Big 12 adds West Virginia and for the moment stands at 11 members

MU MENTION PAGE 2

By BLAIR KERKHOFF

Two major shifts in the college sports landscape were announced over the last two days. But only one was true.

On Friday, West Virginia joined the Big 12.

The other news, a series of articles discovered on the Southeastern Conference website late Thursday, introduced Missouri as its 14th member. Oops.

The postings were quickly taken down, and Friday passed with an explanation of the error as the only announcement from the SEC office. The Tigers will have to wait a little longer for the welcome mat.

But the wait is over for West Virginia.

What started as a promising week for the Mountaineers, eager to ship out of the Big East, and got tangled up with some confusion at midweek, ended with the greeting they waited to hear:

“Welcome aboard, Mountaineers, we’re happy to have you,” Big 12 interim commissioner Chuck Neinas said.

The admission officially came with a unanimous vote by the Big 12 Board of Directors on Friday morning, and the school joins Texas Christian as new members.

“There are a lot of happy people across the Mountaineer nation,” West Virginia president James Clements said.

The Big 12 issued a news release heralding the move, which included the league’s 10-team lineup for 2012-13, and it included West Virginia — intent on not remaining in the Big East through its 27-month notice period — and excluded Missouri.
“Right now, we have our house in order,” Big 12 interim commissioner Chuck Neinas said. “We have everybody signed up.”

But not Missouri?

When a reporter asked Neinas about the omission, “You’re closer to it than I, sir,” he said.

**Questions about Mizzou went largely unanswered. Neinas said he didn’t know of a timetable for the Tigers and the SEC.**

“Until Missouri withdraws, they’re a member of the Big 12,” Neinas said. “I have no information on the timeline. You’ll have to talk to the University of Missouri.”

And if you want to talk exit fees, talk to the Tigers, but …

“Well, regarding when the University of Missouri withdraws, they know that the bylaws stipulate exit fees,” Neinas said.

According to the bylaws, the exit fee — which isn’t a fee but a withholding of conference-generated revenue from television contracts and postseason appearances — calls for Missouri and Texas A&M to lose 90 percent of those revenues because the schools gave notice to the Big 12 between six months and a year before their departures.

Estimates of the fees have varied. A report prepared for the University of Missouri Board of Curators estimated a penalty of $25.9 million if Missouri left this year but would be closer to $10.4 million if the Tigers’ gave two years’ notice.

This month, Neinas said he expected Missouri to be in the conference next year, but all signs point to a departure soon. A news release was written to that effect. Here’s what was posted on the SEC website:

“Given the ever changing conference paradigm over the past year, the Southeastern Conference has continued to demonstrate its commitment to maintaining its stature as one of the nation’s premier conferences by welcoming the University of Missouri as the league’s 14th member, Commissioner Mike Slive announced Monday.”

Was that intended to be this Monday? Last Monday? Is there a plan to announce the Tigers?

The SEC said an agreement hasn’t been reached between Missouri and the SEC and explained the premature release as the fault of its web vendor, XOS Digital. It was written so that if Missouri does join the conference, an announcement could be posted quickly.

An administrative assistant to Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton said, “We have no stance, you have to talk to (the SEC).”
West Virginia also was mixed up in some conference confusion this week. The Big 12 Board of Directors had approved the Mountaineers as the league's newest member earlier in the week. But on a conference call Tuesday, Louisville's candidacy was explored further, and the process was delayed.

According to sources, Oklahoma president David Boren, who served as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, had made the pitch after speaking with Sen. Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican. Sens. Jay Rockefeller and Joe Manchin, West Virginia Democrats, were furious with the lobbying, which they thought had come after the Big 12 had made its decision, and threatened an investigation.

The political involvement brought a rebuke from Sen. Claire McCaskill, a Missouri Democrat.

"Am I excited about the changes that are going on in conference alignment? No," McCaskill said. "Money has become too big and too powerful. But ... we're not very good at what we're supposed to be doing. The notion that we want to stick our nose in some place it doesn't belong seems like a dumb idea to me."

West Virginia athletic director Oliver Luck said "there was a bit of nervousness" during the delay. "But at the end of the day we were comfortable working with Chuck (Neinas)."

West Virginia brings a nationally recognized football program to the Big 12. The Mountaineers have won six Big East championships and have won both of their BCS appearances, most recently a victory over Oklahoma in the 2008 Fiesta Bowl.

The football team is coached by Dana Holgorsen, who was Oklahoma State's offensive coordinator last season and spent several years at Texas Tech.

The men's basketball program reached the Final Four in 2010 and is coached by Bob Huggins, who was hired away from Kansas State after the 2007 season.

Luck said West Virginia had made an exit payment of $2.5 million to the Big East on Friday and plans to soon make another payment to cover the $5 million fee. But Big East commissioner John Marinatto said Friday that he expects the Mountaineers to abide by the league's 27-month notice rule.

West Virginia plans to be in the Big 12 next year.

"Our intent, clearly on July 1, is we'll be a member of the Big 12," Clements said. "Our team and their team are in discussions about how we can make that happen."

West Virginia being in the Big 12 for 2012 is important for football scheduling. Assuming Missouri leaves, the Big 12 wants to maintain the same number of schools for scheduling continuity.
Neinas said the schedule will need to be reworked — it won’t be a matter of plugging West Virginia into Missouri’s 2012 league slate or TCU into Texas A&M’s for that matter.

Ten is where the Big 12 will stop — for now.

“I wouldn’t say there won’t be further expansion, but our mission, also the recommendation of our athletic directors, is to move forward with 10 teams,” Neinas said. “That doesn’t mean there won’t be further consideration, but right now we have our house in order. We have everybody signed up.”

And locked in for six years. The Big 12 also announced Friday that its members had agreed to a six-year grant of rights for first- and second-tier television revenue. Hargis said final approval will happen at the board’s next meeting on Tuesday.
Mum’s the word for Missouri on move to SEC

By BLAIR KERKOFF

JOPLIN, Mo. | Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon loves his sports. He admired Michael Dixon’s shooting prowess in Sunday’s exhibition game victory over Missouri Southern, wondered why Kadeem Green didn’t play more, got updates on the Cardinals in the World Series on his recent business trip to China.

But when it comes to Missouri’s conference affiliation, Nixon bit his tongue.

“I’ll let others (speak),” Nixon said. “I might be too quotable.”

So, no word from Nixon or Missouri athletic director Mike Alden on the Tigers’ conference future, believed to be in the Southeastern Conference. If an announcement is forthcoming, today perhaps, Alden said before Mizzou’s 114-68 victory that he didn’t know about it.

“Not that I’m aware of,” Alden said. “There’s a process.”
Nixon mum about Mizzou move to SEC

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted: Monday, October 31, 2011 12:05 am

JOPLIN, MO. • Back less than 24 hours from China, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon was weary and seemed vulnerable Sunday night to breaking his public silence on the ongoing Mizzou realignment issue.

"I just think anything else I say at this point ... I'll let others ... I might be too quotable," he said, laughing and catching himself repeatedly as he tried to give the "no comment" he knew he was supposed to give after the Mizzou-Missouri Southern basketball game.

Suffice to say, Nixon's strategy has changed since he was more candid in 2010 regarding MU's hopes of joining the Big Ten. His criticism of other Big 12 institutions in the context of the Big Ten was a point of controversy at the Big 12 office and even was referred to by Nebraska as a destabilizing element in the conference when it later left.

And now?

"I'm a fan," he said Sunday, "I don't run the athletic department."

Still, he lingered among reporters. Told he was getting close to saying something pertinent, Nixon playfully said, "Yeah, I know," but contained himself.

