JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) - Gov. Jay Nixon has named two Democratic lawyers to the board that oversees the four-campus University of Missouri system.

The appointments of John Phillips and J. Michael Ponder to the University of Missouri Board of Curators were announced Friday. They would serve until 2019 if the appointments are confirmed by the state Senate.

Phillips, of Kansas City, and Ponder, of Cape Girardeau, both earned law degrees at the university's flagship campus in Columbia - Phillips in 1971 and Ponder in 1990. Phillips practices with the firm of Husch Blackwell and Ponder with the firm of Cook, Barkett, Ponder and Wolz.

Ponder has served on the State Board of Education since 2009. Phillips has been involved with civic, business, education and health organizations in Kansas City for the past four decades.
The two newest members of the University of Missouri Board of Curators yesterday said keeping tuition affordable and expanding the pool of private funding that supports the school would be a major focus of their six-year terms.

Gov. Jay Nixon yesterday filled two of three vacant seats on the board, leaving only the seat representing Columbia to be filled.

Attorneys Michael Ponder of Cape Girardeau and John Phillips of Kansas City are Democrats and contributors to Nixon's 2012 re-election campaign. Both received their law degrees from MU, and Phillips attended MU as an undergraduate.

Ponder is a member of the state Board of Education and a partner in the law firm of Cook, Barkett, Ponder and Wolz. Phillips is a partner with Husch Blackwell.

If confirmed by the Republican-controlled state Senate, they will serve terms that expire Jan. 1, 2019.

In an interview, Ponder said he wants to emphasize the "social obligation" of the university as a land-grant institution.

"The governor is interested in tuition, and that is a part of the puzzle," Ponder said. "I want to make sure we try to keep tuition affordable, so those families from southeast Missouri who aspire to send their kids to the best university in our state can continue to afford to do that."

Many universities are scoring large windfalls from licensing innovations, said Phillips, a former member of the Kansas University Research Institute Board of Directors. MU should expand efforts to do the same, he said, as well as seeking support from employers who hire large numbers of graduates.

"It is pretty well known that the governor wants to keep education in the university system as accessible as possible and keep tuition from rising any more than it has to maintain our status,"
Phillips said, "I am in agreement with him that we ought not be dependent on tuition increases to support our public universities."

Since Nixon took office in 2009, state funding for the UM system has been cut about 13 percent. When curators responded to cuts in 2011 by hiking tuition 5.5 percent, Nixon cut deeper into state support as punishment.

Phillips is vice president of the board of directors of the Edgar Snow Memorial Foundation, a UMKC-affiliated organization that works to build U.S.-China relationships.

He also served on an advisory council for UMKC's Bloch School of Business for 15 years and on boards for Saint Luke's Health System, Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City and Saint Luke's Cardiovascular Consultants.

Phillips has contributed $3,500 to Nixon's campaign funds since the beginning of 2008.

Ponder has been a member of the state Board of Education since 2009 and has a bachelor's degree from Central Methodist University in Fayette. He has been involved with the Cape Girardeau Chamber of Commerce, the United Way and the Cape Riverfront Market Steering Committee. Ponder contributed $1,300 to Nixon last year.

The seat representing Columbia has been vacant for most of the past two years. Nixon tried several times to win confirmation for attorney Craig Van Matre, but Senate Republicans would not allow a vote.

Whoever is selected will be nominated as a Republican and can come from anywhere in the Fourth Congressional District.
Father's death can do harm to adolescents

By TIMOTHY WALL

Saturday, January 5, 2013

A father's death can have long-term effects on a child's later success in life and can be particularly harmful if the father passes away during a child's late childhood or early adolescence, according to new research by a University of Missouri anthropologist. Recognizing the impact that a father's death can have on adolescents could lead to improved counseling and assistance programs, especially for needy families in the developing world.

