MU, Blue Springs sign letter to develop first phase of Missouri Innovation Park

Representatives of Blue Springs and the University of Missouri signed a letter of agreement Monday to develop the first brick-and-mortar phase of the Missouri Innovation Park, a 63-acre development with the university serving as the anchor tenant.

Blue Springs officials hope to begin construction of an 80,000-square-foot building by next September.

The park’s initial phase will be located at the southeast quadrant of Interstate 70 and Adams Dairy Parkway, with the 63 acres fronting the parkway and the Adams Pointe Golf Course. Additional acreage is available for future growth, and officials imagine a build-out over 15 to 25 years representing perhaps $340 million in capital investment and serving as host to as many as 40 companies employing perhaps 3,700.

The project first was announced in 2008. Officials of the city and the university, along with the Blue Springs Economic Development Corp., imagined the park would attract a "knowledge-based" workforce to Blue Springs.

But the development suffered from bad timing, said Brien Starner of the Blue Springs EDC.

“When the economy began to tank, things fell apart for all the players, the state and the university, as well as the private equity market,” Starner said.

“It was then up to the city, the EDC and key stakeholders and — through a coalition approach — we were able to keep our focus on the strategy.”

In May 2010, officials dedicated the new Mizzou Center, the innovation’s park introductory phase housed in office space facing Interstate 70. Initial university tenants included the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies, Extension Food and Nutrition, the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Office of Research.
UM researchers trying to see if smartphone can be used on battlefield

BY tim barker • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Thursday, November 24, 2011 12:00 am

We have smartphone applications that help us find movie times, restaurant reviews, stock prices and directions to pretty much anywhere we want to go.

But how about an app that calls in airstrikes?

*It's not the sort of thing you're going to find in Apple's App Store, but it is a project under development at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Researchers there are trying to harness the power of smartphones to give soldiers another option to locate and track targets.*

Computer science professor Yi Shang is leading a College of Engineering team that has been funded by the Army and the Leonard Wood Institute. They are working to see whether smartphones have the power to pinpoint an object precisely enough that it could be targeted in a strike.

Smartphones, Shang said, are becoming more powerful and have tools that can be used for reconnaissance purposes. Those tools include the phone's camera, microphone, GPS, compass and accelerometer. The goal is for a soldier to be able to photograph a target using the phone's camera. The camera would then relay the target's exact location back to the command post.

The problem, he acknowledged, is overcoming some of the current limitations that most users have experienced with other applications.

Pull up a GPS-based map, for example, and it will often show your location to be slightly off where you actually are. That's the sort of discrepancy that has to be overcome before lobbing missiles at a target.

"We're still in the early stages," Shang said. "So there's a lot of work to be done."

The challenge now is finding more money to continue the work. The project got $400,000 in grant funding last year. But with that money running out at the end of this year, the group is looking for new support. It's unclear whether the military will continue its investment.
There are some potential civilian applications as well. Among them, Shang envisions tourists in unfamiliar areas using the same technology to photograph a landmark. The phone would then search the Internet for information about that landmark.
Campuses see car crunch as enrollment increases

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Saturday, November 26, 2011 12:31 am

COLUMBIA, MO. • Droves of new students have flocked to the region's colleges and universities in the last several years amid a surge in enrollment. The cars they're bringing are adding to one of the biggest headaches of campus life.

Schools large and small are struggling to accommodate them. They're adjusting and readjusting intricate systems for issuing permits. They're making the unpopular decisions of who parks where and when. And some are rethinking parking entirely, pushing for alternatives that encourage students to leave their cars at home.

The problem, administrators say, isn't that there's a shortage of parking spaces. It's that the spaces often aren't where students want them to be.

"We have what I refer to as a convenience issue," said Jim Joy, director of parking services at the University of Missouri-Columbia. "We have a place to park all the cars. It may just not be convenient for the person wanting to park."

This is something known all too well by Ethan Marino, a freshman from Sedalia.

Marino parks his car on the top floor of a parking garage some 10 minutes from his dorm. It's not an awful situation, he admits. Yet every time he makes that trek, he's left wondering.

"There's a parking garage right next to my dorm," Marino said. "I don't understand why we can't park there."

The reason is that it's no easy task to find spaces for the thousands of cars belonging to students and employees all wanting to be close to where they work or live, Joy said.

During peak parking hours — Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. — there are just a few hundred empty spots to be found among the school's 24,000 parking spaces. It's one of the consequences of enrollment rising by more than 5,000 students since 2006.

To keep things under control, the school uses commuter lots served by shuttles and has a complex system for the 28,000 permits issued this year. It offers drivers access only to specific lots and takes into account individual class and work schedules.
"We have permits that are only good after 3 p.m. We have permits that are only good on certain days," Joy said. "It's never a done thing. You tinker with it constantly."

They also use an aggressive enforcement approach, with the school's traffic officers writing 80,000 to 100,000 tickets annually.

TAKING A GAMBLE

Each week, a list is handed to Lt. Charles Roeseler, head of parking and transportation at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The list is a collection of 40 or so cars that have been ticketed at least four times, making them eligible to be immobilized — or booted — if found on campus. These are the worst of the school's parking offenders.

It's the sort of thing that drives Roeseler a little bit crazy, considering that it's just a small piece of the school's parking problem — last year the university wrote 7,600 citations, good for nearly $400,000 in fines.

It's a number that Roeseler, who recently joined the school after 32 years with St. Louis County police, would like to see drop in half.

"I just don't feel good about doing things that way," Roeseler said. "That's not good business. At least not for a university."

The problem, he said, is that students are balking at buying permits. With the cost based on the number of hours taken, a full-time student generally pays around $250 per semester to park. But because the cost isn't included in tuition and fees, it come out of the students' pockets, instead of being covered by financial aid, he said.

That forces many students to gamble. "They'd rather take a chance on the $50 ticket than pay the $250," Roeseler said.

He means students like Erica Elleby, a junior from nearby Dellwood who is studying communications.

Elleby chafes at the idea of paying hundreds of dollars each semester to park on campus. Not when she's already paying several thousand dollars for tuition.

"I refuse," said Elleby, who spends only two days a week on campus. She makes do by catching rides with friends, riding shuttles from nearby apartments and avoiding Roeseler's parking officers.

So far, she's been lucky. She's nowhere near making Roeseler's boot list.

And if she gets a ticket or two?

"People throw that stuff away all the time," she said.
A SORE POINT

There's no surprise when students attending Mizzou and other large campuses complain about parking. It's easy, after all, to grumble about 20-minute walks. Particularly when winter hits.

But the complaining appears to be universal, regardless of campus size.

At St. Louis Community College's Forest Park campus, Chief Richard Banahan said he's watched enrollment grow from 5,000 to more than 7,500 during his 15-year tenure.

Always there are those who gripe about parking, Banahan said, even if the most distant spot is no more than a 10-minute walk: "I've parked farther away at the ballpark."

It's a similar story at Missouri University of Science of Technology in Rolla, where rising enrollment and declining parking spaces — the school has lost a couple hundred to construction and the addition of green spaces — have tightened parking options.

Diana Ahmad, an associate professor of history and chair of the campus parking committee, said the school still has all the space it needs to park everyone's cars, even with the number of permits rising from 1,840 to 2,200 over the past five years.

Parking, however, remains a sore point for some people.

To understand how serious people can get about parking, consider last month's meeting of the campus parking committee. Ahmad said one student showed up to protest his multiple tickets.

"He made a Power Point presentation," Ahmad said, noting that committee members were impressed by his appeal, but were ultimately unmoved.

The lack of sympathy may be due in part to the fact that campus isn't all that large. Even the longest walk is maybe half a dozen blocks. Yet, she understands the frustrations.

"It's something to complain about," she said. "If you don't get the spot you want, it upsets your day."

U OF I REVERSES TREND

Still, not all campuses in the region are experiencing a squeeze on parking space.

Such is the case at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where enrollment has risen by nearly 5,000 students in the last decade. Car usage, however, has dipped.

In 2009, U of I sold 12,100 permits. Last year the number dropped by 1,000. And this year looks to be lower still, said Andrew Blacker, a spokesman for the facilities and services department on the sprawling campus.
They've pushed hard the idea that students can do well without a vehicle. They offer shuttles. They added another commuter lot north of campus. And they've worked to make the campus friendly to bikers, with six miles of marked bike lanes and plans to add 11 more miles.