Earlier, MU athletics director Mike Alden repeated the stance he gave Saturday at Texas A&M, that he had no knowledge of MU's time frame for announcing a realignment decision.

MU and the Southeastern Conference are in negotiations. The Big 12 in a news release Friday omitted Mizzou from a list of schools it expects to be members in 2012.
Score is secondary as Missouri, Missouri Southern play in Joplin

By BLAIR KERKHOFF

JOPLIN, Mo. | About 3 1/2 minutes into the One State, One Spirit Classic at Missouri Southern, the officials reversed a call and Lions center Jordan Talbert was tagged with a foul.

“Bad call, zebras! Bad call, zebras!” chanted the Missouri Southern pep band.

Basketball returned Sunday to fill the senses and all 3,200 seats at Leggett & Platt Center that served as heart of the recovery effort in the aftermath of the one of the deadliest tornados in history. Missouri defeated Missouri Southern 114-68 on a night when the outcome was a secondary consideration.

The game was about the messages from Missouri Southern. To the state, a heartfelt thanks for the outpouring of support and generosity. Through the high visibility of the state’s college and professional teams, Joplin has never left the Show-Me State’s consciousness, and Mizzou, which suggested the game a few days after the F5 tornado on May 22, took the lead.

“The bottom line is people in Missouri really coming together,” Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon said. “Keeping their will and spirits high is very important.”

To the nation — ESPNU was on hand to broadcast the game and retell the stories of tragedy and triumph — the recovery battle continues.

“After May 22, the national media told me we’d be here for a few days and something else will happen, and it will carry us away,” Missouri Southern coach Robert Corn said. “For one night, the national media came back to Joplin, Missouri. Our community benefited from this a lot, a whole lot.”

The Missouri team toured the area Sunday and saw the few blocks along 20th Street, between Range Line Road and Main Street, that defines the destruction and dedication. Land has been cleared and construction signs are planted where houses stood.

The sign in front of Joplin High, devastated in the storm, has been rewritten. The “J” and “lin” were replaced with “H” and “e”: Hope High.
Coach Frank Haith, hired from Miami, Fla., in early April, had been on the job for about six weeks when the tornado hit that cut a 6-mile swath, leaving 162 dead and about 7,500 homes and businesses demolished. He and other Missouri staffers came up with the idea to bring a game at Missouri Southern.

“He came here with no prior connections to the state, to have the idea to bring his team ... to raise money is huge,” Mizzou guard Kim English said.

The idea for the One Mizzou T-shirt came from Carly Northup, director of development, and sales raised more than $275,000 for the relief effort. A symbolic check was presented by Missouri athletic director Mike Alden at halftime.

“It’s not about this game,” Alden said. “It’s about making people aware that while this took place in May, 2011, this is a multi-year rebuilding project.”

And Missouri’s athletic department wants to continue its role in the process. Not necessarily a basketball game, though Haith probably wouldn’t mind a return trip if he knew his team would play this well again.

Against a Lions team that was picked to win the Division II MIAA, Missouri shot 57.5 percent from the floor and with four guards often on the floor, forced 26 turnovers. Marcus Denmon’s 25 points led six double figure scorers.

Because forward Laurence Bowers has a torn knee ligament and is out for the season, the Tigers will be one of the smaller teams in the Big 12. But they were bigger than Missouri Southern and won the board battle 41-28.

“They’re quickness and size we can’t prepare for in practice,” Corn said.

When it was over, both teams were called to center court and given a standing ovation. A game more than five months in the making came together wonderfully.

The night included surprises. During a first-half timeout, Missouri Southern announced it was offering $1,000 scholarships to students at four Joplin area high schools.

Lions athletic director Jared Bruggeman said the game’s gate receipts, including $500 courtside seats, will bring more than $100,000 to the school, and the school will reap another $50,000-$60,000 from Saturday’s men’s and women’s exhibition double header with Missouri State.

Missouri Southern, with nearly 6,500 students, lost three lives directly associated with the university — a professor, a student and a professor’s wife. But Bruggeman estimates that 50 staff members left homes. Cars and property were destroyed.

“This is important for our campus, and community,” Bruggeman said. “The national focus was here again.”
It came to the gym that provided vital services after the tornado. Leggett & Platt and the adjoining Young Gymnasium housed about 600 displaced residents, plus fire and rescue personnel. A medical center treated the injured, a day care amused the young. All in the basketball gyms.

Sunday, Joplin returned, to watch a game.
Mizzou's exit from Big 12 appears to be set

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com • 314-340-8199 | Posted: Sunday, October 30, 2011 12:05 am | (3) Comments

COLLEGE STATION, Texas • With Mizzou omitted Friday from a public Big 12 projection of its membership next year, MU's departure for the Southeastern Conference evidently is down to nothing but the lawvering of exit timing and fees and otherwise dotting I's and crossing T's.

But maintaining an apparent strategy to hit mute on the hot-button issue, Mizzou officials either didn't respond to or declined interview requests on Friday.

And on Saturday after MU's 38-31 overtime win at Texas A&M, athletics director Mike Alden, somehow, seemed incredulous to be asked for a moment to comment.

"No — about what?" he said.

Asked about a timetable, he shook his head and said, "You guys are asking me a question I don't know the answer to."

Alden then retreated into the MU locker room.

With chancellor Brady Deaton scheduled to leave Tuesday for a nine-day conference in India, how soon to expect any Mizzou announcement of its own future is a matter of conjecture.

No notice was given as of Saturday evening of any announcement pending Sunday, already an unlikely day because of MU's investment in its men's basketball game at Missouri Southern for further relief from the May tornado.

So barring Deaton being Skyped in from India or being considered inessential to the hoopla, that leaves it to Monday for hope of prompt resolution.

But is that soon enough to get all the salient issues resolved, including the Big East's stated intention to hold West Virginia to a 27-month waiting period even as WVU and the Big 12 have proclaimed the school will be in the Big 12 next year?

If that isn't completely set, Mizzou may not yet be for 2012, either: the Big 12 says it needs 10 members next year to fulfill its TV obligations, and the SEC doesn't want any potential legal complications on its hands.
Still, the prematurely posted — and quickly removed — SEC website posting Thursday night about MU becoming its newest member was yet another indicator of the inevitable.

So the probable only real question left is not if, but when?

But it's one that Mizzou remains unable, or at least unwilling, to clarify.

"Let me know when it happens," MU coach Gary Pinkel said. "I've been hearing about this stuff for weeks."
MU founder’s descendant not in favor of SEC

By DAVID BRIGGS

Add the university’s founding family to the tradition-minded segment of Missouri supporters against a move to the Southeastern Conference.

In yet another realignment twist, a direct descendant of James S. Rollins — known as the “Father of the University of Missouri” — contacted the Tribune this week to express his dismay with MU’s impending exit from the Big 12.

Clarkson Rollins, the great-great-great-grandson of the famed 19th-century politician, said his blood “boiled over” recently at the thought of Missouri forsaking its regional rivals and century-old roots.

“MIZZOU DON’T DO THIS!!!” Rollins wrote in an email. “Our family will never forgive you.”

In a later phone interview, he tempered his tone and acknowledged Missouri’s move to the SEC was inevitable.

“Boy, I was hot when I wrote that,” Rollins said.

The 47-year-old owner of a Houston-area construction company is far from a power player at MU. He left his hometown of Columbia in 1998 and does not donate to the university beyond his membership in the alumni association.

But Rollins, a 1986 MU graduate, is fiercely proud of his heritage and his family’s ties to the birth of MU.

