Gov. Nixon picks new director for Missouri DNR

By CHRIS BLANK

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon on Monday picked a public relations firm project manager to join his Cabinet and head up the same state environmental agency she helped lead earlier this decade.

Sara Parker Pauley was named the new director of the state Department of Natural Resources. She was the department's deputy director from 2001 to 2005 and served as the liaison to business and environmental groups and oversaw the environmental agency's historic preservation, energy center, technical assistance and public communications offices.

The appointment requires Senate confirmation when lawmakers return to the Capitol next month. Nixon announced the selection at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He cited Pauley's professional experience and said she values the state's natural and cultural resources.

"Sara Parker Pauley has a breadth of experience -- and a proven track record of success -- helping government, business and non-profit groups find common ground and build consensus," Nixon said. "That is the kind of problem-solving we need."

Pauley, 45, of Hartsburg in central Missouri, replaces Mark Templeton. He resigned as DNR director earlier this year to head the Office of the Independent Trustees of the Deepwater
Horizon Oil Spill Trust. The fund was established by BP PLC and is administered by two trustees.

During Templeton's tenure, the Department of Natural Resources faced criticism and a legislative inquiry into the handling of E. coli test samples from the Lake of the Ozarks. The governor's office created a nine-person committee to conduct a nationwide search for Templeton's replacement.

Pauley has been a project manager for D.J. Case & Associates and worked with state and federal agencies on developing policy, marketing and environmental compliance. Before that, she was the executive vice president of a start-up energy company based in Missouri. She also served as the chief of staff to a Democratic state House speaker from 1996 to 1998.

Pauley said she plans to promote renewable energy and conservation of natural resources.

"I grew up outdoors -- hunting and fishing in the Ozarks with my grandparents and parents -- so caring for and respecting Missouri's outstanding natural resources is a value that goes back generations in my family," Pauley said. "I also believe that economic growth and environmental stewardship are not mutually exclusive."

Pauley has degrees in journalism and law from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She also has taught a course in natural resource policy and administration at the school.

Federal campaign finance records show that over the last two years Pauley donated $500 to Democratic Congressman Ike Skelton and $500 to Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Robin Carnahan.
Shopping for an e-reader?

Greater variety of choices, much cheaper costs await customers in stores, online.

Nathan Hurst • University of Missouri • December 14, 2010

Columbia -- As the holiday shopping season accelerates, many consumers are considering e-readers or media tablets as gifts. To help confused shoppers, University of Missouri digital publishing expert Roger Fidler has released his annual online e-reader buyer's guide. Fidler compares seven e-reader models and the Apple iPad media tablet by size, weight, navigation, features, connectivity and cost, and provides information on where to find each model.

Fidler says consumers have more choice in models and less financial commitment this year. The top vendors for e-readers include Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Sony and Kobo, and this year, consumers can purchase them both in stores and online.

"Last year we really only had the Kindle," Fidler said. "There were announcements of other devices but none were really accessible before Christmas. This year we have a whole array of e-readers and tablets available and the price has dropped dramatically."

Apple's iPad is in a category of its own as the first "media tablet." Fidler says the iPad isn't a direct competitor to the Kindle and other dedicated readers with electronic paper displays; however, it will likely produce a surge in demand for e-readers from shoppers discouraged by the iPad's price tag.

For bookworms, Fidler suggests the Kindle's electronic paper display. He says the Apple iPad is better suited for those who prefer reading digital magazines and newspapers as it provides a more visually rich presentation with its 9.7-inch, full-color, multi-touch screen and instant-on display. Fidler says both e-readers and tablets provide a better experience than reading for leisure or news on a computer or phone screen.

"When you read something on your smartphone or on the web, you're really just snacking on the news," Fidler said. "When you read it in print, on your e-reader or a tablet, you're dining on the news. And that's a very different type of reading experience."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Warren Erdman to succeed Judith Haggard as leader of UM System curators

By Josh Barone
December 13, 2010 | 7:16 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Warren Erdman, vice chairman of the University of Missouri System Board of Curators, will move into a new role Jan. 1 when he begins a yearlong term as the board’s chairman.

At a meeting Friday in St. Louis, the curators voted to elect Erdman and David Bradley, who will serve as the board’s vice chairman, according to a UM System news release. Erdman succeeds Judith Haggard, whose term as chairwoman expires Dec. 31.

The Board of Curators is the governing body of the UM System and is made of nine voting members appointed by the governor, as well as one non-voting student representative.

Erdman serves as chairman of the Board of Curators’ Compensation and Human Resources Committee, according to the UM System website. Outside the board, he is the executive vice president for administration and corporate affairs at Kansas City Southern, a railway holding company based in Kansas City.

Erdman, a graduate of Westminster College in Fulton, joined the curators in 2007, according to the news release. He also is a member of the UM-Kansas City Board of Trustees.

Bradley, who joined the curators in 2009, also serves on the Compensation and Human Resources Committee, as well as the Resources and Planning committees, according to the news release.
He hails from St. Joseph, where he is president of the News-Press & Gazette Co. He is a graduate of Syracuse University and is a member of the Inland Press Association.