As the number of permits has dropped, so, too, has the number of parking citations issued by campus police. In 2009, the school handed out 46,300 citations, compared with 33,600 last year. It's a decline attributed both to a smaller cadre of parking officers and the school's decision in 2010 to raise fines to $50 from $20. The effort to cut auto traffic fits both the goal of making the campus more green-friendly and safer for pedestrians.

"With the increasing number of students on campus, you were bound to have more incidents involving cars," Blacker said. "The more vehicles we can keep off campus, the safer it becomes."
Site tracks progress on MU's strategic plan

By Janese Silvey
Saturday, November 26, 2011

A new task force on the University of Missouri campus has until early spring to complete a report on how students can graduate faster.

The group will have to consider a three-semester school year or how to expand summer programs and study the implications of such changes on staff, housing and the community.

And if the group doesn’t meet the March 31 deadline, the world will know.

Providing opportunities for accelerated degrees is one of dozens of goals embedded within MU’s new strategic plan. As of this month, that plan is online in a format that lets visitors see who is doing what — or not — to meet specific goals.

The plan is found online at strategicplan.missouri.edu.

Tom Phillips, a biological sciences professor involved in drafting the strategic plan, unveiled the new website at a faculty meeting earlier this week. He told the MU Faculty Council last month the online features should make university business more transparent.

The plan is broken down into three main goals: to expand and strengthen programs that improve society; build Mizzou Advantage by focusing on five interdisciplinary initiatives; and ensure MU has the resources needed to fulfill its missions. For each goal, there are bullet points for objectives and actions related to education, research, outreach and economic development.

Those objectives and actions include the identity of the individual or group responsible for them. For instance, it’s up to the vice provost for undergraduate studies — currently Jim Spain — to oversee accelerated degree efforts.

Phillips plans to ask faculty members at a general meeting this spring to give updates on what they are doing to meet specific goals.

The fact that goals and responsible parties are on a public website should motivate action, said Harry Tyrer, chairman of MU Faculty Council.
"No doubt we'll be actually using it," he said. "Certainly in terms of looking at the results on the Web, that's a very helpful resource to know where things stand."

The printed One Mizzou: 2020 Vision for Excellence plan has been out for months. Chancellor Brady Deaton told professors he takes the booklets to national conferences and shares them every chance he gets.

He praised Phillips and the plan's committee for "bringing it to life" online.
University Singers headed to White House

By Janese Silvey
Sunday, November 27, 2011

With its annual Handel’s “Messiah” performance in Columbia behind it, University Singers is gearing up for the performance of a lifetime: a chance to entertain at the president’s house.

The University of Missouri group was selected to perform during the White House’s annual holiday tour series. The students are slated to entertain White House guests and tour groups on the evening of Dec. 19.

Director Paul Crabb said he is not sure why staff at the home of the first family targeted the MU group but suspects it is because of reputation. In the past couple of years, University Singers has performed at national conventions and events.

“University Singers have had some tremendous national success,” he said. “They’re known for being good ambassadors for our state.”

After Crabb received an email from the White House, the group had to undergo additional steps, including submitting video and audio recordings.

He also had the tough task of whittling down his 58-member group to 28 singers. The White House caps tour groups at 30, which would provide two slots for himself and the accompanist.

Robin Anderson, a graduate student who has been part of the singers for seven years, was grateful to be among the chosen. “It’s my last huzzah,” she said. “But it’s also one of those chances to bond and to share our talents and spread the gospel of music.”

University Singers goes on tour every year and has performed at Yale University as well as in Chicago and Italy. But the White House trip has a different feel, she said.

“It was very sudden,” Anderson said. “We’ve planned tours and trips like this up to a year in advance. So to be invited and know about it a month before the performance is a really big deal.”

That is why Crabb plans to stick with familiar pieces, likely to include selections from “Messiah.” University Singers, along with the Choral Union and University Philharmonic, performed Handel’s “Messiah” earlier this month at Jesse Auditorium.
"I have four or five rehearsals to put something together, so I can't start something new," he said, adding that White House tour organizers suggested holiday music.

Crabb isn't sure who, other than tourists, will stop by to enjoy the performance, but he plans to invite Missouri's federal delegation.

The White House isn't paying, so Crabb and other administrators from the School of Music and College of Arts & Science are raising money. They've contacted alumni and supporters in hopes of raising enough money so students won't have to pay.

The performance, Crabb stressed, reflects on the university as a whole, not just the School of Music.

"I look at it as something that will help publicize some of the great things going on at MU in general," he said, sharing credit for the success with cross-campus colleagues. "We have communication majors, French majors — students from various disciplines across the campus. So it's not limited to musicians. It also speaks well of the student body."
MU’s plans to become carbon neutral are open-ended

COLUMBIA — Two years after making a public commitment to reduce its carbon footprint, MU has outlined its path: transitioning from coal to wind, solar, wood and natural gas and building more energy-efficient buildings.

MU is among 673 colleges and universities that signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. Toni Nelson, the program's director, said the commitments require that universities set a specific date to achieve carbon neutrality by eliminating their greenhouse gas emissions.

MU has opted instead to outline a five-year "rolling plan with annual updates" that promises to achieve carbon neutrality "at some point in the future," according to the MU website where the plan is posted.

MU joins between a quarter and a third of the universities and colleges that signed the commitment and have a climate plan without a target date.

Nelson said that all of these institutions, including MU, must commit to a firm date by the fourth year of the commitment — for MU that would be 2013 — to remain in good standing.

Steve Burdic, MU’s sustainability coordinator, said MU’s lack of a target date is a matter of honesty, not evasion.

"We don't know enough right now about what's going to happen in the future with all these competing technologies to feel good about picking a date," Burdic said.

Once a date is picked, Nelson said, it isn't difficult for universities and colleges to change it should they decide it isn't feasible.
In the spring of 2013, MU's climate plan will merge with an overarching campus master plan for future building projects and grounds management. This change will make sustainability and carbon-neutrality efforts a central part of how MU operates, Burdic said.

In the meantime, MU will be cautious about adopting new technologies that seek to reduce the campus' greenhouse gas emissions. Burdic said it is easier for smaller, wealthier private universities to spend money on making their campuses energy efficient, but for large, public universities such as MU, the process must be slower and financially conservative. That's why MU isn't "pulling a date out of the air," and creating new expenses in the rush to meet it, Burdic said.

MU consulted with Sasaki Associates, a planning and design company which specializes in eco-technologies, to develop its plan.

One of its major projects was a greenhouse gas assessment, which seeks to tally the entirety of MU's emissions before deciding how to reduce them. The final tally for MU in 2008 was 376,886 tons of carbon dioxide. According to the plan, that tonnage will drop by 20 percent to 300,439 tons by 2015.

MU's carbon dioxide emissions are in line with other Midwestern universities with climate action plans, given that size and location affect a university's energy needs and greenhouse gas emissions.

The inventory considered on-campus structures and activities that release greenhouse gases — such as electricity and steam production at the MU Power Plant, purchased electricity, commuting and waste disposal — but excluded University Hospitals and Clinics from the assessment.

The greenhouse gas inventory will be updated and re-evaluated every year along with the climate plan by Sasaki Associates and campus representatives. The next review is scheduled for Jan. 15.

Because MU Power Plant's new wood-burning boiler will begin to operate next fall, Burdic is optimistic that MU will lower greenhouse gas emissions more than the projected 20 percent drop in five years.
He listed some of the major changes MU will engage in the effort to become carbon neutral:

- Wind power.
- Mixing more wood with coal at the MU Power Plant.
- LEED buildings certified by a third party to be energy efficient and sustainably constructed.
- Increasing natural gas usage by the power plant.
- Transportation changes.

MU's Power Plant is looking to increase the amount of electricity it purchases from the electric grid from 11 percent to 24 percent.

Buying electricity from a grid creates the possibility of merely outsourcing MU's carbon emissions to the producer of the purchased electricity. Gregg Coffin, MU Power Plant's superintendent, said MU is exploring opportunities to ensure that a portion of its purchased electricity is from renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar or wood. The Power Plant is also exploring the possibility of purchasing some electricity directly from a wind farm, Coffin said.

