Technology grant to boost Brashear’s schools

The Brashear school district’s 7th and 8th grade math and communication arts classes will be taking part in a statewide school experiment.

Starting this summer, the middle school math and communication arts classes, teachers and students alike, will have expanded access to technology including laptops, smart boards and document scanners to see what role they can play in the classroom.

The technological boost is thanks to a $12 million federal grant to Missouri’s Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies (eMINTS) National Center at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

The grant is aimed at studying the effects of the eMINTS professional development program for educators on the achievement of rural middle school students.

Brashear is one of 60 rural Missouri school districts selected for the program, with the districts divided into three study groups for the five-year project.

The study groups will be provided with varying levels of technology and instruction and each group’s five-year achievement, measured by state testing scores, will be analyzed.

The first study group, which includes Brashear, will receive laptops for use in communication arts and math classrooms along with other technology for teachers’ instructional use in addition to training for the technology.

For the complete story, see Wednesday’s edition of the Daily Express.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia, Boone County, MU to discuss Hinkson Creek with EPA

By Pavan Vangipuram
December 15, 2010 | 4:53 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA – Representatives of the city of Columbia, Boone County and MU will meet on Monday at the Environmental Protection Agency Region 7 office in Kansas City to discuss the EPA's draft recommendations to clean up Hinkson Creek.

The latest draft recommendations – called a TMDL or Total Maximum Daily Load – call for Columbia to reduce the amount of stormwater that runs into Hinkson Creek by 39.6 percent.

In a cover letter to the city's comments on the EPA's draft recommendations, Mayor Bob McDavid asked the EPA to host a meeting with the city, Boone County and MU staff "to resolve these issues before any TMDL is issued for Hinkson Creek."

The city, county and MU have hired a lawyer, David Shorr of Lathrop and Gage, to represent them.

EPA Region 7 spokesman Kris Lancaster said, "Our goal is to meet and accommodate their request and listen to their concerns."

The meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. in Room 5160 at the EPA office at 901 N. Fifth St. in Kansas City.
MU basketball player Dixon suspended indefinitely

By Steve Walentik

Missouri sophomore point guard Michael Dixon has been suspended indefinitely for the violation of a team rule.

“We have high standards for how we expect our young men to carry themselves,” Missouri Coach Mike Anderson said in statement. “Michael didn’t meet those standards, therefore he is suspended indefinitely.”

A source said no legal issue led to Dixon’s suspension, but he will not play in Thursday’s game against Oral Roberts.

Dixon has started all nine games this year and is averaging 10.7 points and a team-high 4.3 assists.
Health News

Alcohol plays role in romance

Published: Dec. 15, 2010 at 11:34 PM

BUFFALO, N.Y., Dec. 15 (UPI) -- Couples who drink together say they feel increased intimacy and decreased relationship problems the next day than those who drink apart, U.S. researchers say.

Lead author Ash Levitt -- a post-doctoral fellow at the University at Buffalo's Research Institute on Addictions and M. Lynne Cooper of the University of Missouri -- says the study included 69 heterosexual couples, average age 20-21, most white and more than 90 percent college students. Most were dating seriously and seven of the couples were married.

The researchers say the beneficial outcomes for relationships were associated with relatively lower levels of drinking -- one to three drinks. However, harmful outcomes such as decreased intimacy and increased relationship problems were associated with heavier levels of drinking -- four or more drinks.

"The harmful effects of heavy drinking were buffered when partners drank together versus apart," Levitt says in a statement. "Also, when both partners drank either heavy or light amounts, as long as they were similar amounts compared to their partner, it was better for the relationship than when one drank heavily and the other lightly."

The study was published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin.
Dental sealants: Are they safe?

Dental sealants, the popular thin plastic coatings applied to the grooves of teeth, can reduce tooth decay in children by more than 70 percent.

While highly effective, however, sealants pose concerns. They're made with bisphenol A (BPA), a controversial and ubiquitous synthetic chemical that in low doses has been associated with changes in behavior, prostate and urinary tract development and early onset of puberty.

So far, experts strongly recommend sealants based on their proven benefits and the brief exposure to BPA, which can be minimized by taking certain steps in the application process. At the same time, however, there are gaping holes in the data, including the "quality and quantity of BPA absorption," according to a review of the literature recently published in the journal Pediatrics.

"We know BPA derivatives break down into BPA and that BPA is present in saliva for up to three hours," said lead author Abby Fleisch, a pediatric endocrinology fellow at Children's Hospital in Boston. "What we don't know is whether there's more chronic low-level leaching; there is also a need for additional research regarding whether the BPA in saliva becomes absorbed in the blood or urine.

