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MU timeline: Deaton leaves for India next week

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 26 October 2011

That timeline of a few days or a week or two mentioned by Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton regarding the decision on Mizzou's move or non-move to the SEC?

A look at Deaton's academic schedule may lend some perspective.

Deaton's office confirms he is scheduled to deliver a keynote address at an international conference on radiopharmaceuticals in Agra, India November 1-9.

Radiopharmaceuticals - if was explained to me - have a lot to do with a process for the diagnosis of numerous diseases.

But back to the subject of the most current interest: That means Deaton's out of the country starting Tuesday, or perhaps even Monday.

And would Missouri announce any move without Deaton – the official authorized to authorize such a move – on hand?

Not likely.

So what does that mean for the near term?

Well, Missouri might announce a decision today (not likely) or Thursday.

With Gary Pinkel and the football team leaving for Texas A&M on Friday, would that day be out? Would Saturday – when Missouri is playing at A&M – be the day of decision? Would Missouri really announce a move then and there?

Would Sunday be possible back in Columbia?

Sure. Anything seems possible.

And with Monday being Missouri's regular media day for football, perhaps even then might be the day.

Or (groan), there comes into the play the backside of Deaton's timeline. A week or two more of waiting? With the emphasis on the 'more'.



MISSOURIAN
COLUMBIA'S MORNING NEWSPAPER

Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton Will Focus On A Scientific Conference Not The Big 12

Posted: 10.26.2011 at 11:48 PM

(AP) -- University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton will be leaving next week for a weeklong scientific conference in India.

Deaton's office said Wednesday that the chancellor will be gone Nov. 1-9 to attend an international conference on phytochemicals in Agra, India.

Deaton is scheduled to give a keynote address on Nov. 4.

Deaton had said Tuesday that it could be "days" or "a week or two" before the school announces a decision on whether to leave the Big 12, presumably for the Southeastern Conference.

His assistant, Ann McGruder, said Wednesday that his departure date isn't likely to drive a decision on conference alignment.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

A&M sees parallels with Mizzou

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted:
Thursday, October 27, 2011 12:15 am

COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS • As a young physicist in the late 1970s, R. Bowen Loftin spent considerable time in Columbia, Mo.

"They have a reactor there with very high neutron flux," he said. "It was the ideal place for me to collect some data."

That's not the only data Loftin, now the president of Texas A&M, has absorbed over the years about the University of Missouri.

As a member of the Big 12 Conference and contemporary of Mizzou chancellor Brady Deaton, Loftin has a sense of MU's identity and perceives it as a school with plenty in common with his own.

It's a land-grant institution, for one thing. It's also a member of the distinguished Association of American Universities, which last week hosted a dinner in Washington, where Loftin was seated alongside Florida president Bernie Machen and spent time with Deaton.

Loftin didn't say whether Deaton conferred at the two-day meeting with Machen, board chairman of the Southeastern Conference.

But the common university association membership between Mizzou and one of the most influential voices in SEC-land is a major factor in why MU is on the verge of joining A&M in the SEC.

"I find (Missouri) very compatible with Texas A&M, and with the SEC as well," Loftin said during a 45-minute interview Wednesday. "So I think it's a good fit."

Lest he be misinterpreted, Loftin said he had no specific knowledge of MU or SEC plans from either side.

A&M is SEC-bound next year and has been participating in transitional talks with the SEC, but it's not a member until July 1, 2012, and not in on planning or voting yet.

Loftin said Deaton hasn't said much to him about it, either, not even so much as to consult about A&M's blueprint for departure.

But Loftin's feel for the pulse of the situation is strong enough that he suggested a mutual strategy to Deaton in the event MU does go.

Referring to departure terms and fees and adding that the Big 12 twice has canceled meetings on that matter with A&M, he said, "Why have two separate negotiations going on at once? ... So I told Brady if you're going to do it, let's get our attorneys together and make sure that we have a common platform for discussions here with the Big 12 because it would make no sense for us to independently try to negotiate a settlement."

Other than that ...