And by the end of 2012, MU plans to install solar collectors at the power plant and a demonstration wind turbine on campus for both energy production and student education.

Some of MU's efforts toward carbon neutrality, such as transportation changes, depend on the cooperation of individual students, staff and faculty.

Burdic mentioned an increase in the use of public buses and bicycles and the expansion of WeCar, a rental car-sharing program that would encourage students not to bring their cars to college.

Education and outreach to MU's students is an important part of the climate action plan, Burdic said.
"When you look at all the students that go through the university, if we can get them doing more sustainability-related things and they do that for their whole lives, that's really a much huger impact than the university's own infrastructure," Burdie said.

He hopes that by integrating sustainability classes into MU's curriculum and launching educational projects such as the Power Plant solar panels, wind turbine and a proposed campus garden, MU will teach generations of students to change their lifestyles.
MU researcher finds cheaper way to fatten turkeys

Friday, November 25, 2011
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- A researcher at the University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia has found that turkeys don't need as much protein as they're getting and that adopting his feeding plan could save the industry $100 million.

Jeff Firman, a professor in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, tested his theory on 800 turkeys, giving them a mixture that included more cheap grains and fewer proteins. He found that the birds still met health targets and reached market weight in 18 to 21 weeks.

"When you reduce protein, the costs come down," he told the Columbia Daily Tribune.

Corn and soybeans -- both of which figure heavily in turkey's diets -- have been getting more expensive. But producers have done little to alter what they feed the birds over the past 25 years.

Firman's new feeding model, which has been dubbed the Missouri Ideal Turkey Diet, costs from $13 per ton to $25 per ton less, a reduction of 8 percent to 10 percent.

He said the industry is responding cautiously. One company official told him they are not ready to experiment with thousands of birds.

"Everybody is certainly interested, and they'll slowly check our requirements against what they're using," he said. Large producers such as the "Cargills and Butterballs, they have nutritionists who will look at the numbers they're using and see if they can switch to a cheaper format. They don't want to compromise growth rate."

A price reduction would be good news for consumers who spent more to feed their families and friends this Thanksgiving Day. A 16-pound turkey and all the trimmings will cost an average of $49.20, a 13 percent jump from last year, or about $5.73 more, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation, which says grocers have raised prices to keep pace with higher-priced commodities.
Thanksgiving need not be diet train wreck

Published: Nov. 24, 2011 at 2:02 AM

COLUMBIA, Mo., Nov. 24 (UPI) -- University of Missouri dietitians recommend people maintain a healthy diet during the holiday season, beginning with Thanksgiving.

Donna Mehrle, a registered dietitian, reminds people to consider how they feel when they eat healthy foods and are physically active, so they’re more likely to continue those behaviors when holiday stress and cold weather offer convenient excuses. Feeling better is a great motivator, she said.

"People can continue their healthy habits by being aware of their food choices at the Thanksgiving table and identifying time commitments that may interrupt their regular exercise schedules," Mehrle said in a statement. "Choosing different ways to socialize can be a great strategy. Playing a game of flag football or participating in a 5K race as a family, rather than having another big dinner or TV marathon, are enjoyable ways to incorporate physical activity on Thanksgiving Day."

The nutrition experts also recommend to:

-- Eat healthily throughout the day and have a small, high-protein snack such as an apple with peanut butter, a hard-boiled egg or yogurt.

-- Make simple swaps such as whole-wheat bread rather than white, brown or wild rice rather than white, or a yogurt parfait instead of another piece of pie.

-- Enjoy some of your favorite seasonal treats, but use a small plate to control portion sizes.

-- If you do overindulge, try to maintain perspective. One day of overeating won’t make you gain weight, so plan to get back on track with healthy eating and regular exercise the next day.
In the days leading up to Thanksgiving, millions of Americans fretted over their turkeys.

They fretted over which one to buy and how to cook it. Today, they might forget to thaw the bird or put it in the oven without removing the plastic-wrapped giblets. Many will resort to overly aggressive cutting implements or kitchen-scale blow torches. Some will overstuff. Some will under-brown. A few will call a radio show or hotline for help.

But in all the hand-wringing over the bird at the edible center of the holiday, one thing probably won't trot through many people's minds: On this day when millions of turkeys are eaten, what, in their brief days on the planet, did the turkeys eat?

As it turns out, quite a lot — and, in recent years, quite richly.

The 250 million turkeys raised in the country this year subsisted mostly on a combination of soybean meal and corn, both of which have shot up in cost. The price of corn, which reached near-record highs this year, has sent producers scrambling for other, cheaper alternatives.

"The corn market forced us to use more wheat," said Elisangela Guaiume, a nutrition manager for agri-giant Cargill. "In some complexes, we're replacing corn with wheat."

At the same time genetic improvements in the birds, particularly in the past five years, have meant they grow faster and eat more. A decade ago, a bird reached 30 pounds in 140 days. Today it can reach 45 pounds in the same time.

"We have to increase the nutrient content to match with the genetic growth," Guaiume said.

About 70 percent of the cost of raising a turkey comes from feed, which means rising commodity grain prices are taking a bite out of producers' profits and could, they worry, dull the competitive edge they have in the very competitive protein market.
"Feed costs are up substantially, and compared to three or four years ago, they've almost doubled," said Tom Elam, of FarmEcon, an Indiana-based agricultural consulting firm. "Back in 2000, 2001, 2002, the costs of feeding a bird were 20 cents a pound. As of this September, they were 52 cents a pound."

With so much of the industry's profit relying on feed, the industry is constantly fine-tuning what it feeds its birds, blending proteins and nutrients into proprietary formulas so carefully guarded that producers won't disclose their recipes.

"They make their own feed, and they keep pretty careful tabs on who knows what," said Jeffre Firman, a poultry nutritionist with the University of Missouri. "They pretend they have some magic formula."

In fact, Firman has been working on a specialized turkey diet for about 20 years. The diet, which he dubbed the "Missouri Ideal Turkey Diet," tweaks the amount of amino acids and grains in the turkey diet. He tested the diet by putting 800 turkeys on it and found the birds met market weight in 18 to 21 weeks. The formula, he says, will potentially save producers a lot of scratch.

"You tend to feed a lot to make sure you cover your bases, but it costs you more money," Firman said. "In our test case scenario, we save about 8 percent on feed costs, which in the world of animal feed is a lot."

With producers shelling out more to feed their birds, shoppers will probably be spending more to buy them. Last year, stocks of frozen whole turkeys were especially high, which drove retailers to offer turkeys for as little as 40 cents a pound. This year, with the frozen inventory lower and a spike in demand from overseas, retail prices for a typical bird will be just above $1 a pound.

The costs of feeding increasingly popular "heritage" and organic birds is especially high because these birds typically take longer to raise, and they eat more.

"We had to raise prices on our birds because of the increase of corn prices," said Cord Jenkins, who raises heritage birds near Rolla. "We went to $5.75 a pound. We were at $5 a couple years ago. It's kind of crazy. Turkeys eat a lot. People don't realize that. A chicken doesn't eat nearly as much compared to its body weight, but turkeys are incredible. It's like feeding hogs."

Still, most turkeys are a pretty good deal around the holidays, despite their own demanding diets.

"The reality is that retailers utilize whole turkeys as their advertised special, their loss leader," said Sherrie Rosenblatt of the National Turkey Federation. "That's how they get you to go in and buy the rest of the meal."
MU professor's feed lets turkeys eat for less
Wednesday, November 23, 2011

A University of Missouri researcher has figured out a cheaper way to fatten up turkeys — good news for consumers who saw their Thanksgiving meal prices increase this year.

Jeff Firman, a professor in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, studied the amino acid requirements needed for turkeys to gain weight and determined the birds don’t need as much protein as they typically get.

“When you reduce protein, the costs come down,” he said.

Firman tested a mix using an increased amount of cheap grains and fewer proteins on 800 turkeys. He found that the birds still met health targets and reached market weight in 18 to 21 weeks.

Turkey nutrition hasn’t changed over the past 25 years, but costs of soybeans and corn have. The new feeding model, known as the Missouri Ideal Turkey Diet, costs from $13 per ton to $25 per ton less, a reduction of 8 percent to 10 percent. If turkey producers adopted the feeding patterns, the industry could save more than $100 million, Firman said.

