

Thomas Hiles named vice chancellor of development and alumni relations at MU

Thomas Hiles has been named vice chancellor for development and alumni relations at the University of Missouri - Columbia. He will begin the new position in early July.

Hiles recently served as the vice president for institutional advancement and president of the foundation at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

As vice chancellor, Hiles will be in charge of leading the university's fund raising and alumni program. He will oversee 165 staff and a budget of \$14.5 million.

"My wife, Sara, and I are very excited to join the Mizzou family," Hiles said in a statement. "I look forward to working with Chancellor Deaton, the development and alumni team and the university community to build on the previous successful campaign."

Hiles replaces David Housch who retired after serving more than 10 years in the position.

New development chief named at MU

The University of Missouri has tapped a new vice chancellor for development and alumni relations.



Tom Hiles:

Named vice chancellor for development and alumni relations

Tom Hiles most recently served as vice president for institutional advancement at Bowling Green State University. He also served as director of campaigns at Rice University, where he helped plan a \$500 million campaign.

At MU, Hiles will be expected to spearhead the next large fundraising effort, expected to exceed the last \$1 billion campaign.

Hiles said he recognizes the campaign is a priority for Chancellor Brady Deaton and MU.

"I look forward to learning more about what's been done so far," he said. "One thing that's very clear in public higher education is that private support is a critical component to the success of any public research university."

Hiles' wife, Sara, graduated from the Missouri School of Journalism, and his late father was an alumnus of the business school. He will begin in July, replacing David Housh, who retired after a decade in the position.



Nixon finds money for blind health program

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon has found \$17.75 million for a medical care program that helps almost 3,000 blind Missourians, the state Office of Budget and Planning said Wednesday.

The money, which is about \$10 million short of the amount needed to fully restore the program, is available because of better-than-expected returns on Medicaid claims to the federal government, the office said.

The news release that announced the money highlighted three budget amendments Nixon is sending to the state Senate as it prepares to work on the fiscal 2012 budget, which has already passed the House. In addition to funding medical care for the blind, Nixon wants to use a \$50 million federal grant to purchase and implement a new computerized eligibility and enrollment system for the state Medicaid program.

In a statement issued after the news release, Nixon said the budget changes are affordable.

“As I have from Day One, I will continue to balance our budget, hold the line on taxes and maintain strict fiscal discipline,” the prepared statement quoted Nixon as saying. “We will live within our means to keep the state’s fiscal house in order and to protect vital priorities, such as providing health care for needy blind Missourians.

“These additional funds will be available assist the Senate in fully restoring our health care program for the blind and ensuring that 2,800 needy blind Missourians continue to receive the vital services they need. This is the right thing to do, and I look forward to working with the Senate to fully restore this critical program.”

The third budget change Nixon is proposing is a \$250,000 study of the impact of Missouri’s military bases on the nation’s military readiness and the economy.

The blind medical care program was eliminated in the Missouri House as lawmakers sought to shift state funds to state colleges and universities. After Nixon publicly criticized the move and blind groups lobbied to restore the money, the House found \$2 million to begin what House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey called a “transitional” program to help the poorest of those who lost the benefit.

The medical program for the blind operates like the state Medicaid program but is fully paid from state revenue. The recipients of the aid have income or assets that exceed Medicaid limits.

The \$50 million for updating the state's Medicaid computer system also became a lightning rod for criticism in the House. The money comes from a federal program linked to the health insurance exchanges that are a key part of the federal health care overhaul now being argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. Republicans in the legislature have blocked all attempts to implement a health insurance exchange in the state.

Silvey refused to consider spending the money because Nixon had not asked for it in a formal budget amendment. The action Wednesday meets that demand, but only after Silvey had finished work on the budget.

The money to study Missouri's military bases is being sought as rumblings about a possible new round of base closings are coming from Washington. U.S. Rep. Vicky Hartzler, R-Harrisonville, has a public forum on base closings set for next week in Jefferson City.

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

State, federal environmental agencies unveil cleanup plan for polluted Columbia creek

COLUMBIA, Mo. — A polluted Columbia creek found to be in violation of the federal Clean Water Act more than a decade ago has a new cleanup plan.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency and state Department of Natural Resources unveiled the plan to reduce storm water runoff in Hinkson Creek on Wednesday afternoon. City government, Boone County and the University of Missouri are also participating in the partnership, known as collaborative adaptive management.