"Certain negative effects of a father's death can't be compensated for by the mother or other relatives," said Mary Shenk, assistant professor of anthropology in MU's College of Arts and Science. "The loss of a father can result in lower adult living standards for the bereaved children. Not only is a child emotionally affected, but the lack of a father's earning power can cause children to get married younger or drop out of school in order to work."

Recognizing the importance of fathers to adolescents could lead to improvements in aid programs for youths who have lost their fathers. If Shenk's research were expanded to collect more data, she contends it could be used to help develop an evaluation system that would measure the degree of risk that children face from the loss of their fathers.

In poorer regions of the world, a measurement tool could help aid organizations to prioritize children who have the greatest need of assistance.

"Earlier studies have focused on how the absence or death of a father affects children in the United States and other wealthier parts of the world," Shenk said. "Our study looked at the developing world where father death is much more common."

For her study, Shenk interviewed 403 older men and women of Bangalore, India, about their families and examined the effects of death on their 1,112 children. The death of the father before a child reached 25 years old correlated with lower educational achievement, younger ages at marriage and smaller income later in life. However, the effects were significantly smaller for children who lost their fathers when they were younger than 5 years old or older than 20. Older children and adolescents between 11 and 15 years of age showed the largest decrease in later success.
"For young children who lose their fathers, other factors can take over to compensate," Shenk said. "Infants and young children often don't remember their lost fathers, and in many cases another family member may step in to care for them. Also, since young children are not yet in school, their educations don't suffer as much."

The study, "Paternal Investment and Status-Related Child Outcomes: Timing of Father's Death Affects Offspring Success," was published in the Journal of Biosocial Science. Brooke Scelza of the University of California-Los Angeles was co-author.
As Presidents Retire, Colleges Look Farther Afield for Their Replacements

By Ruth Hammond

Everyone had been expecting a flood of college presidents to retire soon. After all, the average age of presidents in 2011 was 61.

And then the departures accelerated, in a way that took even those who were braced for it by surprise. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities counted 109 presidential transitions among its 420 member institutions from April 2011 to August 2012. Normally it sees only about 40 new presidents among its members in a year. Those who were retiring had served an average of nearly 14 years leading their colleges in the association.

The Chronicle's Gazette listings noted the retirements of 92 presidents or chancellors in all higher-education sectors in 2012, along with the appointments of 250. Forty-eight resigned without immediate plans to move to another presidency.

Age is the main reason for the high number of departures. But Muriel A. Howard, president of the state-colleges association, says it's more than that: "The positions are more and more challenging, and they're hard, they're tough. You're having to make very tough fiscal and personnel decisions."

Richard Ekman, president of the Council of Independent Colleges, says that retirements account for most of the leadership changes at private colleges as well, but that some of the turnover "is related to the difficulty of their job, and boards that are sometimes hyperactive in their expectations of a president and insist on very sudden changes."

In a few cases, after protests from students, faculty, and alumni, expected departures were undone. Teresa A. Sullivan, president of the University of Virginia, who was under pressure from the institution's governing board, announced last June that she would step down. The board reinstated her a few weeks later.

In December, Morgan State University's Board of Regents narrowly voted not to renew the contract of the university's president, David Wilson, when it expired in June, but later that month it decided to extend his contract for an additional year.
Nontraditional Paths

The biggest surprise Ms. Howard says she found in the association’s data was the number of deans moving up to the presidency. At state institutions, that happened eight times during the 17-month period studied, making it the third-most-common step to the top post at a public institution, after chief academic officer (35 instances) and president of another institution (22). Of the 250 new presidents listed by The Chronicle last year, 30 had been deans just before assuming the top post.

Kathleen McCartney, who is 57 and has led the Harvard School of Graduate Education for seven and a half years, is one of the deans taking that step. She will become president of Smith College in July.

At Harvard, “deans have quite a bit of autonomy,” she says. “We collect our tuition here, not centrally.” The school has its own library and its own development, academic-affairs, and learning-technology teams. “It’s similar to running a small college,” she says.