The industry isn’t ready to just gobble up the idea, though, Firman said. He said one company official told him they are not ready to experiment with thousands of birds.

“Everybody is certainly interested, and they’ll slowly check our requirements against what they’re using,” he said. Large producers such as the “Cargills and Butterballs, they have nutritionists who will look at the numbers they’re using and see if they can switch to a cheaper format. They don’t want to compromise growth rate.”

Turkey in Missouri this year averaged $1.21 per pound, up 15 cents from last year, according to the Missouri Farm Bureau.

The bureau, in conjunction with the American Farm Bureau, conducted its annual market survey of the costs of a Thanksgiving meal for 10 people. In Missouri, the cost for a turkey dinner with all the fixings cost $47.41, up from $42.52 last year.

Although turkey is the big-ticket item, smaller staple items saw the largest increases. A pound of butter, for instance, has gone up 95 cents, to $3.18 this year. Milk and pumpkin pie mix also are more expensive, up 71 cents and 65 cents respectively.
Missouri prices were $1.79 lower than the national average of $49.20 for a holiday meal, said Diane Olson, director of Missouri Farm Bureau’s promotion and education program.

"Feeding people for $4.74 per person is still a bargain," Olson said in a statement this month. "Enjoying the leftovers during weekend football games makes it an even sweeter deal."
UM keeps quiet on president search
Friday, November 25, 2011

University of Missouri System curators are in the final stretch of the search for a new president, but some say the process has been a little too quiet.

“I can certainly understand their need for secrecy in the sense that there are people who would apply and prefer their” current employer “not know they’re making themselves available,” said Harry Tyrer, chairman of MU’s Faculty Council. “On the other hand, it would be really nice if there were more information forthcoming about the search.”

For instance, he’d like to know how many finalists there are and what types of backgrounds the candidates have.

“There are a number of things they could talk about, which unfortunately they don’t,” Tyrer said.

The Board of Curators has been on the hunt for a new president since Gary Forsee left the job in January. The process has intensified recently, with curators meeting in closed-session telephone conferences over the past several weeks. Board Chairman Warren Erdman said he hopes a new leader is named by the first of the year.

Erdman wouldn’t give a specific number but said the list of candidates “has been narrowed down very substantially.”

Assembled about backgrounds, Erdman referred the Tribune to the system’s online candidate qualification statement, which describes the ideal president. The statement includes a dozen traits, including having academic, business and political know-how, a passion for higher education and an understanding of Missouri’s culture.

“We’re all very diligent and sincere in reviewing the candidate pool against the candidate qualification statement,” he said.

Curators are in the process of vetting the finalists.

“We’re leaving no stone unturned,” Erdman said. “That kind of candidate research takes time.”

Told about concerns over the secrecy, Erdman said a presidential advisory group will represent interested parties. That group is made up of employees from all four campuses and alumni.
"They will be in the position to ask questions and inquire and represent the interest of faculty," he said.

The group met in early March and hasn’t met since. Bill Wiebold, an agronomy professor at MU who serves on the committee, said he stays abreast of the process through media reports.

Erdman said the 20-member committee will be sent a candidate, though he’s not yet sure whether the committee will meet one or multiple finalists.

But he doesn’t expect the public to get a glimpse at candidates before the next president is named.

“We won’t do anything that could risk making a candidate’s name public when that candidate has asked that their identity be kept confidential," Erdman said. “The candidate pool includes many people who have existing employment."
Pinkel’s treatment sends wrong message

Friday, November 25, 2011

Editor, the Tribune: “Play the System 101” with Coach Gary Pinkel: First, decline standard field sobriety test, citing default injury. Second, decline blood test, thus extending time for metabolism of alcohol. Third, legal-loop out of blood-alcohol results being made public.

This is part of what the 99 percent are talking about. The University of Missouri is having trouble hiring custodians at $18,000 a year because of stains on applicants’ background records; dedicated employees at $22,000-$30,000/year are in fear a mistake would cost them their jobs; yet with an annual salary of almost $3 million, the Pinkel percent — I mean the top percent — is untouchable.

If one could measure the so-called “lack of judgment” exhibited by Pinkel and compare it to equivalent cases, we would find fatal accidents, imprisoned people of lesser means and shattered lives left in the wake. For our pre-eminent educational institution to ignore the consequences of this learning opportunity for countless youths and not immediately fire one whose pay scale demands much more leaves not only our community but our entire state in shame.

The learning opportunity here, kids: Screw the rules, the moral codes, the ethics and responsibility to our greater society, and if you’re lucky enough to be in the ruling class, just learn how to play the system and damned be our souls as long as we’re having fun, right?

Christine Doerr
2510 Brookside Court
Missouri move to SEC: more money, more expenses

by ALAN SCHER ZAGIER Posted on November 27, 2011 at 1:17 PM

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) -- Missouri hopes its planned move to the SEC will quickly pay for itself with fatter TV contracts and more generous gifts from donors. The school also can expect to spend significantly more to keep pace.

U.S. Department of Education financial reports show 10 other schools in what eventually will be a 14-team Southeastern Conference spend more on intercollegiate athletics than Missouri does. Florida tops the SEC, spending nearly $113 million in the most recent academic year. That's nearly double Missouri's $58.9 million athletics budget.

Missouri also ranks 11th among current and future SEC schools in overall athletics revenue, bringing in $59 million in the 2010-11 academic year. Only Mississippi, Mississippi State and Vanderbilt earned less.

Missouri's $861,859 annual recruiting budget is 12th among the 14 SEC schools. Tennessee tops that list at more than $2.29 million.
Move to SEC irks some Mizzou alumni

Jimmy Myers, St. Joseph News-Press
POSTED: 10:32 pm CST November 26, 2011

Missouri has a history of not being pigeon-holed as either a northern or southern state. It's doubtful that the state's flagship university joining the Southeastern Conference for athletics will do much to change that. But some local alumni don't agree with the move away from the Big 12 and its Midwestern roots.

"Suddenly, wham! We're abandoning everyone that we've played with, going back over 100 years," said Dr. David Easterla, who played in three sports at the University of Missouri in the 1950s.

The MU/KU rivalry is the oldest west of the Mississippi River, said Dr. Easterla, a biology professor at Northwest Missouri State University, and he fears that new students coming into the university will miss out on that.

"I know we're going through the economy problem and all that, but we can't forget about history," he said.

Local attorney Seth Wright, who graduated from MU in 1999, is also not happy about leaving rivalries behind. He said he understands the move to the SEC because of the instability of the Big 12 but wonders if it will prove to be a wise decision. With Missouri being the northern-most school, he questions whether the culture and traditions fit in with the southern schools.

"There are some concerns that culturally and geographically, we don't fit in," he said, adding that apart from home games, none of the other campuses are within reasonable driving distance. Dr. Easterla is on track with this point, too. Having spent time in the Southeast, he said the "whole culture in the Southeast is different from us up here in the Midwest."

Mike Nicholson graduated from MU in 1990. He understands the reasons behind the move to a different conference, but that doesn't mean he likes it. He said residents living in the southern part of the state might be more willing to embrace that change.

"I love the conference tournament tradition of being in Kansas City every year," he said. "I don't know how it's going to change the university and their appeal ... but being from this part of the state, I'm disappointed to see that happen."

Mr. Wright said the younger generation seems to be more accepting of the move. The older generation — which he said he is sneaking into now — has fond memories of being in the Big 8 and all the old rivalries that have been part of local sports fans' lives.
"I think clearly it's the best move for them now, but the question is, will this be the best move 10 or 20 years down the road?" he said. "Nobody has the answer to that."
Open Column

MU’s move to SEC is a win-win for all

Friday, November 25, 2011

Editor, the Tribune: Please let me use your paper and its myriad methods of communication to welcome the University of Missouri to the arms of the Southeastern Conference and its member institutions. So far, almost all of the sports talk shows are disparaging of this move and broadcast misinformation like: “I have not heard a single football fan in the Southeast who likes this.”