"We chatted a couple times. He mentioned he was going to go to India (next week) for several days. I think he was kind of dreading it. It's a long trip," Loftin said, laughing. "So he's still keeping his hand, I guess, in the real world. More power to him."

As it must be for Deaton, that was hard to do for Loftin during the six-week period between A&M's first step toward leaving the Big 12 for the SEC in mid-August and its unconditional acceptance in late September.

By the estimate of Jason Cook, A&M's chief communications officer, Loftin spent 95 percent of his time on realignment issues during a three-week period. With some relevance for Mizzou's current situation, perhaps the most complicated time for A&M once it decided to leave in August was the threat of legal action led by Baylor president Ken Starr that for weeks left A&M in the gridlock of a conditional SEC acceptance.

That led to a conversation with Starr in which Loftin equated Starr's posturing to the trappings of the Berlin Wall.

"We didn't have a satisfactory end to our conversation," Loftin said, smiling and adding that Starr sent him a "gracious" e-mail after their schools met on the field Oct. 15.

Starr's saber-rattling really was geared toward Oklahoma and Texas' exploration of the Pac-12, which would have destroyed the conference, but A&M was the one held in check.

When the Pac-12 decided not to act, the threat was lifted and A&M was ushered into the SEC.

"Once it was certain that the Big 12 was going to stay together, that was really all the SEC was waiting for," Loftin said. "I hate to be crass, but they basically wanted something to happen, either to stay together or fall apart, one of the two, it didn't matter which one to them in a sense.

"They didn't want the conference to be destroyed, but either one clearly opened up the result that we had."

While there is no obvious specific legal threat being dangled over MU and the conference would be viable without Mizzou, complications with 2012 Big 12 scheduling and thus a potential inability for the conference to meet contractual TV requirements appear to have slowed down

Mizzou's clear intention to leave and have raised the question of whether it can be done next year.

But whether for 2012 or 2013, Loftin doesn't see why MU would be thwarted.

"Should Missouri withdraw, I'm assuming there are other schools stacked up out there that the Big 12 is looking at ...," said Loftin, amid talk about West Virginia and Louisville, among others, being targeted by the Big 12. "The real question for a sitting member of the Big 12 is, is there harm to me? ...

"So I think if the Big 12 stays together as an automatic BCS conference, if the TV contracts are not materially changed in terms of the revenue flowing to the members, what harm is done is the question?"

As for why A&M chose to leave, Loftin said there were books to be written on the overall story but summed it up thusly: "It all revolved around inequity."

The University of Texas' Longhorn Network was the final catalyst. Not so much because of its mere existence, or because of the \$300 million, 20-year deal with ESPN it reaped, he said, but because of such issues as an intention to broadcast high school games.

"And so you say to yourself, 'How many times do you want to go through this?'" he said. "Don't we really want a place where there's stability and peace and equal sense of value for everybody who's at the table?"

Enter the SEC, with which A&M had substantial discussions in 2010.

Because of what it considered the cultural fit, conference stability, increased national visibility and athletic excellence, among other virtues of the SEC, Loftin in conjunction with the A&M Board of Regents began a carefully calculated initiative in that direction.

"We realized early on ... if you don't take charge of the message, somebody will take charge of it for you," Loftin said. "In 2010, we were not in charge of the message. We were in charge of the message in 2011. We had the timeline, we had the message, we made deliberate steps, bang, bang, bang, down to the final one."

Along the way, Loftin was disturbed by assertions he and A&M had lied in 2010 because of a vow to stay in the Big 12.

"Texas A&M has six core values, and integrity is one of those core values. I take that very seriously," said Loftin, who described the Big 12 meeting at which promises of staying in the conference were solicited. "Knowing that there was a great deal of potential change in the Big 12, which I couldn't predict, it would have been stupid for me to sit up there and say we're committed to the Big 12 no matter what. That would be just dumb. ...

"I said, 'Texas A&M is committed to the Big 12 as it is today.' That was a very important thing for me to say, because I didn't want to commit to something I had no idea what it was going to be."

Especially after three schools, Colorado, Nebraska and Missouri, didn't give commitments, he said.

