -- a temporary extension of all the cuts, for a year or two.

"If he decides to give Republicans what they want despite what he said about not giving tax cuts to the wealthiest 1 percent, he'll have a lot of trouble with his base," Fowler said.

One big unknown is how much of a spirit of compromise will permeate the D.C. mindset post-election. Maybe not much, experts said.

Democrats won't be inclined to work with Republicans -- the GOP won, Democrats believe, because they just said "no" during Obama's first two years. What worked for them, Democrats say, can work for us.

Republicans, meantime, face challenges of their own. Tea partiers are destined to populate GOP ranks, and they were elected on stopping all things Obama. They'll be competing with more traditional Republicans who may be more inclined to rack up a few accomplishments and cooperate, at least to a limited extent, with the White House.

Some tea partiers will be eager to dismantle key components of Obama's national health-care package, while some mainstream Republicans may be reluctant to re-argue that hornet's nest.

One man on the hot seat is House Republican Leader John Boehner, whose job it could be, if he becomes speaker, to corral all the competing GOP mindsets.

"He's the guy I feel sorry for in Washington," Fowler said.

...

Some social scientists -- taking a longer view -- suggest voter frustration and unease reach beyond government and may be a semi-permanent part of our politics.

The color of America is changing: By 2050, Caucasian Americans are expected to be a minority. Communication and entertainment are changing with mobile phone apps, tweets and Facebook friends. People aren't attached to telephone cords, neighborhood schools or labor unions. Jobs-for-life becomes careers-that-change, which can turn into no-jobs-at-all.

In times of great uncertainty, some believe, the past looks better than the present or the future.

"The tea party is all about returning us to the idealized, media image of the 1950s," Sirota said. "Meaning white, middle class, stable, unified. That memory is a stabilizing force in a time of great change."
Carl Bearden, executive director of United for Missouri and an ally of the tea party movement, calls that argument nonsense.

"I don't think they're threatened by change," he said. "What they're threatened by are the changes in the basic operating principles of the country. That's driving it more than saying 'I want to go back to Leave It To Beaver.'"

And some argue that voters are more than just angry. Anxious, perhaps; frustrated, to be sure; certainly deeply worried about the future — and their country's place in it.

For whatever motive, tea partiers seem likely to insist on a full consideration of their small-government, less-spending recipe for change, making agreement in Washington even more difficult in the immediate future.

"The last Republican Congress didn't suffer from too little compromise, it suffered from too much," Rep. Mike Pence, an Indiana Republican recently wrote. "Republicans lost their majority because of too much compromise on spending and deficits and debt."

Some political scientists warn against an overreaction to the swinging political pendulum — politics, they point out, has been angry and argumentative before (remember the 1960s, anyone? How about the 1860s?)

Consider all those negative TV ads that only fuel so much of the alienation. You may groan every time you see one, but political consultants continue to suggest that they work. That's why they haven't gone away.

It's possible that America may "age out" of the anger once younger voters, more flexible and comfortable with 21st century changes, take power.

Those younger voters may also be the most interested in compromise — and may simply drop out in 2012 if they don't see some improvement on jobs and the economy in the next Congress.

That, in turn, may convince some in Congress — including all those new members — to tone down the anger and turn up the volume on the kumbaya.

"The conventional wisdom here is that it's going to be gridlock, and bad, and ugly, and I'm not saying they're wrong," said Jim Kessler of Third Way, a centrist think tank. "But there's a reasonable chance that may not occur over the course of two years."

If the sides do move the nation forward, the anger may well dissipate between now and Election Day 2012. "Politicians in both parties had better show they're listening to the voters," Bearden said.

If not? Probably more madness.