As a fan with an academic background firmly anchored to the SEC (two degrees from the University of Georgia) and some experience with the Big Ten — and unlike most of the roadies — I feel that this move is win-win for all concerned. The SEC is more than just football, and this conference should be flattered that a prestigious school like Missouri would want to align with us. Current membership boasts classy state universities — for example, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, LSU, Alabama plus Vanderbilt — but certainly nothing superior to MU. Here’s to a great future. Distance and geography be damned. Play ball — all sorts of ball!

Howard Pelham Wallace 861 Woodland Drive Griffin, Ga., 30224
MU ranks mid-pack academically in SEC
Professors hear data on new conference.

Friday, November 25, 2011

University of Missouri faculty members once concerned about MU affiliating with schools in the Southeastern Conference are getting more comfortable with the idea.

That’s because Chancellor Brady Deaton last week outlined data that show MU won’t lead the pack in academics. Even though MU will be one of four SEC schools in the prestigious Association of American Universities, more SEC schools than Big 12 schools outrank MU in key areas.

In the SEC, for instance, MU will rank seventh out of 14 institutions in the amount of research dollars it is granted. In the 10-member Big 12, MU ranks second.

MU will place fifth in the SEC for the most faculty members serving on national academies, compared to third in the Big 12. And in both graduation rates and SAT scores, MU will rank sixth out of 14 in the SEC, down from third in both categories in the Big 12.

“We’re still with a group of colleges and institutions we can be proud of,” Deaton said.

Harry Tyrer, chairman of the MU Faculty Council, said he was surprised when he initially saw the data and asked Deaton to share it at last week’s fall faculty meeting.

“In the beginning of the fall, I was under the impression that we would be higher in the rankings in the SEC than we are in the Big 12,” Tyrer said.

Leona Rubin, an associate professor, also said she feels better about the move. Originally, Rubin had concerns about poor academic standards she feared would reflect badly on MU.

“I would say my opinion of the SEC academics and research has improved as a result of the data presented by Chancellor Deaton,” she said, noting that media reports also helped ease her fears.

Deaton told professors the move was in the best interest of the university and student athletes over the long term. At one point, Deaton said he was committed to keeping the Big 12 intact, even serving as chairman of the conference’s board. When some schools began courting other conferences, though, Texas A&M bolted for the SEC, leaving uncertainty.
“We did not feel we could responsibly stay where we are,” Deaton said.

It’s unclear yet how much the university will have to pay the Big 12 to get out of its current contract. Deaton stressed, though, that no tuition or state dollars will be used to pay those exit fees.
Neither side budging in Border Cold War

By BLAIR KERKHOFF

Except for the few in the aisles stepping to the exit, members of the University of Kansas marching band were the last to leave their seats Saturday at Arrowhead Stadium. They put the finishing touches on the “Rock Chalk” chant, and then it was time to pack.

The Border War had ended some 20 minutes earlier, Missouri running to a 24-10 triumph in the fifth game in the current series between neighbors in Kansas City, the latest installment of a rivalry that has continued since 1891.

It might be the last.

Although a year remains on a four-year contract signed in 2008, Kansas continues to say it is not interested playing Mizzou beyond Saturday, an expression of its feelings toward the Tigers for leaving the Big 12 next season for the Southeastern Conference.

“At this point, that’s not something we’d be interested in,” Kansas athletic director Sheahon Zenger said.

Missouri doesn’t feel this way and will keep making its case to Kansas. Tigers athletic director Mike Alden told alumni before the game and reporters after that the Border War isn’t theirs — MU or KU — to end.

“It’s not about us,” Alden said. “We think it’s a 2011 issue. It’s not. This type of rivalry belongs to the generations, and we want to see it carry on for many years to come.”

Plenty of others had their say, and these are some of the sights and sounds of the 120th meeting, the rivalry that couldn’t be stopped by two World Wars. Its roots date to the Civil War, but the series may be approaching a cease fire.

... 

On Arrowhead’s east side, near Marching Mizzou, the white sweatshirts of Missouri freshmen Hilary Schmidt of De Soto and Amy Schmidt of St. Louis were conspicuous in the sea of black and gold.
They had coordinated their wardrobe for Saturday. Actually, they created it: Border War wear from the Missouri collection, with “SEC you later Kansas” painted on the front, and an alternate version of the “M-I-Z ... Z-O-U” chant on the back.

Directly opposite, sitting near the KU band, a pair of Kansas seniors from Overland Park brought out their messages.

Katie McLean held a “Border Breakup, It’s not me, it’s you” sign, complete with a broken heart. Kristin Hemauer complimented that with “SEC ya later Mizzou.”

Tailgating opinion was a matter of the company kept. Exclusive color groups — black and gold or crimson and blue — stood their ground.

“KU is bitter about us leaving,” said Chris Wright of St. Louis in a knot of Mizzou fans. “We still want to play. We want the extra nonconference win.”

The door to playing Missouri isn’t closed, said Ryan Mullinax of Overland Park with his fellow Jayhawks tailgaters.

“I know there’s some sadness about ending the series,” he said, “but if they want to come over to Lawrence to play us, we’re there.”

The real sadness came from the tailgates divided. Jim and Theresa Swallow of Overland Park went to Missouri. Their kids, Bryan and Meg, attended Kansas. The family flew a Border War flag — Tiger on one half, Jayhawk on other.

The losers, Theresa said, are Missouri students, who won’t have easy road trips in the SEC.

... The Chiefs want the game to continue, Chiefs chairman and CEO Clark Hunt told Alden before the game.

So does Missouri’s governor Jay Nixon.

At halftime, Nixon paid a visit to the press box and struck an optimistic tone.

“Clearly, it’s a tradition that should continue, and we’re hopeful that it will,” Nixon said. “It’s good for the Kansas City economy. The Tigers want to continue to play regularly at Sprint Center, so too the Tigers should continue to play here.

“In the coming months everybody will be able to set aside any emotions and get to the task of rescheduling this game.”

That’s not how KU folks see it.
“Missouri divorced our family, and we’re loyal to our family,” Zenger said. “That pretty much summarizes it all. At this point, the coaches at the University of Kansas, the administrators and major stakeholders just don’t have an appetite for continuing this competition in wake of what’s transpired over the last couple of years, and certainly the last couple of months and what that means for our conference.”

But Nixon holds out hope.

“It’s an unbelievable college football tradition,” Nixon said. “We kindly, coolly and calmly will do everything we can to get this series to continue.

“The bottom line is these rivalries transcend generations. You have a clear opportunity to continue it. We’re hopeful we can work out the details to make sure it happens.”

As the fourth quarter wound down, Missouri’s victory became apparent. The Tigers had already won the fan count. On a day when the announced attendance was 47,059, two-thirds appeared to be Missouri fans.

The crowd was the smallest of the five games played at Arrowhead, and sad comparison to previous games.

In 2007, when the teams met as top-three opponents and craziness throughout college football leading up to the inaugural Arrowhead game meant the winner would likely advance to a No. 1 ranking, 80,537 found seats after battling traffic jams on the highways and security issues getting through the gates.

But the scene was spectacular, more than any previous Border War.

The next year, with snowflakes falling, more than 79,000 attended, and the 2009 contest attracted more than 70,000. All three games were decided in the final minutes, and at that point it appeared the Border War would lock into the Saturday after Thanksgiving at Arrowhead.

“I thought it would continue,” Alden said.

But less than one month later, conference realignment frenzy started with the Big Ten announcing its plans to expand, and Missouri was strongly rumored as a target.

The Big 12 survived the loss of Nebraska and Colorado in 2010, but earlier this season when Texas A&M announced it was leaving for the SEC, uncertainty again consumed the conference. This time, Missouri sought a new home and found one in the Southeastern Conference.

Kansas felt betrayed.
"The instability that Missouri often referred to in the league we believe began with them a year and half, two years ago and was prolonged by them the last several months," Zenger said. "In the end, that's not just the kind of behavior we're going to reward at this point by continuing this competition.

"They've made a decision that's in their best interest; they wholeheartedly believe in that. They've moved on and we've moved on."

Alden said he's talked to Zenger, and Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton has spoken to Kansas chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little, but KU hasn't budged.

The way Alden sees it, not playing does a disservice to history.

"We owe it to the generations to see what we can do to keep this going and not act to any immediate thing," Alden said. "We have an obligation. We're caretakers right now of a history. ... We'll continue to reiterate that in hopes that other people would see through the immediacy of whatever issues they may have concerns about in 2011.