The first meeting for Erdman and Bradley will be Jan. 27 at MU. At that meeting, the new administration also will be joined by four newly appointed curators who will succeed outgoing members John Caruahau, Bo Fraser, Doug Russell and David Wasinger.

At the January meeting, the curators are slated to take up a discussion of tuition rates for the 2011-12 year, particularly how the curators could craft specific tuition increases based on the needs of the system's four campuses.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Jim Spain to oversee eLearning at MU

By Alejandra Quintela Sanchez
December 13, 2010 | 4:47 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Jim Spain will be overseeing eLearning as interim vice provost at MU. Provost Brian Foster announced Monday.

"He is an excellent administrator and has been very passionate about eLearning," Foster said.

Foster said Spain is a natural choice for the position because Spain has been involved in eLearning for three years. eLearning is an MU program designed to increase online professional development and the skills of MU educators to improve student performance.

"He will work on how instruction will be delivered in the next years," Foster said.

Foster also said the eLearning program will be realigned. This has been under discussion for two years and now, Foster said, it seems to be the right time to start because technology is growing rapidly.

"Our task now is developing a new structure for eLearning including on-campus and long-distance technologies," Foster said. "They have to be integrated at some level."

Foster also said in an MU news release that long-distance education should be integrated in campus completely because electronic communication is used in the majority of courses.

Jim Spain, who holds a doctorate in animal science, works now as MU’s vice provost for undergraduate studies. He will also oversee MU Direct, the distance education marketing group and the Center for Distance and Independent Study. His appointment was effective Dec. 1.
Foster also appointed Tom Henderson, former director of MU Extension, to examine ways to restructure eLearning for the MU campus so the resources available can be used in the most effective manner possible.

"Our goal is to establish a system that continues to extend our teaching and learning programs beyond the traditional classrooms to students here on campus, across the state and around the world," said Spain in a news release.
University Hospital does mass cleanup, responding to 'broad concerns'

By Ayla Kremen, Walker Moskop
December 13, 2010 | 7:23 p.m. CST

Spokeswoman cites dusty corners, cracked walls

COLUMBIA — About 120 University Hospital and Clinics employees put in overtime and unpaid hours last weekend cleaning up facilities in an effort to address "broad areas" of concern cited by federal health inspectors after a visit in early November.

Hospital spokeswoman Jo Ann Wait said Monday the cleanup came in response to a letter that MU Health Care received in early November from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which warned that findings from its last visit would prompt a return visit "for a full review of all of our facilities."

Wait said inspectors found "some issues" related to the physical plant and "housekeeping."

She cited examples of dusty corners, dirty ceiling tiles and cracks in the walls. She noted that University Hospital was built in 1956 and is showing signs of age.

Wait said the cleanup included operating rooms, examination rooms and other patient and nonpatient areas.

"We just did a complete spruce-up of our entire physical plant," she said.

"Yes, we're getting ready for another survey team, but we don't know when they're coming," she added. "They don't tell you when they're coming."
MU Health Care declined to release the report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. "Until (the issues) are resolved, it is CMS' report to release," Wait said.

The Missourian has filed a request under the federal Freedom of Information Act seeking the full report from the centers.

Meanwhile, the Joint Commission, a private, nonprofit health-care accreditation organization, released in a Nov. 10 report statistics that show University Hospital and Clinics met or exceeded national standards in almost all categories. Still, the report, which is based on statistics collected from March 2009 to April 2010, showed they lag behind national averages in some areas:

- 73 percent of patients received the appropriate medication for colon and large intestine surgery, versus the national average of 89 percent.
- 82 percent of adult pneumonia patients were given antibiotics within six hours of arriving at the hospital, versus the national average of 95 percent.
- 87 percent of patients had their antibiotic use discontinued within 24 hours after surgery, versus the national average of 94 percent. Giving antibiotics after 24 hours is not considered helpful, according to the report.

Wait said the hospital monitors these statistics closely and has teams addressing the issues they raise.

In particular, she said, the implementation of electronic medical records will help reduce the time it takes for patients to get prescriptions and limit errors that can occur along the way.
Hope of breeding disease-resistant wine grapes

Tuesday, 14/12/2010

US researchers think they can make wine grapes resistant to diseases, including downy mildew.

Humid and wet weather has caused an outbreak of the fungal disease in eastern Australia, damaging crops and exhausting supplies of chemical spray.

Walter Gassmann, from the University of Missouri, says the secret lies in the disease resistance of a North American grape called Norton.

"If you look at, for example, statistics of how much sulphur is California, that's all the wine industry, the problem is huge," he said.

"There would be a lot of interest in having garnered, harvesting, the innate resistance of plants."
Crop raiding elephants 'stressed'

By Emma Brennand
Earth News reporter

Elephants that invade farmers' crops have higher levels of stress hormones.