Growing up on a dairy farm two blocks away from Memorial Stadium, he attended every home football game and most basketball games — first at Brewer Fieldhouse and then the Hearnes Center. The young Rollins also remembers absorbing his grandfather’s stories about the family bloodline.

James S. Rollins, an ardent unionist who supported land grants for agricultural colleges, played a prominent role in the founding of Missouri as a member of the House of Representatives. After drafting a bill that stated the university would be built within two miles of the county seat of Boone, Callaway, Coe, Cooper, Howard or Saline, his donations led Boone County’s campaign to bring the first public college west of the Mississippi River to Columbia. Missouri opened in 1839 on land bestowed by Rollins.

The Columbia lawyer, who later served on the university’s Board of Curators, was presented the honorary title of “Pater Universitatis Missouriensis” — or “Father of University of Missouri.” Today, students eat at the Rollins Commons off of Rollins Street while the family’s original home on Providence Road is now the Phi Kappa Psi house.
Clarkson Rollins, who is the son of James S. Rollins III and the father of 4-year-old James S. Rollins IV, is deeply nostalgic about the university’s roots and its Midwestern ties. Realignment tears him up.

He understands the attraction of a more stable and lucrative SEC. But this is a matter of the heart. Rollins hates to see so many rivalries abandoned. Missouri and its Border War adversary Kansas have been linked since 1892, from the four-team Western Interstate University Football Association to the Missouri Valley to the Big Six to the Big Seven to the Big Eight to the Big 12. Gone, too, would be century-old meetings with Iowa State and Kansas State and 90-plus years of annual games with powerhouse Oklahoma.

“It makes no sense to destroy what you have been part of for 100 years or so,” Rollins wrote. “It’s shouldn’t be about the money, the potential fame or the recruiting pool. It should be about your roots. It should be about what is right. Mizzou is the heart and center of what is good and right about the Midwest. Mizzou, KU, KST, OU … started this thing a 100 years or more ago. Just a bunch of corn-fed boys that wanted an education.”

Rollins was just getting started.

“What do we have in common with the SEC? Nothing! Actually more than nothing if you get your history right. When my family donated the ground that the Mizzou Campus sits on, and yes we donated it all, it was donated to all free men, and our family was the first to free their men and families during the Civil War,” he wrote, referencing J.S. Rollins’ support of the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery.

“Everything that is the Mizzou campus came originally from my family, the red campus, the white campus and the Vet and Ag schools. The first free and open school west of the Mississippi. The first state land grant college west of the Mississippi.

“Mizzou is part of the original Big 6/8/12. To leave for assumed greener pastures does not compute. This is stupidity at its greatest moment. Explain to me where are the greener pastures, and if so, when does the whipping post come in? Cause we will be in the SEC.”
Reminder of reason for leaving

By JOE WALLJASPER
Friday, October 28, 2011

A university’s choice to switch conferences has been called a “100-year decision.” Some observers have wondered if Missouri interprets that phrase literally as it slowly deliberates.

MU has held off on making official its withdrawal from the Big 12 and application to the Southeastern Conference, even after the SEC website accidentally announced otherwise last night, and even after the Big 12 proclaimed today that West Virginia will play next year in a 10-team Big 12 that doesn’t include Missouri.

Clearly, the decision has been made to leave. The delay is just a matter of sorting out the final details and finding the right day for the press conference.

In the meantime, Missouri’s image is taking some lumps. With the exception of tomorrow’s game at fellow Big 12 defector Texas A&M, each football game will include taunts from opposing fans. Pundits will have their fun. And they have ammunition, because the Tigers’ worst football season in seven years has coincided with the decision to join the toughest football conference in the nation.

The surface-level criticism is that Missouri must be dim or vain to not understand its place in the hierarchy of college athletics.

Why do they think they can succeed in the SEC when they can’t win Big 12 titles in anything but softball? But that criticism misses the point. This decision is about what Missouri wants to leave, not what it wants to join.

SEC, Big Ten, Pac-12, whatever, MU just wants out of the Big 12 before it explodes. It currently has a willing suitor. Not jumping now would be a bigger risk than losing an extra football game or two per year in the SEC.

If that wasn’t already obvious, the point was hammered home this week. After what must have been a very confusing meeting of the Big 12 board of directors Monday, a crazy quilt of conflicting leaked information poured forth.

West Virginia was approved to join the Big 12. No, wait a minute, put that press conference on hold, because maybe Louisville would be a better choice. Why Louisville? Well, Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader, thought it was a good idea, and he is pals with University of Oklahoma President David Boren, who is a former senator.
The Kansas City Star reported early in the week that Oklahoma wanted Louisville and the other schools wanted West Virginia. Apparently the majority ruled, because as of this morning, West Virginia was in the Big 12 again.

It also was leaked that Notre Dame might join the Big 12 in all sports except the one that matters — football — in an arrangement that makes no sense to me. And the Big 12 announced that a conference network was a possibility, which was news to Oklahoma officials, who are planning their own network to rival the Longhorn Network.

"I don't see quite how the conference network would work," Boren told The Associated Press. "I'm confused by that myself."

Former Commissioner Dan Beebe used to get blamed for not being able to herd the Big 12's cats, but the egos of the school CEOs are the bigger problem. As long as the relationship between conference schools is volatile — particularly if the duel of egos is between Oklahoma and Texas, who both have other options and the financial means to buy their way out of the Big 12's financial handcuffs — the demise of the Big 12 will be a constant concern.

In time there will be new school administrators who might have a more collaborative spirit, but there's no guarantee the Big 12 will live to see that day.

That's why Missouri is leaving. It's not because it has grand dreams of beating Alabama and LSU and winning the SEC. It's because there might not be any Big 12 to win.
JOPLIN — Students, dressed in jeans and hooded sweatshirts and loaded with backpacks, hustled across Newman Road on their way to late-afternoon classes Wednesday at Missouri Southern State University.

Around the corner and across Duquesne Road, the Lions football team was practicing with urgency under gray skies in the damp autumn air. A meeting with No. 4 Northwest Missouri State was only days away.

In this small corner of the city, everything appeared normal.

But all it took was a drive a few miles south and west, through the path of the EF-5 tornado that touched down here May 22, to see that life in this community of 50,000 is anything but

Entire neighborhoods on either side of 20th Street are missing. The violent funnel of wind and rain that ultimately killed more than 160 people also damaged or destroyed some 7,500 homes and knocked over or sucked away most of the trees that surrounded them.

The five months since the disaster have provided enough time to clear away the debris, but there is almost nothing left behind save a few front steps leading nowhere amid the barren landscape.

Looming above it off in the distance is St. John's Regional Medical Center, abandoned, its windows shattered and upper floors destroyed.

Joplin High School could pass for a bomb site, with part of the roof and some exterior walls crumbling in on themselves.

The students who should be filling its hallways or streaming out onto the street after the final bell are across town in a shopping mall that's been pressed into use as a school.

It all makes for an eerie scene the first time a person's eyes are set on it.

"I drive through it every day, and I still can't imagine what we've gone through," said Robert Corn, who has spent the last 23 years living in the community and coaching basketball at Missouri Southern.

The rest of the country doesn't necessarily remember. As happens in today's media world, people soaked up the pictures of devastation and the stories of survival last May and reached out with overwhelming shows of support in the days after the tornado, but the plight of people in Joplin soon faded to the background of the collective consciousness as the next big story took over.
As the city continues the slow process of rebuilding, the nation will get a reminder of the hard-to-fathom daily reality residents still experience when Corn’s Lions, the nation’s fourth-ranked Division II team, host Missouri, ranked No. 25 in Division I, in an exhibition game at the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center on the Missouri Southern campus.