"We owe this to generations of Kansans and Missourians to continue to play this game."
Zenger remains firm on not scheduling MU

Posted: November 25, 2011 - 6:33pm

By Kevin Haskin THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — The rivalry between Kansas and Missouri could easily escalate into a Border War on words.

Yet Sheahon Zenger doesn’t feel like engaging in that skirmish any more than he wants to schedule Missouri for future competitions in any sport.

Ask the Kansas athletic director anything about the series he, his staff, his coaches and chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little all opted to discontinue, and the comments don’t vary.

“They divorced our family, and we’re loyal to our family,” Zenger said of the Big 12, which Missouri left to join the Southeastern Conference. MU officials are attempting to expedite the move so that the Tigers can begin competing in the SEC in 2012-13.

If that happens, the 2:30 p.m. football game Saturday between Kansas and Missouri in Arrowhead Stadium will be the last meeting in the foreseeable future, particularly as long as Zenger, the Jayhawks’ first-year AD, remains in that job.

No fallout from KU’s scheduling stance with Mizzou has made Zenger or anyone else in the KU administration reconsider its position.

“Our coaches, our administrators and our outside stakeholders with the University of Kansas just do not have an appetite for continuing this competition,” Zenger said, “based on what’s gone on the past several years and now the past several months at the University of Missouri.

“They’ve made their choice to leave, we respect that and with that comes consequences, one of which is we’re loyal to the Big 12 family and we’re done (playing Missouri).”

Missouri initially made overtures about leaving the Big 12 in the summer of 2010, though an offer it expected from the Big Ten didn’t materialize. Instead, Nebraska left for that conference, while Colorado also jumped from the Big 12 to the Pac-12.

The end to the Kansas-Missouri football game in Arrowhead also means each program stands to lose approximately $1 million in annual revenue with the game contested at a neutral site. Still, the end to the Mizzou series is a matter of principle, as much as it is profit, especially when the KU following at Arrowhead has dwindled and fans have complained about the off-campus site.
“Anyone who thinks university athletics isn’t big business is naive,” Zenger said. “We see that every day. But not everything is about money. Some things are bigger than that.”

Future games in Arrowhead against other opponents will be considered. However, KU must carefully evaluate the scheduling of nonconference home games as it attempts to rebuild its football program. That process could include the dismissal of Turner Gill, who stands 5-18 overall and 1-15 in the Big 12 in his second season. The Jayhawks have lost nine straight and have been outscored 501-258 this season.

The Border War will be waged for the 120th time Saturday. At least the football version. The schools can’t even agree on the series record. Missouri claims a 56-54-9 advantage, while Kansas and the NCAA report it as 55-55-9. The discrepancy stems from a 1960 game forfeited by KU.

Most of the Jayhawks who spoke of the matchup anticipated that, in time, the rivalry will be restored.

For now, however, longtime bragging rights could be on the line. Much like they were Thursday when Texas won the 118th, and perhaps final, renewal of its in-state series against Texas A&M, another Big 12 charter member fleeing for the SEC.

“It’s been a long journey, and this is the game that’s going to decide it for a while,” KU senior linebacker Steven Johnson said of the football rivalry with Mizzou.
Fans sound off about Border Showdown, Missouri leaving for SEC

Saturday, November 26, 2011 | 9:33 p.m. CST; updated 9:41 p.m. CST, Saturday, November 26, 2011

Bill Truesdell, left, Mike and Amy Monahan watch the Missouri versus Kansas game while Mike Monahan cheers for Tigers after a score during third quarter Saturday at Bengal's Bar and Grill.

COLUMBIA — Chilly wind and moderate rain turned bars and restaurants into cozy places for fans who couldn’t watch the game between the Missouri Tigers and Kansas Jayhawks in person on Saturday.

The rival teams played possibly their last game as Big 12 conference rivals Missouri-Kansas Border Showdown at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City. Next season Missouri will leave the Big 12 and play in the SEC.
At the 2:40 kickoff, a few Missouri fans supported their team at bars and restaurants in downtown Columbia.

Mike Santacruz, 25, a bartender at Quinton's Bar and Deli, leaned on the bar and joked with his friends while he talked about the game.

"We're going to destroy them, and the score will be 49-7," he said with a laugh before the game started. "Well, that's my guess."

As for Missouri joining the SEC, Santacruz said, "KU will be worthless without us. We won't miss them, but we'll miss beating them. We'll miss seeing them cry when we destroy their faces."

He added that the rivalry was more of a competitive nature than a violent one, though.

Jim McManus, 53, sat in the booth at Quinton's closest to the hanging television. Taking a glass of Newcastle beer from a server, he said he was sad this was the last game between Missouri and Kansas as conference rivals.

"I'll miss the rivalry," he said. "I wish the rivalry could continue."

McManus, who works for University Hospital, said he has been watching the Border Showdown since it started.

The half a dozen patrons at Quinton's exclaimed when the Tigers made a touchdown, bringing the score to 10-10, at around 4:30 p.m.

Sam Easley, 49, who watched the game from Booches Billiard Hall, said he sees Missouri leaving the Big 12 as "the end of an era."

Easley has been watching the game for years.

"It's a fun and friendly rivalry, and I want to see it continue," he said. "But it's good to see MU playing bigger games, having more fans and more income," he added.

Dan Harder, 38, was eating hot wings at Billiards on Broadway when the game reached the third quarter. He said he started watching the Missouri-Kansas games when he was 18. He said it's absolutely important to him that Missouri win.
He watched the whole season, he said, and he got the impression that Missouri improves in the third quarter. The players reserve their power, he said.

Dan Malone, 30, a bartender at Tropical Liqueurs and an MU alumnus, said he expects the Tigers to win by a lot because Kansas has had a poor season.

He said he would miss the rivalry, which he thinks is not just about fun.

"The sportsmanship is good, but I can't divide historical conflicts and the games," he said. "There was a war, and it's hard not to remember it."

At Shiloh Bar & Grill, fans filled the seats and stared at the television.

Tyson Elbert, 33, of Starkville, Miss., said he's been watching Missouri-Kansas football games since he was born.

An MU graduate who was born in Missouri, he said he was raised to be against Kansas.

"There are rivalries between universities, like Michigan and Ohio," he said. "But none of them has the unique trait that MU and KU have."

He'll miss it, he said. But he looks forward to watching Missouri play new teams.

Garrett Daniels, 21, an MU senior, sat at a table with his girlfriend and three friends, watching the game. He has watched rivalry games for six years.

Missouri-Kansas games are always good to watch, he said. "It doesn't matter how well or poor the teams have been." He still watches and roots for Missouri.

Plus, he enjoys the bonding time with his friends.
Tax abate debate

Business owners will save $2.4 million with abatements, but critics say schools lose.

11:00 PM, Nov. 27, 2011 | Written by Amos Bridges News-Leader

MU mention page 3

When he asked City Council for a tax break a year ago, Jeff Schrag didn't expect Mother's Brewing Company to turn a profit for eight years -- two if the abatement was granted.

In hindsight, he probably underestimated Springfield's thirst for local beer.

The tax breaks, estimated at $13,000 to $14,000 a year, helped him prepare for the demand.

"(The abatement) allowed me to go ahead and over-invest on infrastructure at the beginning," he said. "It's money I can put directly into production."

A News-Leader analysis of property tax records shows tax abatements sanctioned by the city will save the owners of more than 100 properties across Springfield a combined $2.4 million this year.

Tax abatement, which temporarily forgives some or all of the property taxes related to a new development or renovation, has been in the spotlight during the past year.

City Council adopted a new policy in February describing how tax abatement and other economic development incentives are to be used.

Public hearings related to abatement requests have featured spirited debate, with critics arguing they take money away from schools unnecessarily and supporters praising the incentives as a way of growing the tax base at no real cost.

What have been missing from many of those discussions are actual numbers.
The city does not keep comprehensive records showing the dollar amount of tax abated at any given property and claims about the relative costs or benefits of tax abatement are difficult to quantify.

Annual savings to developers -- which the News-Leader derived from records provided by the Greene County assessor -- are more concrete.

The $2.4 million saved in 2011 is equal to about 1.7 percent of the total property tax expected to be collected within city limits this year.