"I understood that. It didn't bother me, exactly. But I wasn't about to commit my institution to something I didn't understand," he said, adding, "If you begin shaving off this member and that member, and others come and go, then what do you have?"

Also paralleling what MU may face with its Kansas rivalry if it leaves, A&M's longtime rivalry with Texas now is threatened. A&M's stance is that its offer is on the table to play Texas and that the SEC has said it would work with A&M to allow that game to be scheduled.

But Loftin also noted that even at a school that treasures traditions as A&M does, things change. Because of the bonfire tragedy in 1999, for instance, that's a thing of the past.

"I'm not comparing this to the bonfire collapse; I'm saying that things do happen in your lifetime as an institution or as a human being that say, 'I can't do it this way any more,'" he said.

Big 12

'Clarity' comes closer

By Henry J. Waters III

Speaking to KFRU's David Lile yesterday morning, University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton said money is not the main consideration in his decision regarding possible athletic conference realignment.

I believe Deaton means what he says, and he is right, even though popular conjecture about a possible move to the SEC focuses largely on financial implications.

The chancellor emphasized his desire to build a conference alliance that will provide stability and other benefits to the long-term welfare of MU. This might sound to some cynics like nothing more than another round of "student-athlete" palaver, but I know where Deaton is coming from, and it is not centered mainly on his athletic budget.

That said, let us remember athletic budgets are growing at an astonishing rate, and nowhere more than in the Southeastern Conference, where MU probably will land. Even at SEC member Louisiana State University, host of the nation's No. 1 football team this week, the president publicly bemoaned the disproportionate growth of athletic expenses at a time when faculty get picayune raises and classroom roofs leak over their heads.

As I engaged in today's most active Missouri sport — trying to read between the official lines regarding conference change — I think I heard Deaton intimate the decision is near and the momentum moves MU toward the SEC. "Clarity" is just around the corner.

By now we probably know one thing: The pending conference move is occasioned more by negative factors regarding the Big 12 than an abiding attraction for the SEC. But once dysfunction gripped our current conference, attention turned to analyzing and making the best of a ready alternative: the SEC.

One notion we are losing is that SEC schools are inferior, not likely to stimulate MU upward as we thought would be the case with the Big Ten. A comparison of MU with SEC schools shows us in the middle of the pack in many key ingredients of institutional measurement. Even more to the point, Deaton said athletic conference alignment has little to do with academic development. Passionate football fans don't translate into commensurately superior institutional academic accomplishment, and vice versa.

So, it looks like we will join the SEC. Moreover, it seems we would become part of the conference's eastern division, where we would play more games with distant teams located on the Atlantic seaboard and fewer with the likes of Arkansas and Alabama.

Deaton & Co. are taking their time touching bases on their way to a decision, but they seem out of the box and on their way to third with home plate in sight.

HJW III



West Virginia to Big 12 stalls as Louisville enters picture

Associated Press | Posted: Thursday, October 27, 2011 12:00 am

The Big 12 is still deciding: West Virginia or Louisville? Could be one or the other, or maybe neither.

Conference realignment took a strange turn Wednesday when, a day after it appeared that the Big 12 had decided West Virginia would eventually replace Missouri as the league's 10th member, the Mountaineers' Big East rival Louisville re-entered the picture.

The result was conflicting stories about what happened, while the Big East was left to wonder not only if it had to replace another member, but which one.

A person with knowledge of the Big 12's discussions told The Associated Press that no decision was made by the conference to add West Virginia, and that Louisville is still a candidate to be invited to join.

The person spoke Wednesday on condition of anonymity because the Big 12's internal discussions are being conducted privately. The person added that a decision about expansion is not expected before next week.

On Tuesday, West Virginia to the Big 12 seemed to be certain after the Big 12 board of directors met the night before. But the person with knowledge of the talks said "no real decision was made on Monday," and the Big 12 is not committed to any school.

West Virginia athletics director Oliver Luck declined to comment in a text message to the AP.

However, another person with knowledge of the situation, also speaking on condition of anonymity because the negotiations are not being made public, said West Virginia was preparing Tuesday to announce the move with a news conference on campus with Big 12 officials on Wednesday.