The game, called the One State, One Spirit Classic and presented by Carthage-based manufacturer Leggett & Platt, is set to tip off at 5:47 p.m. today, six minutes after a moment of silence at the time the tornado struck in May.

ESPNU will televise the exhibition game, and all proceeds will be donated to the Missouri Southern Foundation’s Tornado Relief Fund.

“This is big for this area,” Missouri Southern Athletic Director Jared Bruggeman said. “It’s big not just because of the financial component that’s going to go out. It’s big because it also focuses attention back on Joplin nationwide, being televised as it is. It’s important to let people know where we’re at and what we’re doing and it’s not over yet as far as the rebuilding process.”

Bruggeman believes the game is also important as a distraction for some of the people still suffering.

“People love sports,” he said. “There’s a reason why it’s got its own section in the newspaper. It’s a big deal, and it’s a big deal to see Mizzou come down here to play in Joplin. ... They don’t come here, and they’re here and in all likelihood will never be here again.

“So it’s significant to take people’s minds off what’s going on and focus on a good, enjoyable basketball game knowing there’s a great intent behind it.”

He and Corn are quick to deflect credit for making the game happen. They insist it rests instead with their counterparts in Columbia.

After waking up to Monday morning news reports detailing the destruction May 23, MU administrators began discussing what they could do to lend assistance to those affected. Those conversations carried down to individual departments.

After speaking with Athletic Director Mike Alden, Coach Frank Haith met with then-men’s basketball spokesman Dave Reiter for a brainstorming session. It was in that meeting they came up with the idea of playing an exhibition game in Joplin, an unprecedented event for the state’s flagship school.

Haith and Corn talked about the idea soon after, but there were some logistics that had to be sorted out to make it a reality. The biggest was obtaining a waiver from the NCAA to allow Missouri to play a third exhibition game, because the Tigers already had two contracted with Truman State and Central Missouri.

Approvals came from both schools.

“A lot of times something like this comes up, and it will take awhile to make a decision,” Corn said. “But to the NCAA’s credit, I think it was a very short period of time after all the appeals process had gone in that they made the decision to let the game be played.”

Once they did, the two sides quickly agreed on a date and June 9 unveiled plans for the One State, One Spirit Classic.
Even before that announcement, Haith saw firsthand why the event was important. He and several other athletic officials drove to Joplin on May 26 to tour the devastation, meet with victims and distribute stuffed Truman the Tiger toys to children at various shelters around town, the largest one at the Leggett & Platt Athletic Center.

"It was just an eerie feeling," said Haith, sharing his memories of that day. "There were about five or six of us in the van, and right when we got into town, it just was amazing just seeing buildings just flatlined, and then we went to the worst areas. We parked, and we walked over, and you saw the folks there. They were still walking around, and you saw, there's this closet with clothes hanging in it, but there's no house.

"That's pretty amazing how that happens."

It's impossible to measure the financial impact the game could have on the recovery efforts.

Tickets sold for $22 for reserved seating and $12 for general admission and student seats in the 3,200-seat arena. There were also a few select premium seats sold for $500 each, while virtual tickets went for $10 for supporters who wanted to contribute without attending the game.

Add in concessions and merchandise at the game — plus lodging, meals, shopping and transportation costs for out-of-town visitors — and Bruggeman estimated it could bring between $500,000 and $2 million into the Joplin economy.

The effects of the exposure could be far greater if it helps spur more donations.

It will still be small in comparison to the scope of the damage, estimated at $3 billion. But that doesn't mean it won't be significant.

It's like every house, fast food restaurant or big box store that goes back up where there once was rubble.

They aren't enough to bring the city back to the way things were, but they move it closer.

"When you see the things that happen, you feel good about Joplin," Bruggeman said. "You feel good about the future of Joplin, and you feel good about the people that are around you that are good people and they're dedicated and they're hard-working and they care for others."
MU salary report shows effect of raises

By JANESE SILVEY

The unexpected retirement of the University of Missouri System’s president early this year has had six-figure benefits for one employee.

Philip Hoskins received a $100,000 pay raise when he went from being a UM attorney to temporarily serving as general counsel. He’s acting in that role while the previous general counsel, Steve Owens, serves as interim president.

Hoskins’ change of salary, from $150,000 to $250,000, was the most notable on a recently released database of university employee salaries. The Board of Curators earlier this year agreed to thaw salaries after a two-year freeze that kept pay at 2009 levels. Most workers saw a roughly 2 percent increase.

Hoskins’ raise represented a 40 percent increase, but the salary was adjusted to reflect his new responsibilities, UM spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said. As general counsel, he provides legal advice to the UM Board of Curators and system administrators. He’s also performing some of his previous litigation duties, she said, and manages the office of eight attorneys.

Hoskins’ salary will be decreased when he’s no longer serving as general counsel, but the amount of reduction hasn’t been determined, Hollingshead said.

Owens’ salary in the general counsel role was $375,000 and remains so as he serves as interim president, although he did receive a 10 percent, or $37,500, one-time lump payment for the additional duties. With the stipend, his pay seems to exceed his predecessor’s — Gary Forsee made $400,000 — but Hollingshead stressed that Forsee received other benefits Owens is not getting.

The UM System releases salary information every fall to campus libraries “as a matter of transparency,” Hollingshead said. The data also are found in the state’s official manual.

A comparison of this year’s payroll data to 2010 salaries on the MU campus shows most employees received pay increases this year. Raises are supposed to be handed out based on merit, but most seemed to hover around the 2 percent mark. Higher percentage raises might have been sparked by changes in job duties, counter-offers or faculty members promoted to a higher academic rank, Betsy Rodriguez, UM vice president of human resources, said in a note attached to the databases.

A 2 percent raise translates into larger dollar increases for those on the high end of the payroll, but MU Budget Director Tim Rooney said managers were not instructed to differentiate raises based on income.
levels. Another alternative is to give everyone flat dollar increases, but that would create higher percentage raises for lesser-paid employees, he said. "There's no easy answer."

For the highest-paid employee on MU's payroll, the 2 percent equals an additional $12,500 a year. James Stannard, a professor of orthopaedic surgery and medical director of the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute, now makes $637,500, up from $625,000 last year.

On the lower end of the pay scale, 2 percent has translated into roughly 20 cents more per hour for custodians, landscape workers, food service employees and other staff earning hourly wages. Those workers will see their annual pay increase by about $400.

MU's Staff Advisory Council has, in the past, discussed the way raises are given, Chairwoman Angel Anderson said. But workers aren't complaining this year.

"At this point, since it's been so long we've gone without a raise, we're just happy to have the 2 percent," she said.

Anderson also noted that the council is working with administrators to devise a program that would help employees advance their careers and possible earnings potential.

Funding for university salaries comes from a variety of sources. Health care workers are paid with revenue generated at hospitals and clinics. MU's Athletics Department and auxiliary operations such as residential halls, food services and bookstores also bring in their own revenue to pay employees. Even with their own budgets, though, curators have the authority to call for systemwide pay freezes.

Faculty members are paid with general operating funds, which include taxpayer dollars, but some of those salaries also are supported with grant money or endowment funds.

Academic departments got little financial assistance when they were directed to give pay increases this year, Rooney said. MU distributed about $3 million among the units — roughly $7 million less than what was needed to fund mandated pay increases.

That meant department heads had to use dollars from their existing budgets, requiring them to keep positions vacant or cut expenses elsewhere.
Number of part-time faculty at MU grows

By Janese Silvey
Sunday, October 30, 2011

Faculty members have taken on additional sections. Classes start earlier in the day and end later in the evening. More part-time employees — not eligible for benefits — are on the payroll.