Lucy A. Leske, a partner and co-director of the education practice at Witt/Kieffer, an executive-search firm, says deans at such decentralized institutions, whose jobs are like those of executives, can be well prepared for a presidency.

Other deans who moved into top college posts last year include Christina Hull Paxson, who went from leading Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs to being president of Brown University, and Pradeep K. Khosla, dean of engineering at Carnegie Mellon University, who became chancellor of the University of California at San Diego in August.

His selection is representative of what Ms. Leske has observed as another trend: an increased emphasis on choosing presidents with a background in science or technology, as economic development becomes more focused on those fields.

Another factor that may make hiring committees look to deans as candidates is the possibility that they are interested in taking at least one more position before they retire. Roughly 92 percent of presidents are between their mid-50s and mid-70s, says Jan Greenwood, chief executive of the search firm Greenwood/Asher & Associates. The same is true of provosts. Deans, she says, are “tracking about five years younger.”

Several colleges have chosen even less-traditional presidents, pulling them from government, business, nonprofit organizations, or the upper ranks of the military. Notable figures leaving elected office for academe are Mitchell E. Daniels Jr., Indiana’s departing two-term governor and a Republican, who assumes the presidency of Purdue University this month, and John R. Kroger, a Democrat who stepped down as Oregon’s attorney general last year to become president of Reed College.

Among those drawn from the corporate world are Timothy M. Wolfe, who became president of the University of Missouri system, and Felice Nudelman, new chancellor of the
Antioch University system. Mr. Wolfe was on the senior management team at Novell, the software maker. Ms. Nudelman was executive director of education at the New York Times Company.

And a rare few leaped to the presidency directly from the faculty, among them Michael Hemesath, an economics professor at Carleton College, who became the first lay president of another Minnesota institution, Saint John's University.

Whirlwind of Change

No public system has gone through a greater rush to fill top positions in the past few years than California State University, which has seen a rash of retirements. In 2011 the 23-campus system appointed three new presidents. In 2012 it named six new presidents, three interim presidents, and a new system chancellor. Two other presidents, on the Los Angeles and Fresno campuses, have said they plan to retire this year.

Attracting leaders to a system struggling to cope with severe cutbacks in state funds and limited by law in how much it can pay its presidents may seem like a formidable task. But Charles B. Reed, the chancellor who retired last year, foresaw what was coming, says Ms. Howard, and "did an amazing job of mentoring people across the system and encouraging his presidents to mentor." Several of the new campus leaders were sitting presidents at other system campuses or had previously worked for the system.

The six California State campus presidents who are new this year range in age from 52 to 62, and represent far more diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds than do presidents in the country as a whole.

In California and elsewhere, the new campus leaders must meet changed expectations. What used to excite people about being president is that they were going to be able to build something and shape the future, Ms. Howard says. Now "a lot of it is presiding over downsizing and shrinking your vision." Governors, legislators, and governing boards have little tolerance for any kind of misstep, she adds.

The new presidents involved in her organization have moved past worrying about the loss of state funds and are concentrating on other issues, like making sure that there is enough financial aid for students and that they complete college. Those, she says, are the challenges that presidents are embracing, in a job that many still find rewarding.
Online classes raise questions about future of higher education

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

Around noon most days at Johnson County Community College, educational technologist Marziah Karch shuts her office door, relaxes in front of her laptop and spends her lunch break with a sandwich and a MOOC.

MOOCs — massive open online courses — have attracted millions of students from all over the globe to learn from top professors at elite universities such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford, Princeton and Harvard.

The best part is that MOOCs are free. All you need is time, a computer and the Internet.

With that kind of anywhere, anytime, no-cost flexibility, MOOCs have moved to the center of a national discussion about the future of higher education. If students can get their higher education from MOOCs, then could universities’ ever more costly brick-and-mortar classrooms be in jeopardy of losing students?