Hinkson Creek has been classified as an impaired waterway since 1998. A lawsuit filed against the EPA by the American Canoe Association and the Sierra Club led to a 2002 court order to bring the creek under federal clean water standards.

The EPA established a total maximum daily load of allowed pollutants for Hinkson Creek early last year.

EPA joins forces with community on Hinkson Creek cleanup

By Ryan Finan

March 28, 2012 | 9:35 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The Environmental Protection Agency has now joined forces with an alliance of community interests to manage cleanup of Hinkson Creek.

The newly assembled group, which has sometimes been at odds over the methods to reduce pollution in the creek, announced Wednesday a three-pronged approach to improve the creek's water quality.

The goal is to collaborate and restore Hinkson Creek to the point where the stream is no longer considered impaired, according to Karl Brooks of the EPA.

A science-based approach will investigate a range of possible actions to improve the entire stream system, including the creek and other parts of the watershed.

"We've got an effort under way that is going to identify pollutants, preserve the ecosystem and clean up the water," Brooks said. "We have one goal, and that is to restore the health and life to the Hink."

The effort will be broken into a three-step process, each undertaken by a different team, according to Karen Miller, Boone County's Southern District commissioner.

The first is made up of 15 community members who represent the breadth of interests in the Hinkson Creek watershed. Referred to as stakeholders, their task is to suggest actions to reduce pollution.

The stakeholders team includes members from the city of Columbia, Boone County, MU, Columbia Public Schools, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Chamber of Commerce, Central Missouri Development Council, environmental advocacy groups, property owners, conservationists and commercial representatives.

The remaining two are technical teams — an action team and a science team. The action team is responsible for turning ideas into proposals. The science team monitors the health of the creek, determines the causes of the water quality problems and decides which actions will be most effective.

Shawn Grindstaff of the EPA has been assigned as overall coordinator, Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine said.

Concerns about Hinkson Creek began 1998 when it was placed on a list of the state's impaired waterways. Since then, there have been several attempts to establish a plan that would clean up the creek's water quality.

A lawsuit filed in 2001 prompted a closer look at the cause of the pollution, generally attributed to the amount of stormwater allowed to enter the creek. It took 10 years for a limit to be imposed by the EPA, which ordered in January 2011 that stormwater runoff be reduced by 39.6 percent.

The state, city, county and MU argued that stormwater may not be the main pollutant and claimed that following the EPA order would be too expensive to implement.

The city estimated the cost at anywhere between \$30 million and \$300 million. Throughout 2011 little was done to address the EPA demands, and the agencies responsible for ensuring clean water levels sought other options.

With the plan announced Wednesday, the members of each organization, including the EPA, reached an agreement. Sara Parker Pauley, director of the state Department of Natural Resources, said the cost of implementing the plan will be justified by having the science to back it up.

"Science is going to be telling us what is working and what is not," she said. "We will be spending our dollars as effectively as possible because of this." No timeline was given, but Pauley said the collaborative effort would produce steady progress.

"We have the right process in place to make it happen."

"It's something we've been working on for several years," Miller said. "Our goal today is to figure out how we're going to move forward on this project. It can only happen with all of us pulling together."

City Council candidates discuss future of Columbia bus system

By Jacob Kirn

March 28, 2012 | 5:42 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The city bus system is at a crossroads. Financial issues have reduced service hours and increased fares, and more drastic changes are a real possibility for fall.

A major financial downfall of the system has been the Black and Gold routes, which transport thousands of students to and from MU. City officials have said those routes would cease to exist unless apartment owners agree to pay higher fees. Several have done so, meaning the routes will continue in at least a modified form. It remains to be seen how apartment complexes that do not sign up for continued city bus service will transport students to and from campus in the fall, though private buses are one possibility.

At the same time, MU has hired a consultant to assess the transportation needs of students, which revolve heavily around the high-density apartments along U.S. 63 and Providence Road.

The city, in turn, organized a series of educational trips to three college towns — Ames, Iowa, Lawrence, Kan., and Champaign-Urbana, Ill. — which use student fees along with other funding sources to make bus routes extensive, quick and student-centric. Mayor Bob McDavid, along with other city officials and council members, have said they favor this city-university collaborative model.