The University of Missouri has devised all sorts of ways to balance a growing student population with dwindling state funding, but increasing tenure-track faculty isn’t one of them.

This year’s faculty includes 1,251 assistant, associate and full professors mandated to teach, conduct research and fulfill service requirements. That’s up 12 from last year but down 15 from 2007, according to numbers provided by Deputy Provost Ken Dean.

“Not surprised really,” associate professor Leona Rubin said after reviewing the numbers. “We have had a ‘freeze’ for several years now, and although some full-time faculty have been hired, the ‘enrollment surge’ has been met by increasing faculty at levels other than full-time or tenure track.”

The Tribune compared current positions on campus to those in 2007 because that was the fiscal year before the economy took a nosedive. In the years since, funding has been cut, tuition levels frozen twice and a soft hiring freeze has kept positions unfilled.

So who’s teaching the 5,328 additional students who have showed up since then? More nontenure-track instructors.

That number is trickier to count because it includes full-time instructors simply not looking to pursue tenure and graduate teaching assistants, lecturers, clinical instructors and an assortment of other academic titles.

Jim Spain, vice provost of undergraduate enrollment, stressed that non-tenured does not equate to unqualified. Most of the instructors in the classroom still are hired through national searches, he said, and many are the campus’s award-winning teachers.

Holding the number of tenured positions flat is somewhat strategic, Spain said. Although out-of-state students have kept enrollment at record levels, the number is expected to taper off as Missouri high school populations dwindle. “The concern is how large can you expand, with the concern that also on the horizon is the shrinking size of the graduating classes in Missouri high schools,” he said.

Some faculty members are concerned about the number of adjuncts, teaching assistants and part-time instructors used in classrooms, Rubin said, but she also said those hires helped MU deal with challenging
fiscal times. Unlike peer institutions, MU has not had to implement furloughs or cut positions before they're vacant, she said.

MU professors should protect tenure on campus, she said, but also realize that those non-tenure positions allow them to continue to dedicate time to research and service duties outside the classroom. "I doubt many would volunteer to assume the level of instruction being met by the non-tenure-track or adjunct faculty," she said.

Since 2007, the total number of employees at MU has grown by about 1,000. But the numbers can be deceptive because they include more part-time, non-benefits eligible workers who have replaced full-time positions, said MU Budget Director Tim Rooney.

MU has increased the number of academic advisers by nearly 20 since 2007, an increase Provost Brian Foster says reflects the university's commitment to students' experiences. "We've put a lot more effort into advising, and that's an incredibly important part of the quality of learning," he said.
MU enrollment rises; four-year, six-year graduation rates improve

By Raymond Howze
October 31, 2011 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Every August they charge through the columns, rumbling toward Jesse Hall. Four exciting years wait just around the corner.

For many of these MU students, though, four years really means five or six. In some cases, even more. Freshmen enter MU with a sense they will be done within four years. However, four years leave a lot of time for goals and interests to change, extending many students' undergraduate careers.

MU's graduation rates are near the top for Big 12 schools. MU is also one of the fastest growing universities in the Association of American Universities and the Big 12 according to previous Missourian reporting. But graduating in four years is not as easy as it sounds. With a continued rise in enrollment at MU, the ability to improve graduation rates will be increasingly difficult.

Erica Evans spent seven and a half years as an undergraduate student. Starting out at Truman State University, Evans bounced from major to major until she found something she enjoyed.

After transferring to MU in January 2006, it wasn't until December 2008 that she was able to graduate with a bachelor's degree in human environmental science. She is now in a doctorate program at MU.

"My issue was that I could never find something I was truly interested in, so I had to take classes to find out what I liked," Evans said. "I changed my major about six or seven times."

Since 2001, MU has seen four-year graduation rates rise from 40.9% to 46.5% according to data obtained from the university registrar's website. Six-year graduation rates have gone from 67.2% to 69.3%. Both are clear improvements.

"We worked really hard to recruit students that we have confidence in and can be very successful at Mizzou," said Jim Spain, vice provost of undergraduate studies at MU. "Over
time, we've been able to recruit students that have very strong academic backgrounds from all over the state and all over the country."

Spain credits the rise in graduation rates and enrollment to the programs MU has developed in recent years. These programs include Summer Welcome, Freshman Interest Groups, Student Success Center courses and other orientation courses.

"Not only are we seeing more students graduate, but they're achieving graduation sooner than previous student cohorts," Spain said. "I think it goes back to the things our campus has done intentionally."

According to Spain, MU has continually strengthened opportunities and support networks for students over that last ten years. Spain said it all starts with recruitment.

"We have continued to get better and better at recruitment, orientation and a strong freshman year experience," Spain said. "Underneath all of that, there's a stronger network of student support."

Struggling to determine a major and transferring are factors that can lengthen a student's college career. Some students face financial troubles, medical issues and study abroad decisions as well.

Transfer students like Evans don't factor into MU's graduation rate numbers. But Evans is an example of why students often spend more than four years in their undergraduate careers.

The difficulty in determining a major is something that plagues many undergraduates. For $15, the MU Career Center offers a StrengthsFinder assessment for students to help determine which careers would suit their skills.

Spain explained how switching majors can be beneficial to students in the long-term because they find a major they are more connected to.

"Our schools and colleges at Mizzou are working to help students find that fit earlier," Spain said. "The sooner we can help students navigate majors, the sooner they're going to be able to graduate."
Step into the Student Center on the University of Missouri campus during lunch hour and look around. Logos abound. Students drink coffee from paper cups emblazoned with a coffeehouse’s emblem while they peer up from behind the glowing fruit forms on the backs of their laptops. In the MU Bookstore, you can buy hooded sweatshirts festooned with that trademarked snarling tiger face in addition to an athletic-looking swoosh.

It’s a logopalooza in there.

But tucked away in a small glass cube is a relief from all of that. Neatly folded graphic T-shirts drape themselves over the ledges of cubit-style shelves. Stacks of stickers fan themselves out, inviting the visitor to pick them up and take a closer look.

This is the INDIEpendence Boutique, a decidedly un-mainstream shop.

Kiarah Moore, a senior textile and apparel management student won the right to park her business rent-free in that spot through the Unions Entrepreneurship Program. For the remainder of the academic year, she will seek out student artists and lesser-known designers to feature their work in her store. Her goal, she said, is to form a collaboration of independent artists and designers.

"INDIEpendence is a movement. A lot of people have a lot of trouble with what they’re doing, but they believe in it so much. If each individual can reach their own target market, which is probably about 100 people, just think if five of us or 10 of us were able to come together and put together a collection of all our brands under one roof. We’d make a greater impact," Moore said.

Lawrence Waller, a senior sociology and financial planning major who helps Moore run the boutique, describes the shop’s customer base as “people our own age who are seeking to express themselves creatively but aren’t willing to buy things that are mass-produced by the hundreds of thousands.”

Moore’s own clothing line, called Vory, is one of the seven featured in the boutique. When she first decided to pursue the space, her idea was to expand on Vory. But as she put together her 20-page business profile, she saw an opportunity to lift other lines up with her own.

“I wanted to help other brands in the same way," Moore said.

The boutique opened Aug. 29. Since then, a core group of five has manned the shop during store hours — 2 to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.
In addition to maintaining a full load of classes, Moore said she’s at the shop some 10 hours a week. She talks with customers, researches new designers to bring into the boutique and looks for more ways to keep the boutique afloat.