Scientists found high levels of glucocorticoid metabolites in dung collected from crop raided fields.

That suggests the African elephants were under high physiological stress before the crop raid, researchers say in the journal Animal Conservation.

Elephants are intelligent creatures and this discovery could show their ability to anticipate the potential risks involved in raiding farmers' crops.

The study also supports previous research showing that offending elephants tend to be sub-adult and adult males.

In Kenya, elephants are not confined to national parks or reserves. As they wander, they often come across farm crops that they raid for food such as maize or potatoes.

Researchers from the University of Missouri, Columbia and African Conservation Centre, Nairobi, Kenya collected dung samples from elephants involved in five crop raids and from the two closest protected areas for comparison, Amboseli National Park and Maasai Mara National Reserve.

The dung samples were analysed to determine the age, sex and level of the stress hormone in reserve elephants compared to the crop raiding parties.

"The crop raiding elephants had high levels of stress hormones, and significantly higher stress hormone levels than the Amboseli elephants, explains lead researcher Marissa Ahlering.

"However, the crop raiders did not show a significant difference from Maasai Mara primarily because of the increased variability seen in the dung from Maasai Mara elephants."

The variation in the hormone levels in the Maasai Mara elephants may indicate that they were actively crop raiding beyond the boundaries of the park in the 30 hours before the samples were collected.

The Maasai Mara reserve is surrounded by agricultural land providing ample opportunity for elephants to forage in these agricultural fields. The researchers suggest that this, in addition to the increase in human and vehicle traffic in the area, may indicate a generally higher state of stress in Maasai Mara elephants.
Crop raiding is likely to be stressful for elephants because they are often chased and attacked during the raid.

Additionally, animals with higher levels of stress hormones can have increased aggression leading to an increase in confrontations with local communities.

"I wasn't too surprised at our results. I would expect that the conflict resulting from a crop raiding event would be quite stressful to both the elephants and the people involved," explains Dr Ahlering.

The glucocorticoid metabolite levels in the collected dung reflect an average of levels over the previous 30 hours, the time it takes for food to pass through an elephant's stomach.

"It is impossible to determine from our samples whether the elevated glucocorticoid levels associated with crop raiding were due to the stress of raiding or were one of the factors driving the behaviour," says Dr Ahlering.

"With intelligent, social animals, such as elephants, it is also plausible that glucocorticoids could become elevated before raiding crops if elephants are able to anticipate the risk involved in such behaviour."

Avoiding conflict

Crop raiding causes significant economic damage, with many farmers resorting to shooting, spearing and poisoning raiding elephants in order to protect their livelihoods and families.

Many conservation organisations including the African Conservation Centre are exploring innovative ways of deterring elephants from crops including electric fences, early warning systems, guards, capsicum grease and bee-hive fences.

Dr Ahlering and her colleague's hope that their findings will help establish why elephants raid crops and determine how to reduce the occurrence of these human-elephant conflicts.
University of Missouri and LPU Signed MoU

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Jalandhar: In a step further towards its internationalization strategy, Lovely Professional University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of Missouri, Columbia. This MoU was signed between the Engineering departments of both the Universities with a vision of providing the students the opportunity to study in each other’s campus and learn the workings of foreign universities.

Both the universities are prominent names in the field of education in their respective countries and are considered to be pioneers of quality education at international level. Missouri University is considered one of the nation’s top-tier institutions of the world and has a reputation of excellence in teaching and research while LPU has earned the stature of largest University in India. The twinning arrangement programmes offered by LPU have a major say in the curriculum and pedagogy of the University and this prompts the foreign universities to come in collaboration with it. Under this MoU, the students taking admission in the under graduate engineering courses of 2011 session shall be eligible to complete half their course at LPU and the other half at Missouri University.

On signing the MoU, Mr. Ashok Mittal, Chancellor of LPU said, "LPU is a global University having tie ups with 20 international universities of global repute. Our twinning arrangement programmes are the strength of our curriculum which allows our students to have enough international exposure. This collaboration with University of Missouri will benefit our students in terms of practical exposure and knowledge enhancement which will further help them in their professional lives. Such students who have global exposure and experience always have an edge over other potential candidates at the time of recruitments. We want all our students to have that 'edge' and hence we are doing continuous efforts to enter into such new collaborations."
Expressing his trust in LPU, Dr. Jim Thompson, the Dean of University of Missouri said, "We always wanted to have a tie up with an Indian University which works on the similar strategies and patterns as we do. After a stringent survey on Indian universities we found LPU to be the best suited one for our requirements. The University is not only open to spreading quality education at international level but also has its curriculum and pedagogy at par with international universities. This makes it a university well recognized at global level. As we sign this MoU with such a renowned name, I'm pleased that our 6 months efforts to get associated with LPU have well paid off."

The most illustrative factor about MU is that it is ranked at No. 32 with Michigan State University and Virginia Tech in the top 50 public national universities-doctoral list with more than thirty thousand students on rolls. North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) of United States accredits it. NCA itself is one of six regional organizations recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.