"It would behoove the dental industry to look at alternatives," added Fleisch. "But right now there are none."

Some sealants are considered safer than others. Resins called "bis-GMA-based" are recommended over bis-DMA-based (both are derivatives of BPA) but "many products contain mixtures," said Dr. Perry Sheffield of Mount Sinai School of Medicine and a co-author of the Pediatrics study. "Thus, we emphasize the application techniques more strongly at this time."

The American Dental Association says there's no basis for health concerns relative to BPA exposure from any dental material. But BPA researcher Fred vom Saal calls lack of information about the different sealants a "big problem."

Tooth decay is a serious medical condition, and for some children, sealants are necessary, said vom Saal, a professor of biological sciences at the University of Missouri. "But it would be nice to know which on the market are not going to keep exposing your child to BPA," he said.

Pregnant women should minimize their exposure to dental sealants and composites (tooth-colored material used to treat cavities), which also contain BPA.
**Ways to reduce exposure**

To reduce your child's exposure to BPA, researchers in the Pediatrics study suggested asking your dentist to do the following:

- Have children gargle 30 seconds and spit immediately after sealants or composites are applied to prevent saliva from breaking down the chemical into BPA.
- Rub the surface of the materials with pumice to remove the top liquefied layer of the sealant.
- For kids who have trouble rinsing and spitting, try substituting a thorough rinse with an air-water syringe.
- Using a rubber dam (a thin square of latex rubber) during the application could further limit potential exposures.
Agriculture.com

Stem borer takes a bite

Agriculture.com Staff 12/15/2010 @ 11:27am

By Larry Reichenberger

Farmers know they can’t count on a crop until it’s in the bin. But there’s nothing more frustrating than losing a part of it just before the combine gets to the field. That’s what soybean growers in some Midwest and Southern states are experiencing as a result of damage by the soybean stem borer.

This small, long-horned beetle – officially known as the Dectes stem borer – delivers its heartbreaking damage by causing soybeans to lodge late in the growing season.

“It’s not the biggest threat soybean growers face, but it can be very frustrating,” says Kelly Tindall, entomologist at the University of Missouri Delta Research Center. “Last year, we measured losses of nearly 5 bushels per acre in heavily infested fields. And it’s not uncommon for most fields in hot-spot areas to have infestation levels of 95% to 100%.”

Hot-spot areas for the stem borer have been across Texas, Kansas, and into Nebraska, along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers (Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee), and the southeastern states along the Atlantic Coast. In Kansas, the soybean stem borer is spreading in central and western areas. A recent statewide survey found infestations in 64 counties – up from only five counties found in a 1985 survey.

Kansas State University entomologist Phil Sloderbeck explains that stem borer larvae tunnel up and down the inside of soybean stems and end up at the base when plants are mature. “This leaves stems weak and brittle at harvest time. They break off right at the ground level and often fall flat, making them difficult, or impossible, to recover,” he says.

“Typically, any yield loss to stem borer damage becomes most significant when harvest is delayed. In those cases, we’ve seen 40% to 50% of plants lying on the ground. Depending on the equipment a farmer is using, much of this can be lost. Or, at least, the pace of harvest will be further slowed,” says Sloderbeck.

Sloderbeck says there is no approved method to manage the soybean stem borer. Insecticide options either aren’t available or aren’t practical, and there are no resistant soybean varieties.

“Timely harvesting is one of the few ways to reduce yield loss to soybean stem borer,” he says. “Crop rotation may help, but it’s also not practical if soybean acreage in the area is increasing.”

Tindall is also frustrated over how to help growers battle soybean stem borers. “We’ve got more questions than answers,” she says.
"The increasing popularity of no-till is probably a factor because the larva overwinters in the base of soybean stems. But we had this problem before no-till became popular, so that's not the cause of it," she says.

Tindall says initial results of her latest research show that manipulating soybean planting rate may help reduce damage to the pest. "We're finding that plants with skinny stems – as may occur at high seeding rates – suffer more yield loss than plants with thick stems. We are using seeding rates beyond the normal range to study this difference, however. So we're not sure how it will relate to actual management situations.

"Research is also indicating that parasitic wasps may play a role in reducing stem borer problems," she adds. "We've found they can provide up to a 30% reduction in populations of the pest."
Mizzou: A day of good news, bad news and news that defies description

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 15 December 2010

Missouri made some good news, some surprising bad news and some news that no one knows quite how to take on Wednesday.

Brad Smith, the first star of the Gary Pinkel Era of Missouri football, was named to lead a six-person class into the University of Missouri Intercollegiate Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility.

Sophomore point guard Michael Dixon, out of Lee’s Summit West, was “suspended indefinitely” by basketball coach Mike Anderson for violation of a “team rule.”