Reductions for individual properties vary from zero, in the case of more than a dozen sites where no improvements have been made, to as much as $182,106 for the Jack Henry and Associates $21.6 million facility on East Battlefield Road.

Enhanced Enterprise Zone tax abatements like those claimed by that facility are the most numerous, with 67 properties saving a combined $1.35 million in taxes in 2011.

Meanwhile, urban redevelopment projects at College Station, Brick City and elsewhere in center city will save a combined total of more than $1 million.

**Urban redevelopment**

Developers who have used abatement frequently said the tax savings -- often combined with historic tax credits or other incentives -- have allowed them to pursue renovation projects that benefit the city but might not have been financially feasible otherwise.

"Urban redevelopment is inherently environmentally friendly ... It requires less infrastructure and you're cleaning up some of your messes," said developer Matt E. Miller.

Miller, whose companies have obtained tax abatement for projects such as Brick City and the Six23 Condos building on West Walnut Street, said the tax breaks can be the difference "between a go or no-go, absolutely."

At Brick City, tax savings -- about $87,000 this year -- have allowed Miller and his partners to charge lower rents, he said. As a result they've been able to land tenants that include Missouri State University's Art and Design Department and, soon, its new pharmacology program.

At the Six23 building, residents who bought condos won't have to pay property taxes until 2017. Miller's company pays the taxes owed based on the lot's minimal value before the condo tower was developed.

"It was blighted, undeveloped and now it's got a $5 million building on it," he said, noting that the full value will go back on the tax rolls by the end of the decade.

"It's easy to look at 'What are we giving away right now?' But if you shift that to, 'What are we getting long-term?' that's really where the benefit is," he said. "It's an investment."
The payoff isn't strictly monetary, said Rusty Worley, executive director of Urban Districts Alliance.

Downtown redevelopment projects that have received tax abatement "bring new businesses and taxable sales to the district, but they also just improve the vitality and the energy of the district," he said.

At Mother's, Schrag talks eagerly of the 15 jobs -- 10 full-time -- tax abatement helped create. He also points to the rehabilitation of an underused and deteriorating building that now hosts periodic outdoor music festivals. "I'm very, very proud of that."

**Demonstrating need**

City policy requires applicants to show a documented financial need when applying for tax abatements with the longest terms, which require council approval. Incentives with shorter terms often are available as long as the project fits into an existing redevelopment plan or is part of a targeted industry.

Developer Craig Wagoner received a 25-year tax abatement for his Big Windows project at National Avenue and Chestnut Expressway, which he said was key to offsetting the additional cost of renovating an older building of such size.

He also routinely applies for 10-year tax abatements that are available regardless of financial need in areas that have been declared blighted, including most of downtown.

"It can get the project on solid footing in terms of cash flow and keeps rent competitive," said Wagoner. "It's just one piece of the whole big puzzle to make these projects work."

Enhanced Enterprise Zone tax abatements, which are available to a range of industries throughout the city, are another incentive available regardless of financial need.

The tax breaks, which reduce the taxes on new construction for 10 years, are "a very small incentive compared to the incentives other communities offer," said Ryan Mooney, senior vice president for economic development at the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

State law allows cities to offer up to 100 percent tax abatement -- and some do -- but Springfield generally offers only 50 percent, Mooney said. That way, at least some of the new construction goes on the tax rolls immediately.

"It's a relatively small incentive that can be used to induce a significant amount of economic activity and job creation," he said.

**Critics' concerns**

Small or not, more accessible tax abatements may be more costly, according to critics.
"The biggest issue is that it's very difficult to know if an individual firm would have located or expanded (in the area) even if there had been no incentives offered," said Judith Stallmann, a professor at the University of Missouri's Truman School of Public Affairs. "Did this really add something additional or would this company have done this anyway?"

Stallmann, also a professor of agricultural and applied economics, co-authored a recent paper on economic development incentive best practices.

She recommends cities limit the use of incentives to projects that would not move forward otherwise.

When standards are too low, such programs essentially offer free money, Stallmann said. "Then any incentives you give have no additional return to the economy or to the state."

Springfield resident Carl Herd, who spoke against several of the redevelopment plans City Council approved this year, voiced similar concerns.

"I don't blame the developer for wanting a higher return on his investment," said Herd, who ran for Springfield school board in April. "But I think we give these abatements too freely ..."

"Somebody gains and somebody loses on that tax abatement. It takes away tax money from the school district and other entities like the library. I just feel like, if the project is worthwhile, then the developer should bear the cost."

Herd said he understands the argument advanced by proponents that abatement boosts the tax base overall by encouraging development that might not have occurred otherwise.

He's just not sure all those developments are needed.

"Springfield is certainly not hurting for places to spend money," he said, arguing new developments might simply siphon business from elsewhere. "Then you're giving an unfair advantage to these developers that use abatements."

**Recommendation**

Stallmann, the MU professor, doesn't advocate doing away with tax abatement and other economic development incentives altogether. But she does recommend cities adopt formal policies that don't treat incentives as entitlements.

"There are steps that in the long run can probably get you better payback," she said.

In addition to requiring applicants to show financial need, cities can require them to sign contracts that allow the incentives to be withdrawn if certain performance measures are not met.

"We also recommend that you require firms to report to you on the attainment of things set up in the contract, so you can know if they are meeting them," she said.
The economic development incentives policy City Council adopted in February incorporates the use of contracts and other best practices Stallmann recommends, although not all requirements apply to all types of tax abatement.

Economic Development Director Mary Lilly Smith noted that, in some ways, tax abatements are self-enforcing. "If you don't make any improvements, you're not going to have any incremental increase in property taxes, so there's nothing to abate."

Smith said city staffers plan to begin an annual review of properties that receive urban redevelopment tax breaks to ensure the agreements are being followed.

City Council generally has been supportive of the city's policies.

"There's obviously differences of opinion, but I believe it's a good way to grow the tax base," Mayor Jim O'Neal said. "Especially in this economy, anything we can do that's legal should be used at every opportunity ... It's a catalytic effect, that's the whole idea."

Councilwoman Cindy Rushefsky, who has been the most prone to criticize abatement applications, said she thinks the guidelines will help ensure the incentives are used appropriately.

"I think that tax abatement can be a valuable tool for economic development if it is properly used," she said. "If we actually follow the guidelines, both in spirit and in letter, then I think we're doing all right."
Professors push to create digital storytelling degree at MU

By Janese Silvey
Saturday, November 26, 2011

Digital storytelling could be offered as an interdisciplinary degree at the University of Missouri if some cross-campus faculty members get their way.

Leaders from several MU schools, colleges and departments — including English, communications, film and journalism — are hashing out details of a digital storytelling degree. Pat Okker, an English professor, expects the group to submit a proposal soon.

“The key idea is preparing students to communicate in multimedia environments,” she said in an email, “and the major requires students to develop skills in writing, visual communication and design, and production.”

Adding a degree requires approval from the UM System’s Board of Curators and ultimately the state’s Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

Digital storytelling combines technology, such as video and images, with narratives to educate, entertain or persuade.

The Missouri School of Journalism offers a convergence journalism degree that is similar but limiting, said Charles Davis, an associate professor of journalism. “People are coming to campus interested in filmmaking, documentaries” and multimedia public relations, he said. “All over campus, we’re finding people who are broader than we are. We’re working together to create a bigger sandbox for kids to play in.”

Okker thinks a digital storytelling degree would be desirable in today’s job market because writers now have to work not only with words but also images, sound and video. “From our conversations with potential employers, they are very interested in hiring people with this hybrid set of skills,” she said.

The group is organizing a digital storytelling workshop for March 5 and 6, the Monday and Tuesday after the True/False Film Fest, Davis said. Brian Storm, founder and executive producer of the multimedia production studio MediaStorm, is expected to be part of that conference, as is an animation team from Hallmark.
Davis said the first day likely will be a day of “show and tell about what’s possible, what we could be doing and what we’re not doing.” On the second day, he said, “we’ll talk curriculum with the pointy heads.”