The Missouriian asked the five City Council candidates for their thoughts about the bus system.

Sixth Ward candidate Barbara Hoppe

Hoppe, an incumbent seeking a third council term, said overhauling the transit system is important for her constituents and for the entire city.

The key, she said, is to ensure reliable funding for improvements. She has been studying financial models of successful transit systems nationwide for several years. She cited the system at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

"The funding part of it has always been a focus," she said. "You don't make change overnight."

Hoppe proposed the creation of the Public Transportation Advisory Commission, which was approved by the council in December 2009, to examine how the system might better serve Columbia residents and how to ensure stable funding.

Hoppe called public transit a "basic service," comparing its importance to that of utilities. She said there's an argument for subsidizing that service, as the city does now with its transportation sales tax.

The city's budget for fiscal 2012 allocates \$5.5 million in transportation tax revenue for sidewalk improvements, \$1.9 million to Columbia Regional Airport and \$1.5 million to buses. Over the past two years, allocations to the airport have increased and those to the transit system have decreased slightly.

Hoppe said her priority has been bringing potential financial models, including a split between MU and the city, to council members' attention.

"I'm happy that the city is having an evaluation done and that the students are discussing it," Hoppe said. "That's a perfect storm, as far as I can tell."

Sixth Ward candidate Bill Tillotson

Tillotson said he would like to see the city collaborate with MU to raise more revenue for the bus system.

"I share the mayor's vision," Tillotson said. "The transit system is important, but we've got to be able to pay for it."

Tillotson said that if the city and MU can't reach an agreement, the council will have to look for other sources of income. That could include higher fares.

"That may be one area we have to look at sternly."

Tillotson said the city also should consider charging more for placing ads on buses and seeking more federal grant money.

In fiscal 2012, fares are projected to pay for just 29 percent of transit's operating expenses. Advertising on buses, which began in 2010, provides a little more than 1 percent of the bus system's operating expenses.

Second Ward candidate Bill Pauls

Pauls said he fully supports McDavid's efforts to make Columbia's transit system more student-centric and to advocate for cost sharing between the city and MU. He specifically praised the mayor's willingness to re-evaluate all aspects of the transit system and to examine the different models in college towns throughout the Midwest.

"It's an issue we didn't get out in front of," Pauls said of the current economic and service woes of Columbia's bus system. "I think we need to backtrack a little bit. They mayor has done that."

Pauls, an Iowa native, said he was particularly impressed, as were city staff, by the CyRide model at Iowa State University in Ames. CyRide's \$8.2 million cost is shared by students, the university, and city, state and federal funding. The student portion comes from a \$125 annual fee charged to all students.

CyRide also carries about three times as many passengers annually as the Columbia system and offers service seven days a week until midnight or later.

"I love that model there," Pauls said. "I think everybody that came back from Ames really likes the way that's being done. It's been working really well for a long time."

Pauls said he thinks the hard work by the mayor and city staff will pay off with a financially responsible solution that benefits all parties soon.

"I think we're on the right track," Pauls said.

Second Ward candidate Michael Trapp

Trapp said the only way the city can expand the bus system is to collaborate with MU.

"We can't hemorrhage money," Trapp said. And the collaboration seems to be the best way to solve the financial problems and expand transit, he said.

As far as other funding sources, Trapp said he would not advocate taking money away from road or sidewalk maintenance for buses. If the city increases its lodging tax, a portion of that

new revenue could be funneled toward the bus system — "especially if we create a shuttle service that goes from the airport to hotels and downtown," Trapp said.

City officials have contemplated asking voters to increase the city's tax on hotel and motel rooms to 7 percent. It stands at 4 percent now. Thus far, they have looked to the lodging tax to fund renovations at the Columbia Regional Airport terminal building.

Second Ward candidate Mike Atkinson

Atkinson said the bus system should be more self-sufficient, and he advocates higher fares.

"The fees are going to have to sustain the success, especially if we want to increase the hours and coverage area," Atkinson said.

The transit systems in the three Midwestern college towns visited by city staff are heavily subsidized by the universities and by local and state taxes.