And Sheldon Richardson – considered one of the best defensive tackles ever to sign with MU football before he flip-flopped a month ago to say he was headed to USC – flipped again back to the Tigers with an expectation he will be on hand for spring football.

Here are my thoughts on all three matters:

First, Dixon. You never know what “indefinite suspension” means precisely. I’ve got people telling me Dixon will miss a game and probably no more. But only Anderson really knows.

I’m just glad that I’m also being assured – by some people who ought to know – that Dixon has broken a rule, not a law.

When you hear of suspensions, experience has taught us to look first at the police blotter, the court calendar, or call a lawyer.

Next let’s deal with Brad Smith. Smith is going into the University of Missouri Athletic Hall of Fame on the first time he is eligible.

That should tell you how much Brad Smith did for Mizzou. Without him, I don’t know if Gary Pinkel is allowed to hang around long enough to make the Tigers a perennial Top 25 team.

Brad was a great kid, I’m sure he’s grown into a fine young man. And if you’re making a list of players that held shovels when it came time to dig Mizzou out of mediocrity, I’d put Brad right
up there with Corby Jones and Brock Olivo. They’ve all paved the way for Chase Daniel and Martin Rucker and Chase Coffman and Danario Alexander and Sean Weatherspoon and Michael Egnew et al.

Now there is the strange case of Sheldon Richardson. Once, twice, three times a Tiger. He signed with Missouri out of Gateway Tech. He kept telling us he was coming back to Missouri while he was in junior college in California. All the way to the day last month where he said he was going to USC.

Now Richardson says, once again, that Mizzou is the place for him. And he’s signed another letter of intent, this time of the junior college variety.

Will Richardson be eligible? Will he make it to spring football at Mizzou? Will he ever play down of football for the Tigers or any other college team?

Heck, right now I don’t know one way or the other.

It was a day, after all, of good news, bad news, and news that is still awaiting categorization.
Veterinary postgraduate program in development
Would create institute aimed at boosting food animal professionals

MU mention page 3

Two states have acquired federal funding for a novel approach toward addressing veterinary shortages in the United States.

The Missouri Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development, in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, have signed a cooperative agreement toward establishing a National Food Animal Veterinary Institute in northwest Missouri.

The announcement was made Oct. 29 at the Kit Bond Science and Technology Incubator on the campus of Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph.

USDA Rural Development has allocated $500,000 for the endeavor, which is being spearheaded by the agriculture commissioners of each state, Dr. Mike Strain from Louisiana and Jon Hagler, PhD, from Missouri.

The agreement calls for the development of a business plan, followed by a pilot study, within three years to provide specialized training to graduating veterinarians and veterinary technicians in food animal medicine, research and development, food safety, public health, and regulatory disease control, according to an MWSU press release.

Specifically, in years one and two, working groups will focus on four key areas: business and financial planning, curriculum development and identification of training opportunities, faculty and administration recruitment, and research and training infrastructure identification and development.

The partners plan to develop a postgraduate pilot training fellowship opportunity in year three that will build on the planning by the working groups, according to the release.

Much of the initial funding from USDA Rural Development will be used to flesh out the proposal and develop and plan for the pilot project. Dr. Strain said he and others will work on securing further assistance from private industry and the federal government but that first, the business and financial planning working group needs to look deeper into the
Cheryl Cook, undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development, announced Oct. 29 a $500,000 grant to create a business plan and pilot program for training large animal veterinarians and veterinary technicians.

Dr. Carrie Castille, a deputy assistant commissioner with the Louisiana agriculture department, said right now the project partners are working on finding team leaders for the four working groups. Individuals in academia, industry, and the public sector are being sought.

"We're moving forward quickly. We were actually surprised at the rate this has taken off in terms of receiving funding," Dr. Castille said.

Once the fellowship program is up and running, Dr. Castille said anywhere from 50 to 100 recent veterinary and veterinary technician graduates would participate in the first year of training, depending on the facilities and other factors. Somewhere in Buchanan County has been pegged as the likely location, but MWSU will allow use of its facilities in the interim. Missouri Western State's campus in St. Joseph is located in Buchanan County, an hour north of Kansas City. The site was chosen because of its proximity to the Animal Health Corridor in addition to the high concentration of food animals in the region, Dr. Castille said. According to a report by Brakke Consulting Inc., more than 45 percent of the feed cattle, 20 percent of the beef cows and calves, and more than 40 percent of the hogs in the United States are located within 350 miles of Kansas City.

Dr. Strain said the expectation is to involve all U.S. veterinary schools and colleges in recruiting recent graduates to receive advanced clinical training. The students would be selected on the basis of aptitude in addition to their willingness to practice in the rural, regulatory, military, or public health sectors.