MU would be the first university in the state to offer a degree by the name of “digital storytelling,” according to a search on the Missouri Department of Higher Education website. Missouri State University hosted a digital storytelling institute this summer.
CHART: What Obama's student loan plan means to University of Missouri System

BY YOUYOU ZHOU

November 19, 2013 5:14 p.m. CST

On Oct. 26, President Barack Obama announced a new student loan relief plan that would begin as early as Jan. 1. Under the new plan, borrowers of federal student loans starting in 2008 or later would be eligible for a reduced monthly payment and shortened time before forgiveness. Here's a look at the situation of federal student loans in the University of Missouri System and the possible influence of Obama's proposal.

SEE CHART ON NEXT PAGE
Policy changes to the federal student loans repayment plan over time

According to this example provided by the White House, recent graduates with $60,000 in federal student loan debt and an annual income of $45,000 will see a reduction in their monthly loan payment under Obama's plan.

Standard repayment plan for federal direct student loans:
Pay back all debt plus interest up to 10 years after a six-month grace period

Monthly payment = $60,000/10/12 + interest rate (depending on specific loans)

= about $690

July 1, 2009
Income-Based Repayment plan became available:
Limit monthly payment to 15 percent of discretionary income* and provide forgiveness of student loans after 25 years

Monthly payment = $358 (taking family size as one person per household)

Oct. 26, 2011
Obama proposed "Pay As You Earn" program:
Cap monthly payment at 10 percent of discretionary income and provide forgiveness of student loans after 20 years

Monthly payment = $239 (taking family size as one person per household)

Jan. 1, 2012
"Pay As You Earn" is set to start. Only borrowers who took out their first loans in 2008 or later and who will take out at least one loan in 2012 or later are eligible.

*Discretionary income is calculated based on the annual income, family size and the size of loans. As the income increases, the monthly payment increases.
An outdoor holiday-themed art display on the University of Missouri campus was destroyed over the weekend, and an instructor wonders whether alcohol was a factor.

MU police responded Sunday morning to the scene of the vandalism, outside the Fine Arts Building at Hitt Street and University Avenue, said Hannah Reeves, an assistant adjunct professor who teaches the 3-D design class that created the work. She was notified Monday.

“The officer presumed it was drunk people passing through after the game,” she said. “He said in the future we should consider bringing installed artwork inside the building and locking it up on football weekends.”

At first, Reeves said, the suggestion made sense. “But to have to work around the tolerance of public drunkenness and destruction is upsetting,” she said.

There are no suspects, so police Capt. Scott Richardson said there is no way to know whether Saturday’s football game or alcohol were factors.

The 3-D piece, a class project, featured Thanksgiving dishes on a white table. Students created food items out of tissue paper. The pieces were then glued to white plates, which were attached to an oversized table.

The art aimed to make a statement about overconsumption.

“The idea was, while we focus on abundance at Thanksgiving and over the holidays, there’s this ignored issue of overabundance and overindulgence and weight,” Reeves said. “We wanted to take this component of the holidays that’s ignored and make a spectacle out of it.”

The piece, installed Nov. 15, was supposed to be up through the semester, changing with weather conditions. When rain hit it, dyes from the tissue paper were expected to run onto the white table, creating a colorful spectacle.

“What’s a shame ... is that we didn’t have any precipitation between when we installed it and when it was destroyed,” Reeves said.
This isn't the first time Reeves has had a problem with student art being vandalized on the lawn. Over the summer, students made pop-art plaster sculptures that were on display the first week of the fall semester.

"They were beautiful," Reeves said. "And they were so heavy I didn't think there was any need to bolt them down. They weighed 300 pounds."

But after the first weekend, one was stolen, and two others were carried for several blocks, then dropped and broken.

In the case of the recent display, vandals tore up the tissue paper items and broke the table.

Reeves said she realizes leaving art outdoors is a risk, but she doesn't think her students should have to compromise to accommodate vandals.

"It's tricky because students need the opportunity to display their work publicly," she said. "Professional artists need to be able to work within a site display and work outdoors. There are constraints I like to teach students to figure out."

Reeves said she wants the community to have a chance to view student artwork, "but there's this trust involved that has really been violated a couple of times."

Faculty should discuss solutions such as a security camera, she said — "something other than just giving up on the space."
10 tips to kick holiday stress in the jingle balls

Drink more OJ, smile, and run fast for more calm than crazy this holiday season

By Steve Calechman updated 11/25/2011 11:12:01 AM ET

It's hard to say, exactly, what the worst part about stress is. Is it the tightness that starts somewhere around your solar plexus, then extends out to your toenails, earlobes, and cerebellum? Is it randomly snapping at innocent—and, occasionally, quite guilty—loved ones? Is it sobbing quietly behind the closed door of a bathroom stall?

Uh, sorry, did we say that last one out loud?

The point is, stress attacks in all sorts of ways—and at the worst times. The holiday season is hectic and chaotic, but you can learn to thrive under pressure. We've spent the past several months devouring studies and cross-examining experts to find the best stress-busting tips of all time. And when we read the advice we'd compiled, we suddenly felt much, much better.

Soon you will, too.

Drink more OJ
Researchers at the University of Alabama fed rats 200 milligrams of vitamin C twice a day and found that it nearly stopped the secretion of stress hormones. If it relaxes a rat, why not you? Two 8-ounce glasses of orange juice daily gives you the vitamin C you need.

Put a green dot on your phone
This is your secret reminder to take one deep breath before you answer a call, says Susan Siegel, of the Program on Integrative Medicine at the University of North Carolina school of medicine. Not only will you feel better, but you'll sound more confident.

Spend quality time with a canine
Yours or someone else's. According to research at the State University of New York at Buffalo, being around a pet provides more stress relief than being around a two-legged companion. As if we needed a study to determine that.
Go to Starbucks with your coworkers
Researchers at the University of Bristol in England discovered that when stressed-out men consumed caffeine by themselves, they remained nervous and jittery. But when anxious men caffeine-loaded as part of a group, their feelings of stress subsided.

Shake it out
When you're facing that big-money putt, shake out your fingers, relieving the tension in your forearms, hands, and wrists and shifting your focus to the only thing you can control: your preshot routine. You won't think about making -- or missing -- the shot, says Alan Goldberg, Ed.D., a sports-psychology consultant in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Listen to music at work
And make it the blandest playlist you can create. According to a study at Pennsylvania's Wilkes University, Muzak lowers your stress levels at work, while also reducing the risk of the common cold. We knew Celine Dion had a purpose.

Shut up and smile
Freaking out about a speech? Smile, look at the audience, and keep quiet for 2 seconds, says T.J. Walker, president of Media Training Worldwide. It'll slow you down and create the impression that you're relaxed and in control. The audience will then feel more comfortable, leading you to actually be relaxed and in control. Now start talking. Unless you're a mime. In that case, as you were.

Talk with your hands
To keep calm in a job interview, rest your arms on your lap, with your elbows bent slightly, and have your fingers almost touching, says Walker. This will keep your body relaxed, which will keep your tone conversational.

Run fast
Bike hard. Punch the heavy bag. And we don't mean your mother-in-law. A University of Missouri at Columbia study found that 33 minutes of high-intensity exercise helps lower stress levels more than working out at a moderate pace. What's more, the benefits last as long as 90 minutes afterward.

Hit the sauna after your workout
In an Oklahoma State University study, those who combined sauna use with group counseling had greater stress relief, feelings of relaxation, and sense of accomplishment compared with those who only had their heads shrunk.
Geriatric training advocated in JAMA article (AUDIO)

November 28, 2011 By Bob Priddy

A leading Missouri medical educator writes in the nation's leading medical publication that his profession needs to do more with elderly, frail, and vulnerable patients.

Doctor Steven Zweig, who passed the nation's first certifying examination in geriatric medicine, has made it his focus throughout a career that has put him in charge of the family and community medicine department at the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia.

His article in the October Journal of the American Medical Association says there is a growing need for doctors who can help the aging population get proper care and make end-of-life decisions.

He says there are few doctors who want to care for older patients and for a long time there had not been a way to teach resident specialists about elder care. “All of us, whether we do family medicine or internal medicine or geriatric medicine have to touch older patients and are responsible for doing a good job. Clearly those who practice orthopedic surgery, cardiology, ophthalmology, ... are all involved in taking care of older patients. So there are a lot of basic principles that apply to the work that all of us do,” he says.

The University of Missouri was one of the first medical school to start a cross-discipline training geriatrics program for its students. Zweig says about 40 of the nation's 400 medical schools have followed suit.