Some education experts say they expect that before long, higher education may look very different.

MOOCs are poised to “change the game” for higher education, said Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education.

“MOOCs are changing the delivery system,” said Ed Hammond, president of Fort Hays State University.

Kevin Carey, director of the education policy program at the New America Foundation, told the Chronicle of Higher Education that “the future is so clearly one of universal access to free, high-quality, impeccably branded online courses.”

Not so fast, say others who note that despite the rapid growth of MOOCs, these high-level, five-to 16-week online courses don’t appeal to many 18- to 21-year-old students who want the campus life that comes with college.

Karch has enrolled in more than a dozen MOOCs since they exploded in the online education scene this past summer, but like most people who enroll in these courses, she has completed only a few.
“I just like being able to sit at my desk at lunch and learn something new,” said Karch, who no doubt has had MOOC mates in Mumbai, Hong Kong and Paris.

“Universities used to be thought of as these giant ivory towers holding tight to their intellectual property. Now they are opening up and saying, ‘Hey world, here’s what we got and here’s what you could know.’”

For now, the University of Kansas, University of Missouri and University of Missouri-Kansas City are among schools that are watching MOOCs before wading in.

Kansas State University may soon announce some movement into the MOOC realm, but “details are not ready for release yet,” said Sue Maes, dean of continuing education.

“I applaud the efforts,” Maes said. “Millions of people never have the opportunity to travel out of their underdeveloped village, so I compliment them (the elite schools) for being willing to share their knowledge with the world. I think all will benefit from this practice.”

At KU, officials think MOOCs “are still too new, and there are a lot of unanswered questions,” said Julie Loats, director of the university’s Center for Online and Distance Learning.

Still, Loats sees their potential for learning and growth as boundless.

“I don’t think that MOOCs overnight will change enrollments on campuses, but I do think they will make higher education more consumer-driven,” she said. “MOOCs could allow students to break their education program down, course by course.”

A student could take one MOOC taught by an MIT professor, another taught by a professor at Harvard and yet another taught at Duke. In the end, the student could take a discipline-specific assessment, like a bar exam, to get something akin to a license to practice in their field.

At Metropolitan Community College, officials like the idea of using MOOCs to teach remedial courses to students who haven’t mastered entry-level coursework needed for college success. MCC officials think those students would prefer a free remedial MOOC, rather than handing a community college thousands of dollars to enroll in non-credit remedial courses.

The Gates Foundation recently put up several hundred thousand dollars toward grants for nine universities to develop remedial MOOCs.

Fort Hays State and Johnson County Community College are among campuses piloting MOOC-like programs and looking for solutions to problems such as how to test, how to grade thousands of essays and exams, and how to prevent cheating.

“We certainly can’t ignore that MOOCs are an important trend in the future of higher education,” said Vincent Miller, director of the Educational Technology Center at JCCC. “We have to be in the game as things are moving forward.”

Rapid growth
Online education began in 1984 at New York University. By 1995, online enrollment at U.S. colleges had reached 759,000 — and still some institutions questioned whether distance learning was just a fad that would fade soon enough.

By last year, online college enrollment was up to nearly 7 million students, according to national and regional higher education organizations.

The impact of MOOCs on the numbers has yet to be calculated, according to the Institute for Higher Education Policy. But institute officials agree that MOOCs have pushed colleges and universities to the precipice of a revolution in digitally delivered higher education.

MOOCs cemented their prominence in the higher education conversation when a 2011 class on artificial intelligence, taught by former Stanford professors Peter Norvig and Sebastian Thrun, attracted nearly 58,000 students from around the world, more than three times the size of Stanford’s entire student body. Even though fewer than half of them completed the course, it was clear the MOOC’s reach dwarfed anything possible in a classroom or lecture hall.