The school and the league also were working on a news release when university leaders received a call from the conference telling them to put those plans on hold, the person said.

"I think all of this should have great clarity within the next 10 days or less," University of Oklahoma President David Boren said Wednesday after a regents meeting in Lawton, Okla.

One thing seems sure — the Big 12 is going to need a replacement for Missouri, which has been working on a move to the Southeastern Conference.

The person with knowledge of the Big 12's discussions said conference officials are not holding out hope that Missouri will stay, but said West Virginia and Louisville should not be considered finalists to become the Big 12's next member.

"Those two certainly have been discussed a lot," the person said. "And I wouldn't rule out other schools just yet."

BYU also has been considered as a potential new member by the Big 12. The person said no meetings have been set up with Big 12 officials and schools outside the conference.

"We're still discussing among ourselves," the person said.

Big 12 leaders have also discussed possibly expanding back to 12 members, the number it had before Colorado and Nebraska left after last season and Texas A&M announced earlier this month that it was moving to the SEC. The Big 12 has already replaced the Aggies with TCU, another blow to the beleaguered Big East. TCU planned to leave the Mountain West Conference to join the Big East in 2012 but was instead diverted by the Big 12 to reunite with former Southwest Conference rivals Texas, Baylor and Texas Tech.

The person said it is unlikely the Big 12 would go the 12-team route and invite both West Virginia and Louisville in the process.

MU study links facial features to autism

By Janese Silvey

A new University of Missouri study shows that children with autism have slight differences in facial characteristics — a finding that indicates the disorder develops in the womb.

Kristina Aldridge, assistant professor of pathology and anatomical sciences in MU's School of Medicine, worked with other researchers at the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders to analyze 64 boys with autism and 41 typically developing boys ages 8 to 12.

They used a camera to capture 3-D images of each child's head and then mapped 17 points on the faces. When Aldridge compared the two groups, she found statistically significant differences in facial features.

Children with autism have a broader upper face and wider eyes than children without the disability, researchers found. Autistic children also have a shorter middle region of the face, including the cheeks and nose, and a wider mouth.

"What's important about studying the face in autism is that the brain and face develop in close contact," Aldridge said.

If something in the brain is changing that will ultimately result in autism, she said, that also should be reflected in facial features.

"We can look at a point in time when facial features are being developed and genes that are shared at that time between the face and brain," Aldridge said. "This narrows the window of time and the candidate genes we might look at."

The research indicated two subgroups of autistic children also had facial features slightly distinct from one another, which corresponded with behavioral differences between the two groups.

Identifying those groups will allow for further research into why autism is so variable, Aldridge said.

The study, published in *Molecular Autism*, was a collaborative effort with researchers from the School of Medicine, College of Engineering and College of Arts and Science.

There are numerous studies about the potential causes of autism, including a recent report that autistic children appear to share a certain shape in their airways. Barbara Stewart, a lung doctor in Pensacola, Fla., presented the study yesterday at the annual meeting of the American College of Chest Physicians, according to WebMD Health News. The research indicated children with autism share abnormal double passages in their windpipes.

There have been a number of studies about brain differences among children with autism and normally developing children, but these two are among the first to indicate physical differences.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.

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Lung cancer screening with X-rays isn't beneficial

By LINDSEY TANNER

Routine chest X-rays do not prevent lung cancer deaths, not even in smokers or former smokers, according to a big government study challenging a once common type of screening.

In the study of more than 150,000 older Americans, those who had four annual chest X-ray screenings were just as likely to die of lung cancer as participants who didn't have those tests.

The results from the National Cancer Institute-funded research confirm previous, smaller X-ray studies. They follow another big study from that institute favoring a newer, more sophisticated imaging test. That found fewer lung cancer deaths among current or former heavy smokers who had special CT imaging scans versus those who had chest X-rays.

CT scans provide much more detailed images than X-rays, and while no major medical group recommends any type of routine lung cancer screening, several are preparing new guidelines.

