

JUN 22 2011



## Radiation lingers in MU's Pickard Hall

By Janes Silvey

The University of Missouri is asking a federal agency for more time to figure out how to best deal with radiation found in a historic campus building.

MU's Environmental Health and Safety office has removed some radiation from the basement and attic of Pickard Hall, but contamination still exists in pipes and ductwork behind walls, Director Peter Ashbrook said. Under regulations that took effect in 2007, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission requires buildings where naturally occurring radioactive material is found to be cleaned within two years and "decommissioned" — which essentially means the building would be taken off the agency's watch list.

But getting the radiation out of Pickard won't be a simple task. The building on Francis Quadrangle houses the Museum of Art and Archaeology and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

"To relocate a museum is not a trivial undertaking," Ashbrook said. "There are artifacts there that are priceless and must be handled carefully. You can't just hire movers off the street to move this stuff."

The university has asked the agency to extend the cleanup timeline indefinitely. As part of that request, the NRC is holding a public hearing from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday in Jesse Wrench Auditorium at Memorial Union.

Pickard Hall, built in 1892, previously served as MU's chemistry building. That's where noted chemistry Professor Herman Schlundt extracted radioactive materials from natural ores for research purposes in the early 1900s — the source believed to be responsible for the radiation found in the building today. MU has known about the so-called "legacy" contamination in the building since at least the 1970s, Ashbrook said. His office has taken steps to remove it where possible over the years, with more aggressive efforts since the latest regulations took effect.

"Our office had monitored the building before to see where some of these things had accumulated," he said. "Where we found higher accumulations, we took steps to remove it or provide shielding to protect the public. When the NRC rules came into effect, we hired an outside contractor to do a much more thorough characterization of where all this stuff is."

At one point, his office removed contaminated soil from a nearby steam tunnel and from dirt near the building's gutters, he said. There are a couple of spots in the basement and attic where signs warn would-be visitors to contact the environmental health office before entering.

There's no indication anyone has been harmed because of exposure to radioactive material in the building, campus spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. In a statement, the NRC said it "believes the building is safe for use by the staff, students and public."

The agency plans to spend the coming months reviewing MU's request for a timeline extension.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail [jsilvey@columbiatribune.com](mailto:jsilvey@columbiatribune.com).



## **MU investigates missing patient information**

A missing package containing copies of patient billing information has University of Missouri police and health care officials working to notify those whose financial information might have been compromised.

When University of Missouri Health Care officials did not receive the package as expected last Tuesday, officials notified the MU Police Department and began identifying the patients whose billing information was included. The health system sent letters today notifying 1,288 such patients, according to an MU Health Care news release.

A Kansas City bank that is the clearinghouse for the health system's billing had sent the package to MU Health Care via a private courier. The package included copies of payments the bank received June 6-13, the news release said. MU Health Care has since terminated its contract with the courier.

"Safeguarding the privacy of patient information is our top priority, and to that end, we have taken immediate action steps to investigate the missing information, notify the patients affected and help the patients protect their accounts from identify theft," Jim Ross, MU Health Care chief executive officer, said in a statement.

No Social Security numbers were included in the documents, but missing information did include include names, addresses, bank account numbers and partial credit card numbers. The university said affected patients were being advised to contact their bank or credit card companies, place a fraud alert on their credit files and check credit reports.

Patients wanting more information can go to [www.muhealth.org/ProtectedInformation](http://www.muhealth.org/ProtectedInformation) or call Cheryl Hopson at 882-2013 or (800) 877-2372 or Misty Woods at 884-1983 or (800) 877-2372.



## UM budget

### A radical suggestion

By Henry J. Waters III

As the University of Missouri Board of Curators considers budgetary reactions to recent appropriations withholding by Gov. Jay Nixon, one suggestion never heard before around these parts is capping enrollments.

Capping enrollment will not be considered as a short-term fix for next year's budget but rather is advertised as a long-term solution to shrinking state financial support. I'm not sure whether this is a serious idea or a thinly veiled threat warning state officials that unless they give more money, UM will start turning away prospective students.

Many people think Nixon withheld money in retaliation against the university for increasing tuition charges beyond his proposal. Many now might think the university is retaliating in kind.

If this is a pissing contest, it's sure to soil both sides, with more downside for the university than for the governor.