That first effort was so successful in terms of numbers enrolled that Thrun and Norvig launched Udacity, one of the first major MOOC platforms. The goal, as Thrun put it: “Democratize higher education and change the world by bringing education to places that can’t be reached today.”

Along with Udacity, the big early players in MOOCs are Coursera, founded by Stanford computer science professors Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller, and edX, started by MIT and Harvard University.

Others have sprouted since these first three, and more colleges and universities are looking to update their technology to accommodate MOOCs their own faculties want to launch.

JCCC techies are looking at installing an electronic learning management system capable of accommodating a MOOC. But Miller said the school may have to set limits on how MOOCs would be used.

“The college has to ask, do we want to put a lot of our content out there for free? We could do it as a promotional or marketing tool — a student takes one course in a program for free and then enrolls to complete the program. We can’t give everything away for free.”

To date, 22 of U.S. News & World Report’s top 25 colleges offer MOOCs.

Giving credit

To be clear, companies providing a platform for MOOCs are not offering up comprehensive degree-granting programs — just hundreds of individual courses, everything from poetry to calculus, Greek and Roman mythology to astrobiology.

Udacity and other MOOC providers operate only as the electronic platforms on which the mass courses are presented.

Some MOOCs come with certificates of completion. But for now they cannot offer credit for the courses, and the elite colleges teaching them are not giving away credit hours.
That’s where Fort Hays State might come in. Hammond said Udacity has tapped his school to attach college credit to MOOCs.

If Fort Hays agrees, a student could pay the school for credit after taking a MOOC taught by a professor from MIT, for example. That credit then would have value because it could be transferred to another institution toward an actual degree.

Fort Hays also has its technology gurus developing software to make it possible to monitor online students and prevent cheating on tests by determining whether the enrollee is also the test taker.

Hammond said it may be several months before Fort Hays has a business model set up to enter into a credit-granting arrangement.

“We have to find out what is the benefit for us,” he said.

Colorado State University-Global Campus, an online university, already grants credit for MOOC completion when students can prove by an exam that the knowledge they gained is equivalent to what they would have received from an on-campus course and pay a credit fee of less than $100. A regular online CSU course costs $350 a credit.

Other methods for valuing MOOC completion have emerged, with technology giants like Google launching their own MOOC and selling student information and contacts to employers looking to hire. Students linking into the MOOC have to agree to make their personal data available to employers.

So how do the companies peddling the MOOCs make money? One possibility being talked about by MOOC company execs is to have universities pay them for the platform use. MOOC providers may offer monetary incentives to professors who might be thinking about whether adapting their courses as MOOCs would be worth their while.

Should MOOCs become big moneymakers, some federal education officials envision businesses sprouting up to solve problems like grading millions of essays and exams. Studio production companies might get involved to help instructors look and sound better. Students would probably opt for taking courses taught by more energetic and theatrical professors. MOOCs could create celebrity professors.

That’s in the future — although maybe the very near future.
Fifth Ward candidates weigh in on downtown density

By Andrew Denney

Saturday, January 5, 2013

MU MENTION P. 2

Whoever wins a Feb. 5 special election to fill the Fifth Ward seat on the Columbia City Council will become part of a legislative body dealing with issues related to increasing density downtown, including how to preserve the central city's character amid a wave of new student housing and parking concerns.

The candidates are Tootie Burns, treasurer for the Grasslands Neighborhood Association; Mark Jones, political director for the Missouri National Education Association and a former Democratic strategist; and former Fifth Ward Councilwoman Laura Nauser, who served in the seat from 2005 to 2011.

The Fifth Ward seat was vacated Nov. 30 by Helen Anthony, an outspoken member of the council who left midway through her term to move to Providence, R.I., to be closer to family.

Burns is a professional artist who works in the North Village Arts District, which has recently begun to experience the effects of the city's student housing boom.

The Brookside on College student apartment complex housing 273 residents is just down Walnut Street from the arts district, and plans are in the works to add units at the site to accommodate 450 more.