Screening refers to routine tests in people without symptoms; doctors say chest X-rays are still useful to help diagnose people with lung cancer symptoms, including a persistent cough or coughing up blood.

Chest X-ray screening for lung cancer was common decades ago, and some doctors continue to recommend it in smokers and former smokers. The new study results should put an end to that practice, said Robert Smith, director of cancer screening at the American Cancer Society.

"No one recommends it but they do occur quite a lot," said Smith, who was not involved in the study.

The study was released online in the Journal of the American Medical Association on Wednesday, when it was presented at an American College of Chest Physicians meeting in

Hawaii. The doctors' group is among those preparing new lung cancer screening recommendations.

The study's participants were aged 55 to 74 and were tracked for about 13 years. During that time, there were about 1,200 lung cancer deaths in participants who got X-rays and in those who got usual medical care. That's equal to about 14 deaths per 10,000 people each year.

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer; it will be diagnosed this year in about 220,000 people nationwide, and more than half that number will die from lung cancer, the cancer society estimates.

Less than 1 percent of never smokers will develop lung cancer in their lifetime. By contrast, about 18 percent of current smokers will get the disease by age 75; the risk is somewhat lower but not zero for former smokers, depending on how long ago they quit, said Dr. Christine Berg, the study's senior author and chief of the National Cancer Institute's early detection research group.

"We were really hoping chest X-rays might be beneficial," partly because they are relatively inexpensive -- about \$60 versus hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars for CT scans, Berg said.

But Smith said the study shows routine chest X-ray screenings in healthy people without symptoms are "a waste of time," plus they can lead to false-positive results that may lead to invasive and potentially harmful tests.

Similar concerns have been raised recently about too-frequent pap tests for cervical cancer, routine PSA tests for prostate cancer screening, and excessive mammograms for breast cancer, leading to revised guidelines from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

That independent group, which advises the U.S. government, concluded in 2004 that there was no evidence to support any method of routine lung cancer screening in people without symptoms, including X-rays and CT scans.

It is updating those guidelines based on recent new evidence, including last year's CT scan vs. chest X-ray study, and will take into account the new X-ray study, too, said Dr. Michael LeFevre, co-vice chairman of the task force and a family physician at the University of Missouri. That process may take up to two years, he said.

Because CT scans also can yield false positive results, it is unlikely any group will recommend them for screening nonsmokers.

Missourinet

Study examines “Drunkorexia” – eating less food, drinking more alcohol (AUDIO)

October 26, 2011 By [Allison Blood](#)

A new study looks at the effects of young people restricting the number of calories they take in daily, and then binge drink.

Drunkorexia is a term coined by the media in the last few years to describe the behavior of eating less, and drinking more, with the intent of not gaining weight. A University of Missouri Assistant Professor studied this. Dr. Victoria Osborne says there wasn't a lot of research for her to build on. She says she found a number of people who are in their 40s who say they engaged in this behavior while in college, so she is led to believe this is nothing new.

She says there are short-term problems when a person drinks alcohol without eating enough, because the alcohol has a stronger effect. Not only does this kind of behavior have the short-term consequences of terrible health and the risks that come with binge drinking, but there are long-term mental affects too. She says disordered eating habits such as this one can lead to full eating disorders, which are difficult to cure. She says it could also lead to anxiety and depression, as well as alcohol dependency and abuse, which have been linked to eating disorders.

She says there are few support systems for those who do this, and because it is seen as “common” on college campuses, many people don't seek help for it. She says if there were more educational efforts by universities or local health agencies, perhaps fewer people would do it.

Trespassing citation stirs worry at MU

Chinese student may face charge.

By Janese Silvey

A University of Missouri graduate student who took a group of Chinese visitors out on a morning tour in Boone County this month has been issued a summons for criminal trespassing, raising some concerns about the repercussions she could face as a Chinese national.

Chen Yao was driving the group of Chinese scholars on the outskirts of Columbia the morning of Oct. 13 when she drove to the 9300 block of Turner Farm Road.

The property, where a home is under construction, is heavily marked with "no trespassing" signs, Boone County Sheriff Detective Tom O'Sullivan said.