It's fair enough for university officials to bemoan the withholding of funds, accentuating a long-term trend. The percentage of university operating money provided by the state has dipped from 64 percent in 1999 to 36 percent today, but this loss comes for reasons other than simple legislative parsimony. Public higher education has increased in cost and complexity. Growing enrollments are spurred with publicly and privately funded scholarships and other incentives. Public budgets have come under stress. As one of the largest operating cost items, public higher education is a big target for state budget-cutters. Public support for UM is among the lowest in the nation.

This pushing-and-pulling match is nothing new, but the idea of an enrollment cap is.

UM finance officers say a cap should be aimed first at in-state students, who pay less than those from outside. This expresses fiscal reality, but targeting in-state enrollment also shoots directly at the governor's priority of increasing access for Missouri students.

I can't see enrollment caps ever happening. Posed as a long-term consideration, the idea of caps will be available for ongoing deployment but more as a political weapon than a way to solve budget problems.

Indeed, the idea of cutting off demand for a product as diverse and full of fixed costs as UM education makes no sense. Surely the associated revenue is enough to more than offset the true incremental cost of each additional student receiving average subsidies. If not, it will be beyond comprehension that this is the precise moment that fact became known to UM fiscal planners or that the long-term health of the institution can be served best by suddenly ending growth of the student body.

HJW III

## **Married men 'should not retire before their wives'**

**Married men should be careful not to retire before their wives because there will be no one at home to look after them, according to a new study.**

By [Nick Collins](#) 1:32PM BST 22 Jun 2011

While wives report that their health begins to improve a few years after retiring, husbands remain convinced that their physical state is in decline the longer they are out of work – until their wives join them.

The change in husbands' attitude, laid bare in a survey of retired couples' perceptions of their own health, is down to the effect of having a good woman to care for them, experts said.

Despite husbands believing that their health was in decline, the study – which also measured participants' heart condition – showed that men were in fact at a lower risk of cardiac problems after retirement, while there was no change in women.

**Researchers from the University of Missouri in America, who presented their findings at the annual meeting of the Gerontological Society of America, said that preparing for changes in lifestyle and health would lead to a better retirement for married couples.**

Assistant professor Angela Curl said: "When wives retire, they may monitor their husbands' health more closely, taking them to the doctor regularly and ensuring they lead a healthy lifestyle.

"Women traditionally put the needs of everyone else before themselves, a behaviour that could put their own health at risk."

Working part-time after retiring could help ease the transition into retirement and improve health in the later years of life, Ms Curl suggested.

She said: "There are a lot of health benefits to staying employed ... Working just a few hours each week can facilitate better health."

---

## Stress of applying for welfare hurts kids

Published: June 21, 2011 at 1:54 AM

COLUMBIA, Mo., June 21 (UPI) -- Applying for some U.S. welfare programs can create stress on families, and that can have a negative effect on young children, researchers say.

Colleen Heflin of the Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri and Sharon Kukla-Acevado of Central Michigan University studied the cognitive scores of young children whose families receive assistance from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Heflin found the cognitive scores of 3-year-old children whose families were on temporary assistance were much lower than those of children whose families instead received social programs based in the tax system, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit.

"Our findings suggest that the way these assistance programs are structured could have negative effects on child outcomes," Heflin said in a statement. "While temporary assistance traditionally has been the main social program to offer financial support to low-income households with children, current program requirements may create pressures that conflict with the objective of improving child outcomes."

Families receiving temporary assistance must comply with requirements ranging from drug testing to attending job development classes to accepting minimum wage jobs that require single mothers to be away from their families during evenings and weekends, the study said.

The study was published in Children and Youth Services Review.

# MISSOURIAN

## University Hospital treats two Joplin tornado survivors for fungal infection

Tuesday, June 21, 2011 8:00 p.m. CDT

BY CARRA HANSEN

COLUMBIA — Two Joplin tornado victims were transported to **University Hospital** to be treated for an aggressive fungus infection.

“We treated two patients from other hospitals confirmed to have mucormycosis,” Matt Splett, media coordinator for MU Health Care, said.

University Hospital could not verify Tuesday evening whether the patients were still being treated.

While Splett confirmed that the two patients had been affected by last month's tornado in Joplin, he could release information neither about the hospital where they were previously treated nor about their conditions.

Mucormycosis, also known as zygomycosis, is a rare fungus infection that can be caused when soil or vegetative materials enter the skin through open wounds, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website.