Burns said downtown's burgeoning student housing stock is "changing the complexion" of the area and that she is concerned about the diversity of the residents who live there in terms of professional status.

Adding more student housing to downtown, she said, might begin to turn off non-students to living in the area.

"I do think we need to slow down on student housing downtown," said Burns, who earned Anthony's endorsement for the seat before Anthony left Columbia.
Jones said that because University of Missouri student enrollment is projected to increase in the near future, the city should plan in advance for an influx of students living near campus, rather than considering where they will live as an "afterthought."

Jones said that if elected, he would like to see developers, historic preservationists and planners form a stakeholders group to identify where student housing should be built and which parcels should be preserved. Doing so, he said, would help the city get in front of problems arising from density, rather than having to "sort them out as problems creep up one by one."

Nauser also said she thought the city government should do more advance planning for downtown development, noting that planning documents for the area have been drafted but usually end up getting shelved rather than influencing policy.

This has led the council in recent years, she said, to "legislate by project," or implement policy changes when faced with an individual project that raised objections from residents.

"I don't think it's good legislative process," said Nauser, who serves as president of the Boone County Federated Republican Women.

The issue of downtown density was one of several the candidates discussed yesterday at a forum hosted by the Muleskinners, a Democratic club. On Jan. 14, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a candidate forum at the Walton Building, 300 S. Providence Road.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Early predictions: What to expect in this session of the Missouri General Assembly

MU Mention Pg. 2 & 3

By Fedor Zarkhin
January 6, 2013 | 6:20 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA – With more than 200 bills and resolutions already filed in the Missouri House and Senate, the 97th General Assembly will have considerable fodder for discussion beginning Wednesday when the session opens.

A list of key topics for the upcoming session have emerged, among them Medicaid expansion, tax credit reform, bond issues for transportation and capital improvement projects and medical malpractice caps.

Medicaid expansion

The General Assembly must decide this session whether to expand Medicaid as a provision of the Affordable Care Act, but fundamentally different views on the potential consequences divide the lawmakers along partisan lines.

Approximately 161,000 Missourians stand to get coverage under Medicaid expansion, now optional for states under the health care law. Those who could be eligible are in limbo, as is a pool of $8.2 billion in federal funds that would pay for most of the expansion for the first seven years.

To receive the $8.2 billion, the legislature must agree to raise eligibility limits to cover those earning up to 138 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. It would cost the state $333 million over the next seven years to fund the provision.

Republicans believe the expansion will saddle Missouri with bills it won’t be able to pay, while Democrats – including Gov. Jay Nixon and legislators who represent Columbia – see it as an opportunity to get enormous returns for a modest investment.
"We will be making a pretty loud statement that this state is not serious about succeeding in the 21st century" if Medicaid isn’t expanded, said Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia.

House and Senate Republicans have declared equally strong opposition to expansion on grounds that Missouri will be unable to afford it in the long run.

"The governor hasn’t explained how (expansion) is going to be paid for," said House Speaker Tim Jones, R-Eureka.

**A study by the MU School of Medicine suggests that jobs created through the infusion of federal money would create enough tax revenue to offset the costs of expansion. Republicans disagree with those findings, saying it made unfounded assumptions in projecting a jobs gain of 24,000.**

Jones and Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, both predicted that money would be diverted from education if Medicaid expansion is approved and funding falls short. Rep-elect Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said he hasn’t made up his mind about Medicaid expansion, but if it means cuts to education – he won’t vote for it.

**Tax credit reform**

Hundreds of millions of dollars went to Missouri businesses and residents through tax credit programs in 2012. The governor and some lawmakers want to see that money redirected to the state treasury.