In Champaign-Urbana, considered one of the best transit systems in any U.S. college town, the state of Illinois covers well more than half of the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District's \$27 million budget.

Atkinson said he would like to see city staff vie for more grants. In fiscal 2012, grants are projected to cover roughly 25 percent of transit's operating expenses.

Missourian reporter Kip Hill contributed to this article.



SEC commissioner speaks in KC, charms MU boosters

By Dave Matter

KANSAS CITY — Southeastern Conference Commissioner Mike Slive couldn't have expected his biggest applause line yesterday to be a one-word answer.

A Missouri booster in the middle of a jam-packed crowd at the Westport Flea Market Bar & Grill asked Slive a perfectly reasonable question at the Tiger Club of Kansas City luncheon that sounded like this: Could you explain how the decisions were made to put Texas A&M in the SEC West and Missouri in the SEC East?

Slive's reply came without hesitation.

"No," he said.

The crowd, and Slive, erupted in laughter.

The 71-year-old Slive had the boosters rolling, but do not mistake the man for a court jester. Yesterday, he was feted like a king.

With several university and civic dignitaries in attendance, the SEC commissioner made his first public appearance in Missouri since November's announcement that MU was joining Texas A&M as a 2012 addition to the SEC. For the 250-plus fans crammed into the booster club's weekly watering hole, the buzz was still raging.

"If this is the energy from the University of Missouri that's going come to every one of our events, I'm going to have to go home and warn our guys to be careful," Slive said. "The energy in this room is phenomenal."

With an audience that included MU Athletic Director Mike Alden, University System President Tim Wolfe, UM Curators David Bradley and Warren Erdman and Kansas City Mayor Sly James, Slive addressed several unresolved matters regarding Missouri and Texas A&M's addition to the league, which becomes official July 1.

But no question from the boosters or a group of reporters who later met with Slive produced the response like the fan's query about division assignments. Slive's curt but playful response spoke to his quick wit; the audience's amusement validated his command of the room.

Introduced by Alden as "the finest commissioner in all of college athletics and one of the most respected folks in all of sport," Slive was greeted by a standing ovation.

On the topic of the conference's television contract, Slive said the SEC and media partners CBS and ESPN are "at the table" and exercising the look-in provisions that allow both sides to renegotiate the terms of their landmark 15-year, \$3 billion agreement. Twelve years remain on the contract, but Slive said the league and networks have already had "significant meetings."

"I am optimistic that we can make Mike Alden very happy," he said.

Asked about the Big 12's newly structured TV deal — Missouri's soon-to-be former conference is reportedly finalizing a \$2.5 billion contract through 2025 — Slive touched on other aspects of his conference that explain its appeal to MU and Texas A&M.

"What Missouri was looking for," he said, "was a home that was stable and a home where they felt comfortable with people they could enjoy being with."

"We've been reading about the Big 12," he added, "and hopefully they'll do a great job and be very successful and generate a lot of revenue."

Slive was noncommittal about plans for further SEC expansion and the formation of an SEC Network. Asked about the University of Texas' controversial Longhorn Network, the straw that figuratively broke the Texas A&M Aggies' back, Slive said current media contracts prohibit an SEC school from making a similar arrangement, prompting more applause.

Among other topics addressed:

- The SEC would be open to St. Louis and Kansas City petitioning to host upcoming postseason basketball tournaments, Slive said. The men's tournament is booked through 2016 with openings for 2017-18. The St. Louis Sports Commission had a delegation in New Orleans earlier this month during the SEC men's tournament.
- School athletic directors and presidents are expected to finalize long-term scheduling formats for football and basketball either before or during the league's May meetings in Destin, Fla. Those discussions include settling the permanent cross-division rivalries in football, Slive said. It's anticipated that Missouri and Arkansas will become permanent rivals in football starting in 2013. Slive said there's no interest in moving from an eight-game to nine-game conference football schedule.
- The SEC is halfway through four-year agreements with its nine bowl partners. Those deals run through the Bowl Championship Series contract, which expires after the 2013 season.

Speaking of that, Slive participated in Monday's meeting in Dallas to discuss the BCS's future. Alternative formats were discussed, Slive said, including a four-team "plus-one" system.

"I've characterized this as a marathon not a sprint," he said. "We have until the end of the summer."

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