Funding has been a major challenge. Moore said she has spent $7,000 of her own money on the venture, so she is looking for funding from other sources. Last week, Moore presented her business plan to the Collaboration, Leadership and Innovation for Missouri Business, or CLIMB, Business Plan Competition. As a finalist, she was awarded $1,000 and is one of six finalists to compete for a $4,000 prize next month.

Because she’s not yet in a place where she can replenish her inventory with pieces purchased at wholesale prices, Moore works with smaller brands on a consignment basis.

But even this arrangement brings unique challenges, Moore said.

Many of these small designers cannot afford to print continuously, and their limited production puts Moore’s inventory at the mercy of their schedule, she said.

Still, the boutique is a venue for local designers to sell their creations. In addition to Moore’s Vory line and an in-house INDIEpendence line, the store carries MU senior civil engineering major Geordan Lightfoot Smith’s line, Arrogant Empire.

Lightfoot Smith said he got his start in fashion design with footwear.

“I started painting my own shoes because I didn’t see what I wanted,” Lightfoot Smith said. “I liked looking at my own art, anyway.”

Although he started painting shoes to get exactly what he wanted, many of his T-shirt designs are a collaborative effort. Lightfoot Smith said he often gets ideas from others.

“I can work with something if I have an idea,” he said.

After he creates designs on his computer, he has them printed locally at ACME T-Shirts or Diggit Graphics.

Some of his designs for the in-house INDIE brand are created to appeal to students from specific geographic locations. For example, a shirt featuring the Chicago skyline boasts the slogan “WINDIE,” a riff off the Windy City nickname.

Although she will have to relinquish the space at the end of the spring, Moore has plans to keep up with INDIEpendence Boutique. She’s looking into retail spaces downtown, and she hopes to become a resource for fledgling designers who understand the aesthetics of what they want to do but don’t have the business background to get themselves going.

Ultimately, Moore said she would like to one day expand INDIEpendence Boutique.

“I see a franchise with a lot of different boutiques, more stores being built and being able to cater to” a specific market “of independent brands,” Moore said.
WASHINGTON: Saints and religious gurus have been saying this since ages, now a new study has reinforced their idea that spirituality improves health outcomes for both men and women facing chronic illnesses.

Researchers at the University of Missouri in the US found that being involved in religious or spiritual activities improves women’s mental health, while men experience better physical health as well as improved mental health. "The new findings reinforce the idea that religion or spirituality may help buffer the negative consequences of chronic health conditions," study author Stephanie Reid-Arndt said.

Numerous previous studies have shown the positive effects of spirituality and religion on health. To delve deeper into the religion-health link, Reid-Arndt and her colleagues looked at the role of gender in using spirituality to cope with their chronic health conditions such as stroke, cancer, spinal cord injury or brain injury. For their study the researchers recruited 168 people, aged 18 and more, from an academic health center who had chronic health conditions.

After gauging each participant’s level of religiousness or spirituality, the researchers measured their general mental and physical health by asking them to fill out questionnaires. Though women are stereotypically regarded as more religious than men, the researchers found no differences between two sexes in terms of self-reported levels of spiritual experiences, religious practices or congregational support.
A way out: The Duncan solution

By HENRY J. WATERS III

Friday, October 28, 2011

Despite having spent a considerable amount of time absorbing the ruminations of the University of Missouri's vice chancellor for research, I would not want to bet my entire little stash whether Rob Duncan is a Republican or a Democrat.

Rather, I take him to be a hybrid whose goal at the end of the day is to find something that works. Along the way, on scientific subjects he ventures into arcane realms unknown to most of us. He is a physicist, after all, but with a pragmatist's job heavily bent toward finding ways to translate MU research into big bucks.

Sometimes his fertile mind wanders beyond the confines of tight discipline, as it did in print the other day in these columns when he proposed a way out of the nation's current economic mess. His treatise ran Sunday, for readers who might want to review.

Duncan rightly began by asserting that the woes of the housing market were a key factor in causing the recession and remain key to its continuation. He suggests a way for "underwater" owners to remain in their homes with the help of a public-private corporation that would buy their bankrupt properties with an agreement the owner must pay over time perhaps 40 percent of gross earnings to settle the mortgage. The corporation would involve private investors and be publicly regulated.

He believes this mechanism, more carefully described in his column, would allow the housing debt problem to be resolved over time, allowing homeowners to remain in their homes while they rebuild earning power and repay their debts. If the mortgage holder finally is unable to cover the mortgage, the real estate is put up for sale by the corporation under a fair-value market designed to allow private investors to participate and recover public equity.

Duncan's ingenious scheme is based on what he calls a set of shared values that, if agreed on, pave the way toward practical solutions to tough problems:

- Individuals must always be held accountable for the outcomes of their personal financial decisions. Otherwise our personal freedoms will not endure.
- Public revenue must never be used to excuse personal debt because such an action would be no different than stealing from the Treasury.
- Our markets are to be used only to promote trade in the real value of goods and services, not to extract resources from the market by mere trickery without contributing real value to society.

Almost as interesting as Duncan's workout scheme is this statement of shared values. They sound vaguely Republican, built on personal responsibility and limited government involvement. Yet his solution
is sort of Democratic, a use of government to organize private marketplace dealings in a careful way intended to protect private and public interests alike.

Working down the middle like this too often attracts more opposition than support, particularly at a politically deadly time like the present, when the main tactic of partisan extremists is to find something wrong with the other side.

In other words, the last thing today's candidates would do is agree on a working set of shared values, leaving creative solutions like Duncan's dead aborning.

HJW III

The leaders of the French revolution excited the poor against the rich; this made the rich poor, but it didn't make the poor rich.
Southeast, others adding courses to online collaboration

Monday, October 31, 2011
By Erin Ragan ~ Southeast Missourian
The universities of Missouri are finding that putting their heads together can be a great thing.

With the success of a new program offering students the opportunity to take courses online at other universities throughout the state, Southeast Missouri State University and seven others will add to the courses as part of a statewide academic collaboration.

Areas of study will include agriculture, environmental science and education, according to university provost Dr. Ron Rosati.

The program began with a collaboration on a foreign language class last spring between Southeast and the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg. This fall, five universities offered six courses in economics, foreign language and physics to students at Southeast, the University of Central Missouri, Northwest Missouri State University, Missouri Western State University, Missouri University of Science and Technology, Missouri State University, Truman State University, the University of Missouri and the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Dr. Willie Redmond, an economics professor at Southeast, told the board of regents during last Friday’s meeting that the collaboration makes sense, especially when it comes to efficiency.

"We're better able to allocate our professors that we have to the places where we have different needs," Redmond said of the department.

"They are able to take courses like labor economics and sports economics that we haven't been able to offer in the past few years, because of our limited resources that we have in our department with the number of majors that we have," he said.

Students pay the university at which they are enrolled for the courses, and instructors at the university where the course is based send their grades to that university at the end of the semester. This fall, 224 students are enrolled in the courses.

The cost to students is the same as they pay for regular online courses from Southeast.

The universities are assessing how to make sure all involved are getting as much as they are giving, Rosati said, but as of right now the universities are allowing the program to grow and
become established without having to worry too much about the trade issue. There is no extra cost to the university to be a part of the collaboration.

"The bottom line is this is an opportunity for students to get a better educational experience in a way that's cost-effective for taxpayers in Missouri," he said.
MU museum opens for a haunted night

Two-year-old Ella Dobkins had quite the night. Lady Hamilton praised her outfit and told her she could be a fashion model. Pablo Picasso shook her hand. And at the end of the Museum of Art and Archaeology's Haunted Museum Tour, the toddler got a big ol' bag of treats, to boot.

Asked what the best part of the adventure was, Ella popped a gummy in her mouth.