Significant changes to tax credit programs – which Nixon has been working toward since 2010 – have failed to pass the General Assembly in the past few years. Nixon’s effort has been joined by lawmakers from both sides of the aisle, but some caution that cutting too much from programs that have benefited Missouri would obstruct economic development. Tax credit programs give businesses and residents breaks for certain kinds of projects. The two biggest channels for credits are the Historic Preservation and Low Income Housing tax credit programs. Tax credit redemptions took 7 percent – $629 million – of Missouri’s expenditures last year. Some legislators have promised to try to scale back tax credit programs this session, and a handful of bills to do so have been pre-filed in the Senate.

A bill pre-filed by Sen. John Lamping, R-St-Louis, would cap tax credits in the two biggest programs, while a bill pre-filed by Sen. Brad Lager, R-Savannah, would eliminate some programs and also cap the largest programs.
Rowden and Rep-elect John Wright, D-Rocheport, believe money directed to tax credits should go to education instead.

"In my mind that's the safest investment because it's investing in the people of tomorrow," Rowden said.

Wright, meanwhile, said budget constraints are strapping Missouri schools; he said a school in his district has cut back to four-day weeks to manage the limitations. Despite support for tax credit reform from members of both parties, some legislators urge caution.

Schaefer and Jones both pointed to the benefits tax credit programs have brought Missouri, including revitalization of blighted cities. Schaefer said some of Columbia's proudest cultural achievements, such as Ragtag Cinema and the North Village Arts District would not have been possible without tax credit programs. Rowden said he expects resistance to big changes in tax credit programs.

"If you cut somebody's tax credit program, they're not gonna like it," he said. "Once you start giving away that money, it's hard to take it back."

**Bond issues**

With historically low interest rates, state legislators say they want to pass at least one bond issue to invest in Missouri's infrastructure.

A pre-filed Senate bill – backed by both Schaefer and Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia – would ask voters to put almost $1 billion into higher education buildings, state parks and state buildings. Jones has proposed another bond issue to repair Missouri's highways.

**The bond issue endorsed by Schaefer and Kelly could fund an engineering school at MU, expand UMKC's medical facilities, repair the collapsing sewage systems in state parks and improve antiquated mental health facilities.**

The Missouri Department of Transportation, meanwhile, has warned that Interstate 70 warrants serious attention and puts the cost at $2 billion to $4 billion for needed repairs.

Webber said that he is doubtful a bond issue to fund reconstruction of I-70 would pass because of the amount of money involved.

"When you look at the higher ed budget, close to a billion dollars is a huge chunk," he said. "When you look at the cost of Missouri's highways, it just isn't as much."
Medical malpractice limits

In 2012 the Missouri Supreme Court overturned a 2005 law that set the limit on damages — primarily pain and suffering — at $350,000 in lawsuits alleging that health care providers caused injury or death.

The Supreme Court struck down the law on grounds that it was an unconstitutional encroachment on the rights of juries.

Rep. Bill White, R-Joplin, has filed a resolution for a constitutional amendment which, if passed by Missouri voters, would put the $350,000 cap into the state constitution.

"If you change the constitution, the Supreme Court cannot make what I kind of think is an activist interpretation," White said.

Jones said he also wants to reinstate the cap, either as a change to state law or the constitution. The Associated Press has reported that the governor is not opposed to caps.

Both White and Jones said an absence of caps brings uncertainty to medical professionals, potentially drawing them to neighboring states where caps do exist, particularly Kansas.

The Kansas Supreme Court in 2012 upheld a $250,000 cap on medical malpractice awards.

"If you’re going to be a family practice doctor, why are you going to practice in Missouri? There’s total uncertainty in the court system for what can happen in a judgment," White said.

Rowden agreed that caps need to be reinstated, predicting it would be one of the first things the House addresses this session. Caps are necessary to keep medical malpractice insurance low and prevent health professionals from choosing states with caps instead of Missouri to start their practices, he said.

Webber, however, said juries should retain the power to determine damages in medical malpractice suits.

"I trust the people of Missouri to decide what’s fair and what’s just more than I trust politicians," he said.