The site has had problems with trespassers in the past, he said, and the sheriff's department has a standing request from the owner to issue a summons to anyone caught on the property.

When Yao and the visitors arrived at that location, they got out of the vehicle and started taking photos. That was when a construction worker told them to leave and reported the group to authorities at 7:06 a.m.

Earlier that morning, the sheriff's department had taken a separate call from a woman who reported Yao's vehicle parked in her driveway, O'Sullivan said. The car left while she was on the phone.

Columbia attorney Dan Viets is expected to represent Yao, although the prosecuting attorney has not yet filed charges. Viets said he is still gathering information but said it was his understanding that the visitors simply wanted to take in the scenery.

"They wanted to take photos of the sunrise in the country and went to this location," he said. "They either didn't see or didn't recognize the 'no trespassing' sign."

Under Missouri law, a person commits trespassing in the first degree if signs are reasonably posted. It is considered a Class B misdemeanor, which carries a maximum penalty of a \$500 fine or six months in jail.

Yao is earning a master's degree in journalism and is in a "mild panic" over the ordeal, said Charles Davis, an associate journalism professor who has raised money to help cover her initial

legal expenses. As a Chinese national, she worries about facing long-term repercussions from a criminal record, Davis wrote in an email to colleagues asking for help.

He told the Tribune he empathizes with property owners who have had problems with trespassers, “but this was an innocent mistake and one that was made by a very kind young lady. My hope is that cooler heads prevail.”

Kenneth Bunting, executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, also expressed support for Yao. He said although he doesn’t have a vested interest in the case, “it sure seems like an overreaction to me.”

He said he hopes “common sense and prosecutorial discretion will show up and this goes away without any hassle, criminal record or expense. If that doesn’t happen, I’ll be disappointed.”

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.

MISSOURIAN

KOMU-TV receives four Emmys

Wednesday, October 26, 2011 | 5:29 p.m. CDT

BY [MADELINE SCHROEDER](#)

COLUMBIA — KOMU 8 News won four Emmy awards Saturday at the 35th Annual Mid-America Emmy awards ceremony in St. Louis.

The station took awards for photography, community service, video editing and historical and cultural coverage. The event, which recognizes excellence in broadcast, was hosted by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

"We stand out because everybody (at KOMU) is so excited about journalism," KOMU 8 News Today anchor Megan Murphy said.

She said the environment at KOMU is open to ideas and opinions, and people write and edit as a team.

Murphy has anchored at KOMU for almost seven years. She received her first Emmy Saturday for her work with photojournalist Scott Schaefer covering "WWII Model Planes." The story featured a Columbia man, Jim Cooper, and his quest to renovate the only flying WWII Seafire 15 airplane. They received the historical and cultural category award.

Murphy said she and Schaefer had the perfect reporter-photojournalist relationship. "We almost didn't even need to speak. I always know what he's trying to do, and he knows what I'm trying to do," she said.

They worked on the project for more than a year.

"It was a story that I feel like the whole station supported," Murphy said. "All of our coworkers heard of us talking about and watched a million versions of it. It was such a team effort."

Schaefer, a 2004 MU graduate, received another award for his video editing of a part of the story showing Cooper building airplanes in his house. He also received awards for news photography and community service. With four this year, he has received 13 Emmys in five years.

He said it's always a good feeling to be recognized for the time and hard work that goes into a story.

Schaefer, along with KOMU 8 News Anchor Sarah Hill and General Manager Marty Siddall, were awarded the community service Emmy for their support in the Central Missouri Honor Flight. The flight is a part of a national Honor Flight organization that flies aging and terminally ill veterans for free to see their memorials in Washington D.C.

KOMU 8 founded the Central Missouri Honor Flight in 2009. Schaefer went on several flights and documented stories of veterans. After watching the video, KOMU viewers could donate money for veterans.

"I get to experience something new everyday and at the end I get to see that finished product and all the hard work," Schaefer said. "It's just fun."

To Murphy, everyone has a story to be told.

"There are so many people in our community who have fascinating stories," she said. "I want them to watch it and be amazed at themselves."