The combination of spooks, art, history and sweets brought dozens of area families to Pickard Hall on the University of Missouri campus last night for the eighth annual haunted museum event. The tour attracts about 300 visitors every year, said Cathy Callaway, associate museum educator.

Although staff members and regular visitors bring their children, the Halloween event also gives newcomers a chance to peek inside. "It's a chance to show kids that the museum isn't a stuffy or boring place," Callaway said.

Last night, kiddos had a chance to hear from six historical and fictional figures stationed in front of their respective art displays. Lady Hamilton, played by Cortney Black, had a chance to explain why she ended up in so many paintings, and an ancient Egyptian princess, played by Natalie Fish, came out of her tomb long enough to explain the mummification process. Gary Beahan, with his face painted in Picasso style, encouraged the young visitors to embrace their childlike artwork.

Becca Cuscaden has spent three years volunteering for the event and last night doubled as an angel to explain Renaissance art. "It's a wonderful way for art to come to life," she said before the event.

Medusa might have stolen the show, at least judging from the faces of one tour group. Portrayed by Shari Emery, Medusa's snake headgear, green face and creepy story of how she can turn people into stone made some children squirm, especially after she pointed to a marble bust of Nero as an example of her "work."

Caroline Burke wasn't scared, though. The 8-year-old marched up to Emery — after she was done talking about the mythical Greek goddess Athena having her head cut off — and asked to hold her prop. "I liked when she let me hold the snake," Caroline said later.

That's not to say she wasn't listening. As soon as Caroline left for the Cast Gallery downstairs, she bypassed a live bird display, craft booths and other fun activities to find the cast sculpture of Athena, just like Emery had instructed.

The Halloween event proved perfect for the younger children who aren't quite ready for more serious frights.

"We wanted something not-too-scary," said Sean Dobkins, holding the candy-eating Ella. "And this was also educational."
Lee Elementary, MU Museum of Art and Archaeology partner for Art After School

By Cho Ling Ngai
October 29, 2011 | 5:23 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School collaborates with the MU Museum of Art and Archaeology to hold the program Art After School for students.

The two have had a history of collaboration because of the Partners In Education program, said Ann Mehr, an art specialist at Lee School.

“We formalized the partnership eight years go, but for 20 years I’ve been bringing kids over on a regular basis to learn at the museum,” she said. “I’m just so glad the museum is so close that we can just walk over.”

The program consists of four interactive art projects that take place from October to January at the museum.

The first in the series, “I can Fly!” was held on Oct. 13. The students looked at ancient and mythical part-human, part-animal art pieces such as a sphinx and created a hybrid self-portrait afterward.

Upcoming art projects

On Nov. 10, students will pay a visit to the new Mediterranean Melting Pot exhibition in the Ancient Gallery. They will learn about the production process of these vessels and make their own using clay or cans.

On Dec. 8, students will get a notebook and an excavation kit to use when they dig into hardened brick in search of artifacts. The museum’s staff archaeologists will explain their jobs to the children.
On Jan. 12, students will tour the museum to study animal-shaped art pieces. Then they’ll make masks.

Mehr said the program does not only engage students in art but also allows them to connect to the world through art.

“Modern kids spend too much time in front of screens; what they learn is also virtual and they’re so disconnected from reality,” she said. “When they get to come to the museum and learn in front of primary sources and materials, that’s very powerful and important to them.”

The program also enhances the knowledge the students have about art, Mehr said.

“In the museum I get to reinforce art concepts that the children learn at school. They get to observe two- and three-dimensional art, and they get to observe landscapes, still lifes, portraits and so on.”

The most rewarding aspect of this program is that children get to understand that art, people and life are all related to one another, Mehr said.

“When the kids get to come and see artifacts from different countries and different times, they get the sense of how people are more the same than different,” she said. “I think it’s particularly poignant for children to learn about that.”
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Nate Phelps, the 'counterbalance' for the Westboro Baptist Church, speaks at MU

By Melissa Gilstrap
October 28, 2011 | 8:04 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — In 1976, Nate Phelps ran away from home.

At midnight on his 18th birthday, he stole away from his sleeping family members. After living in a home filled with physical and mental abuse, he left without a second thought to what the world might have in store for him.

"I was convinced what I was doing was going to end up putting me in hell," Phelps said.

If Phelps' last name seems familiar, it's because his family has received considerable media attention. In 2007, they were featured as the subject of a BBC documentary called "The Most Hated Family in America."

Nate Phelps' father, Fred Phelps, is the leader of Westboro Baptist Church, an organization well-known for its extreme anti-gay and lesbian rhetoric. The church is located in Topeka, Kan., but members — mostly family of Fred Phelps — picket funerals and other events all over the country.

Phelps, 53, is now a public speaker on religion and child abuse and an advocate for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

On Friday afternoon, he spoke to a crowd of about 85 people at MU's Women's Center. The question-and-answer forum was originally meant to be held in the nearby LGBTQ Resource Center, but the event was moved because the number of people would possibly have violated fire code restrictions.

Phelps said after he left his father's house and his church, Fred Phelps cut off all ties of communication with him.
"When I first left, I tried to avoid anything to do with religion," Phelps said. "I thought I was fine. I thought I had survived, unscathed."

When psychological issues later arose, Phelps sought the help of a counselor. During counseling, he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, something he attributes to the abusive environment he grew up in.

"I heard what he was preaching to us, but I also saw how he behaved. ... He was so willing to respond to other human beings cruelly," Phelps said. "If there was any sign of weakness, he would physically and verbally beat it out of us."

Phelps said his father believes homosexuality is a uniquely evil sin, but the hatred and protests were not solely for the gay community.

"Make no mistake about it, he doesn't reserve God's hatred just for the gay community," Phelps said. "He hates everyone." Fred Phelps also found he could provoke strong reactions and media attention from protesting at events, Phelps said.

In 2008, a student reporter wrote a story about Nate Phelps' experiences in the church. After the story received much attention and an award, Phelps was called to speak to groups about his life. He then realized becoming a LGBT advocate and speaking out against his father's teachings could help counterbalance the effects his father's church had on the gay community, Phelps said.

University of Missouri Skeptics, Atheists, Secular Humanists and Agnostics and MU Organization Resource Group collaborated to bring Phelps to campus. He will also be speaking Saturday about his life at the organization's fall conference. Dave Muscato, the group's vice president, said he hoped those attending the conference would gain a new perspective on religion and religious fanaticism from Nate Phelps' story.

"It (religion) can be beautiful and give people hope, but it can be jet fuel for hate when applied as written," Muscato said. Now an atheist, Nate Phelps has been speaking at events, including gay pride parades and atheist conventions, around the U.S. for the past three years. He is also in the process of publishing a book about his life that is "pretty much written," he said.

"It would be nice to say we all lived happily ever," Phelps said. "Someone said give me a child until he's 7, and I'll give you the man. You put thoughts in a child's head and they never go away."
MU professor to start growing saltwater shrimp with sustainable technology

By Yiqian Zhang
October 29, 2011 | 5:53 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — David Brune wants to grow saltwater shrimp in the middle of Missouri.

_The MU agricultural systems management professor has spent months working on a greenhouse at Bradford Research Farm that will allow him to grow Pacific white shrimp year-round._

He wants to prove it's possible and profitable to use sustainable technology to cultivate shrimp in mid-Missouri.

Instead of using a traditional pond, Brune is building a partitioned aquaculture system, growing shrimp in a greenhouse and using algae to provide oxygen through photosynthesis.