"We've tried for a number of years, through a variety of mechanisms over the last 12 years, including loan repayment, scholarships, and grants, but we have not made any significant progress in dealing with the growing and impending shortfall in the area of food animal medicine, regulatory medicine, military veterinary medicine, and other areas," Dr. Strain said. "Our regulatory personnel and food animal veterinarians are aging out, and we don't have a sufficient number of highly trained people to take those places."

The idea first came about during conversations among members of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. These state commissioners discussed looking at models found in human medicine "or looking at some other type of model to where we can find some of the best and brightest and put them in an atmosphere where they're training with some of the best (teachers) in the world."

Accreditation of the fellowship program and certification of program participants are two major issues that will need to be resolved down the road. Dr. Castille said as the institution
becomes full fledged, it will look at accreditation.

She also acknowledged that veterinary schools already offer hands-on training and high-value degrees, not to mention internships, preceptorships, and opportunities for students to work at practices while being mentored.

Some leaders in veterinary academia have expressed cautious optimism for the program.

Dr. Neil C. Olson, dean of the University of Missouri-Columbia College of Veterinary Medicine, said the concept is very much in its infancy, and a number of issues need to be worked out. Yet, it has the potential to be a national resource that addresses not only the rural veterinary shortage but also the ongoing shortages of veterinarians in public health and regulatory veterinary medicine and in food safety.

However, for the institute to become successful, Dean Olson said, it won't be able to locate all its operations in Missouri alone, owing to the scale of the project. Instead, he said, the NFAVI should work with existing training facilities nationwide.

"As most academic deans are aware, there are a number of special training opportunities across the country that are (in) stand-alone facilities, like the (U.S. Meat Animal Research Center) in Clay Center, Neb., (and) the University of California Cooperative Extension dairy farm in Tulare County as well as the Cornell University and University of Minnesota dairy programs," Dean Olson said. "There are pods across the country and they're good ones, but they are more set up at the local level. It would seem to me what could come out of this national institute would be finding a way to bring some of those existing training facilities under some sort of umbrella so they would still exist."

Second, the institute would require ongoing support.

Dean Olson said economic incentives such as scholarship programs can be powerful recruiting tools for students to stay in food animal medicine, but they haven't had a chance to succeed because of budget cuts and a lack of ongoing commitment. Whether the institute can buck the trend is the multimillion-dollar question, he said.

"If it ends up being the same old 'We have money at the beginning and when the going gets tough the money goes away,' that's not going to be successful. There has to be a long-term commitment to this. I would suspect it's going to take federal and private money and perhaps state monies," he said.

Even if those conditions were met, Dean Olson doesn't expect the institute to recruit a large wave of new food animal practitioners, perhaps a handful. More realistically, he thinks, the institute could help existing food animal students stay in that field.

"I think the opportunity for having a little bit more advanced training could open up other potential career opportunities within food animal medicine. For example, someone who did a more rural practice with this training, they could have the feasibility to go to the
Dr. Marguerite Pappaioanou, executive director of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, noted that the association's board of directors has not had an opportunity to discuss the new agreement, and that the association does not have an official position at this time. However, she said that the AAVMC would be interested in learning more about the NFAVI and how the program will be developed, implemented, and funded.

She noted that the U.S. veterinary colleges already have excellent programs for educating food animal practitioners and that evidence indicates the lack of rural practitioners exists because of the shortage of economically sustainable jobs that pay well as well as quality-of-life issues for new graduates moving to rural America.

"We are curious to learn how the NFAVI program will add more public practice and food animal veterinarians to the workforce and also the implications it may have on students' education debt burden," Dr. Pappaioanou said. "It is wonderful that NFAVI recognizes these issues. And if planned carefully with collaboration with existing accredited colleges and schools of veterinary medicine and with acquired sustained funding, this very well could be a positive initiative, and the AAVMC would appreciate the opportunity to explore how it could add value to the proposed program."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

University of Central Missouri cuts, combines programs

NO MU Mention

By The Associated Press
December 16, 2010 | 7:09 a.m. CST

WARRENSBURG — The University of Central Missouri has reorganized several programs in an effort to cut expenses.

The Warrensburg school says in a news release that many of the programs now in the College of Health and Human Services are being combined into a new College of Health, Science and Technology. Seven staff positions also will be cut.

By July 1, the university’s five colleges with 33 academic departments will be combined into four colleges with 25 departments.

The consolidation is expected to save the university an estimated $612,000 in 2012.

University president Charles Ambrose told The Sedalia Democrat that the cuts began in October. He says the university also will focus on creating partnerships with community colleges, high schools and businesses.