Murphy said she enjoys working with students and she has no plans to leave the station anytime soon.

"It's my home," she said.

MISSOURIAN

MU students participate in 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition' in Joplin

Wednesday, October 26, 2011 | 6:12 p.m. CDT; updated 7:44 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, October 26, 2011

BY RAYMOND HOWZE

JOPLIN — Five semitrailers rev at the end of Jackson Street. They are filled with furniture from the likes of Crate & Barrel and Ethan Allen, ready for delivery to seven newly built homes.

Hundreds of volunteers in sky-blue shirts and hardhats stand attentively in the front yards and on the porches, listening to instructions about when to run out of the homes and cheer the arrival of the furniture.

Jackson Street is in one of the hardest hit areas in the May 22 tornado. Around the corner are the remains of homes and trees stripped bare of leaves, branches and bark. The shell of St. John's Memorial Hospital is blocks away.

The new houses have been built courtesy of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" for families who were selected through letter nominations.

The goal was to build seven homes in seven days. What emerged was an oasis in a desert of concrete foundations, caved-in walls and stairs going nowhere.

Five MU students traveled to Joplin on Tuesday to participate in the effort. Emelie Henzel, Lauren Vienravee, Courtney Padgitt, Morgan Grawe and Stephanie Rasch left Columbia at about 8:30 a.m. to get to Joplin in time for their six-hour shift. They were part of the second of two MU teams who volunteered for the show; the other group worked overnight Saturday on the same houses.

The Tuesday team members are all architecture students and officers in the Student Environmental Design Association. Their volunteer work included unpacking furniture and hanging up spray-painted canvases in a skate park behind one of the houses.

"To be able to use what we're studying and be in an environment we can give back is great," said Vienravee, whose emphasis is interior design.

The black and white trucks now roll down Jackson Street. Volunteers storm out of the homes and gather behind each truck.

Crew members throw open the back doors and begin handing down lamps, pillows and other furnishings. Cheers rise from the crowd. The army of helpers are from Missouri and nearby states.

"Keep screaming it!" shouts a crew member as the camera operators go in for closeups. Much of the work during this time is staged. The volunteers are cued when to begin working, when to cheer. While the filming is going on, the real labor is more or less on hold.

Padgitt said she will never forget the experience. She found herself deeply touched by photographs in front of the houses of the families who will live in them.

"While it's great that they've provided these seven families with beautiful, well-furnished houses, it's sad to know that all of the other community members are still standing on their foundations wondering when they will be able to have a home," Padgitt said.

"I realize there is just no way to provide everyone with a house since the damage and destruction was so devastating. I just wish there was."

Diagonally across from the new homes is a boarded-up house with a big, orange "X" across the front door. "Owner" is spray-painted in black to the door's left with a phone number below. A blue tarp flapping in the steady wind serves as a makeshift roof and, on this day, signals an approaching storm.

The house is a common sight in the neighborhood around Jackson Street.

Brenda Bragghas lived through hurricanes Iwa and Iniki, which hit Hawaii in 1982 and 1992, respectively. She returned Tuesday to volunteer.

Right after the May tornado, Bragg came to town to help her cousin, whose nearby home was severely damaged.

"When I crossed over the hill and saw the hospital, it took my breath away," Bragg said. "It takes so long to recover from something like this, and it's easy for people who aren't around it everyday to forget."

Bragg, her cousin and other family members spent days sifting through memorabilia and debris, numbingly consumed by deciding what to keep and what to throw out. She is struck by how much people still need.

"You don't think that six months later you're going to still see soup kitchens," she said.

At this point, it's hard to tell how much work the volunteers are really doing. Most of the outside construction work is done. One of the homes, a cabin-themed house, will be revealed on "Good Morning, America" the next morning.

The new homeowners will be able to see the abandoned hospital every day. Nothing obstructs the view.

"These people have literally lost everything," Padgitt said. "I instantly thought of the emotions I would be going through if that was my house and family — I couldn't even relate. Truly heartbreaking."

"Joplin just needs help and as much they can get," she said. "Hopefully, more volunteers keep coming and helping these families in need."