Brune said he hopes to apply more than two decades of his research to this project. Before coming to MU, he worked at Clemson University in South Carolina, where he developed the university's patented system.
Brune said the research reflects a bigger issue in modern aquaculture — sustainable fish and shellfish production. Most fish farmers still use traditional still-water ponds and are slow to adopt newer technologies.

He wants to find a way to persuade them to adopt his system and put fresh-market shrimp on the dining table in about three years.

**Promoting sustainable aquaculture**

The primary difference between the pond and Brune’s system is a series of raceways. They are like lanes in a highway and allow the shrimp to grow at much higher densities than in conventional ponds.

Another key piece of his design is growing algae with the shrimp to provide oxygen and clean up the water.

Shrimp produce carbon dioxide and ammonia. When the substances reach a certain level, they become toxic, Brune said.

“During photosynthesis, algae removes the two things that are toxic and also produces oxygen,” he said. “It rejuvenates the water.”

In order to keep the algae growing, Brune puts water wheels in the raceways. The wheels, which look like paddle wheels on a steamboat, keep the water rolling and provide a better opportunity for algae to get sunlight.

“The algae grow four to five times faster than in a still-water pond,” Brune said.

If the algae population becomes excessive, however, it can harm the shrimp population. This is one reason fish farmers dislike algal blooms in fish ponds, Brune said. Large quantities of algae can increase the need to aerate the pond.

During his research at Clemson, Brune developed the technique of using tilapia co-cultures to control the algae population.

Having tilapia — a freshwater fish — in the system selectively removes the type of algae that isn’t compatible with aquaculture species. Tilapia control algae density and also reduce the occurrence of zooplankton blooms that can “crash” the system.

After several years of experimenting with this process, Brune was able to achieve a huge leap in fish production.
"When we started doing this, (the farmers) were producing 5,000 pounds of fish per acre," Brune said. "After a few years, we were able to reach 20,000 pounds per acre."

**The facility at MU**

The greenhouse Brune is working on at Bradford Research Farm is built around the same concept.

The facility takes up one-fifteenth of an acre, about the size of a tennis court. It is divided into two identical sections for experimentation and educational purposes.

Each section has two shrimp raceways that are 3 feet deep, a tank of tilapia, a water wheel and two tanks providing additional water treatment.

Brune will buy dried sea salt to make the salt water that fills the raceways. He said he will grow about 30 times the density of a still-water pond.

The tilapia tanks are placed next to the raceways, and Brune will keep the fish in plastic or fabric nets.

The two back-up tanks are needed, Brune said, because Missouri's winter is colder and cloudier than in South Carolina. The reduced sunlight and temperature could kill the algae, which has prompted him to devise a back-up system to clean up the water.

The back-up tanks will contain bacteria that can break down the excess ammonia produced by the shrimp, eventually converting it to nitrogen gas.

Also, because of the colder weather, the water must be heated during the winter.

"We can't afford to buy heat, so we are going to put a biomass generator next to the shrimp culture facility," Brune said.

The generator will burn wood or grass and produce electricity. Brune hopes to sell the electricity to the city grid and use the waste heat produced in the process to warm the shrimp.

"Usually when burning wood, it produces a kilowatt of electricity and two kilowatts of heat," he said. "Most places don't even use it — most places throw that away — but we are going to use that to heat the water."

**Is this feasible for the farmers?**

Internationally, the shrimp-farming business is dominated by Asian countries.
According to the 2008 fishery and aquaculture statistics from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the total Pacific white shrimp (also known as whiteleg shrimp) production was about 2.26 million metric tons that year.

The United States contributed 1,932 metric tons, less than 0.1 percent of the total.

Mainland China produced 1.06 million metric tons, about 47 percent, and Thailand produced 498,800 metric tons, about 22 percent.

In Asia, the labor and environmental costs are significant lower, Brune said. The farmers are less regulated and can use chemicals to control diseases.

Brune said he stresses high productivity as one advantage of using his system.

When he was at Clemson, Brune worked with farmers interested in installing his system, but persuading them to try it was a long and difficult process, he said.

“I worked there for 20 years, and for the first 10, most fish farmers wouldn’t talk to me,” he said. “Many didn’t want to install the system, and they didn’t want their neighbors to install the system because it could lead to potential competition.”

Money is at the heart of the issue, Brune said. Installing a new system costs roughly $25,000 per acre, and not every farmer has those resources, so they prefer to stick to their old ways.

Craig Tucker, a former colleague of Brune’s who now works at Mississippi State University, agreed. He made a commercial version of Brune’s design, naming it the “split-pond system.” Instead of building a greenhouse, Tucker built levees in existing ponds to create the raceways, a design some farmers later adopted.

“It’s the simplified version of what David created,” Tucker said.

With the split-pond system, a farmer can expect to produce 15,000 to 21,000 pounds of fish per acre per year, which is three or four times more production than in an ordinary still-water pond, Tucker said.

Yet, producing more fish is not a big deal, he said. The real trick is to do it and make money.

“It appears that this can be a profitable way to make fish,” Tucker said. "You can control over the environment; the survival is good.”
Tucker said no economic analysis has been done to explore the profitability of a split-pond system.

"You have to determine long-term construction costs that can be fairly sizable, so you've got to in the long term to make enough money. That's the key we know right now," he said.

Tucker built his first commercial system in 2009. Two years later, there were a couple hundred acres of split ponds in Mississippi, he said, demonstrating eventual acceptance of his idea.

"(The farmers) think it's economically justified, even though we haven't done a formal study on that yet," he said.

"Frankly, no one knows," Tucker said.

Paul Smith, owner of Show-Me Shrimp Farm in Dixon, said he's heard of saltwater shrimp farming, but it's unlikely he'll convert to that system.

"It's easier for the normal farm to raise farm prawns than growing saltwater shrimp," he said. Smith said he has been growing in-pond prawns for 10 years, and his farm produces between 200 to 600 pounds of prawns per year, depending on the weather.

He said growing saltwater shrimp is expensive and requires assembling a new facility. Not every farmer has the ability to do so.

The trick is to get started

Brune recognizes that farmers are used to growing freshwater prawns in Missouri, and it won't be easy to persuade them to change.

According to the 2005 census of aquaculture, there are two farms in Missouri that raised freshwater prawns, and one farm in Missouri raised saltwater shrimp.

"The only way to know whether you can do this is to build the system and grow the shrimp," he said. "First thing people want when they come in with money is 10,000 pounds of shrimp."

This is why Brune hopes to determine whether the greenhouse is a feasible option.

"I hope to expand to tens of acres within three years," he said. "That means success and proving profitability."
Brune said shrimp production could be significantly more profitable than corn or soy beans, which only make about a few hundred dollars an acre. But with saltwater shrimp, if successful, he's looking at about $100,000 to $300,000 cash flow per acre per year.

The plan is to provide shrimp samples when investors come to see the facility, Brune said.

He intends the facility to be sustainably dependent on biomass energy, but to be profitable, the biomass-generated electricity will need to sell at a higher rate than fossil-fuel generated electricity, and the fresh shrimp will have to sell in local market at prices greater than frozen shrimp from Asia, he said.

He hopes he can charge a premium price of $4 to $5 a pound for what he calls a "higher-quality, locally grown product."

"If people are unwilling to pay a premium price, we're in trouble," he said.

Tim Reinbott, Bradford Research Farm's superintendent, said he's quite excited about what Brune is doing. He provided the site and has helped with supplies and equipment.

"There can be workshops, opportunities to talk about what he's doing, to help the people know about it and understand it," Reinbott said.

That's exactly what Brune plans to do.

"That's the name of the game: Get something built and then find the money," he said. "Really, the trick is to have something on the ground to show people."