The infection is most common among people with weak immune systems but can be caught during an event such as a natural disaster when a wound is stitched up before it is properly cleaned, the website stated.

The website also explained that the infection can be treated with a prescribed anti-fungal medication taken by mouth or through a vein, and it sometimes requires surgery to remove the infected tissue.



# Students to rally against cut

## Event set for 5 p.m. at union

Jimmy Myers St. Joseph News-Press  
POSTED: 10:45 pm CDT June 21, 2011

Student leaders are adding their voices to the concern that Missouri Western State University is getting short shrift.

The Student Government Association is holding a rally today at 5 p.m.. near its second-floor office in the Blum Student Union. The event will allow students and community members to share their thoughts about state funding issues.

**The outcry comes nearly two weeks after Gov. Jay Nixon announced that Western would take an 8.2 percent appropriations cut while most other public universities will see a 7 percent reduction. Western and the University of Missouri System, which is seeing an 8.1 percent cut, were singled out for having approved tuition hikes above 5 percent.**

Alison Norris, SGA president, said she's already seeing the effects of years of budget woes in the classroom. A senior convergent media major, Ms. Norris said they are unable to hire new professors who are trained in the latest technology relevant to her major. Classes are often hard to get into because enrollment has increased, while budget constraints restrict hiring. "It's hard for us to compete with other schools, because we're not able to hire new faculty," she said.

Ms. Norris and SGA vice president Jacob Scott will address students attending the rally. They'll also be pushing a petition that addresses the proposed budget cut, which she said could affect scholarships, academic programs, faculty and staff.

"We want to continue to have the high standards that we do," Ms. Norris said. "I think this rally will give students a chance to speak their mind about the situation, as well as give us a chance to tell the students what's going on and what we should look for in the future."

A second blow to the university came last week when it was denied a penalty waiver for the proposed 6.3 percent tuition increase, approved by Western's governing board in March. State law requires that universities not raise tuition above the consumer price index or risk a 5 percent appropriations penalty. That penalty can be waived by the commissioner of the Missouri Department of Higher Education, David Russell.

Mr. Russell suggested Western lower its proposed tuition, which the board will discuss in tonight's regularly scheduled board meeting. The waiver process has been ongoing since March and needs conclusion as the fiscal year begins July 1.

Universities approved for penalty waivers include the University of Missouri System, which had an average of 5.5 percent increase across its four campuses; Harris-Stowe University, 5 percent; Truman State University, 4.7 percent; Northwest Missouri State University, 1.8 percent; Lincoln University, 4.9 percent.

Missouri Southern State University approved a 9.27 percent increase in its tuition, which didn't find favor with the commissioner. Mr. Russell requested that the university reconsider its tuition increase or be penalized 5 percent of its appropriation. However, Missouri Southern wasn't included with Western and the University of Missouri System in more extreme appropriations cuts.

## **The Star's editorial | MAST pension plan still too costly for KC taxpayers**

**Dear Robert Bailey:**

Kansas City taxpayers soon may be counting on your arbitrating skills to craft fiscally responsible pension payments for about 300 former Metropolitan Ambulance Services Trust employees.

**As director of the Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution at the University of Missouri School of Law in Columbia, you're experienced at arbitrating issues where parties disagree. We understand you could be weighing in on a dispute in Kansas City.**

Local 42 of the International Association of Fire Fighters represents the former MAST workers and wants the city to give them nearly fully retroactive pensions.

In response, Mayor Sly James and City Council members have privately crafted a plan they intend to rush through on Thursday with just one public hearing today, not exactly a model of open government.

Granted, the city proposal wouldn't reach the outrageous \$30 million price tag over 10 years, which the union sought in 2010. But even the city's scaled-back plan could cost \$10 million over 20 years. And it would still provide generous retroactive pensions to the ambulance workers, now employed at the Fire Department.

For example, five of the longest-tenured employees soon could be eligible to get pensions averaging more than \$38,000 a year. That's a potential \$1.9 million public obligation over a decade just for that handful of workers.

The dispute could reach arbitration soon, which is why the city wants to pass its plan immediately. In fact, you know some of the players involved; you arbitrated a case in Local 42's favor three years ago when the union won pay increases for Jackson County assistant prosecutors, whom it represents.

But this case involves a lot more money. And in our view, neither the union nor city officials have sufficiently looked out for the interests of Kansas City taxpayers so far.

---