Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon called for ethics reform and a $150 million increase in education spending, among other proposals, in his State of the State speech tonight.

The governor, a Democrat who just started his second term in office, gave a mostly upbeat assessment of the state, touching on economic development projects and access to education and health care.

“We have unique opportunities before us,” he said. “Now is the time to seize them.”

Nixon said he will use his public profile to get a proposal that would limit campaign contributions on the ballot for voters to decide, if lawmakers don’t pass an ethics reform bill this year.

“Missouri’s ethics laws are among the weakest in the nation,” he said. “But above all, the single most destructive force to our system is the unlimited sums of money pouring into the campaign accounts of candidates seeking public office.”

For the first time, Nixon faces veto-proof Republican majorities in the House and Senate. In his speech, he urged cooperation.

His education spending proposal would boost K-12 funding by $100 million, while adding $34 million to higher education and $17 million for early childhood.

“Of course, with increased funding, come higher expectations,” he said. “We expect better test scores, better graduation rates, more college degrees and more Missourians ready to compete for the best jobs in a global economy.”

The increase in K-12 funding should be used to train more teachers, modernize equipment and lengthen the school year, Nixon said.

He also called on lawmakers to issue bonds to, among other projects, modernize Missouri’s K-12 classrooms - money above and beyond the $150 million increase for education called for in his budget. He said the bonds could be paid for by reducing the cost of the state’s tax credit system.
With the early childhood increase, Nixon said the state would more than double funding for the Missouri Preschool Program, and put additional money into programs like Early Head Start.

In one of his first official acts upon being sworn into office earlier this month, Nixon met with a preschool task force he created.

"The clear consensus: Early childhood education is a smart investment, with a big return," he said.

To make up for the increases, Nixon has called for additional cuts in state government. Already, the state has cut its workforce and increased its reliance on technology to offer services.

Nixon proposed the consolidation or elimination of several commissions at the Department of Natural Resources that he believes are "redundant and unnecessary."

Nixon didn’t say how big of a bond bill he would like to see lawmakers approve, but he said that the money should be used to update K-12 classrooms, mental hospitals and state parks.

"With our perfect Triple-A credit rating intact and interest rates at all-time lows, we now have a unique opportunity to move forward with a bond issuance," he said.

Nixon also used his speech to again call for the expansion of Medicaid - Missouri's health care program for the poor.

He called the expansion "the biggest economic decision facing our state right now."

"This isn’t the time to re-open the debate or re-argue the merits of the president’s health care plan. I had some problems with it, and I know many of you did as well. But Congress passed it – the President signed it – and the Supreme Court upheld it," he said. "It’s the law of the land. And it’s not within our power to rewrite federal laws, even if we wanted to. It is within our power – it's our responsibility – to now do what’s right for Missouri."

The Medicaid expansion, an optional provision in the federal Affordable Care Act, would add an estimated 300,000 Missourians to the program.

About 881,000 Missourians are now enrolled in Medicaid, which has varying degrees of coverage based on income. More than 60 percent are children, and 18.6 percent are people with disabilities.

Nixon noted that the expansion is backed by business leaders in the state and cited a 2012 economic impact study from the University of Missouri that claims an additional 24,000 jobs will be created in 2014 if the state opts into the expansion.

"Strengthening Medicaid will strengthen our economy," he said. "Without question, it’s the smart thing to do."
Under the proposal outlined in the federal health care law, Medicaid benefits would be expanded to everyone who makes up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level — up to about $31,800 a year for a family of four, or $15,000 for a single person. Most of the new enrollees would be childless adults who are not disabled or elderly and can’t qualify for Medicaid under Missouri’s current requirements. Parents also would see a jump in Medicaid eligibility.

The federal government already pays part of Missouri’s Medicaid costs. Under the federal expansion proposal, it would pick up the full tab for new recipients in the first three years and continue paying most of the costs beyond that.

The governor’s budget office estimates that the state would see a $300 million boost to its general revenue fund over the next three years if the Legislature expands Medicaid. Once the state’s costs kick in, savings from other programs and estimated new revenue would more than cover the cost of the expansion, according to the estimates.

The budget office expects that the state would see about 259,500 newly eligible enrollees in 2014 under the expansion — nearly half of them childless adults. By 2018, the new enrollees would grow to 307,000.

“I’m well aware this is a tough issue politically. But across the country, we’re seeing governors and state legislators put politics aside to do what’s undeniably best for their states,” Nixon said. “Republican governors in places like Arizona, North Dakota, New Mexico and Nevada are using federal funds to strengthen their Medicaid systems. Not because it’s the easy thing for them to do politically, but because it’s the right thing to do.”

Nixon also called for a $10 million increase in spending on mental health programs. He said the additional money could be used to provide more services in community mental health centers, train professionals to recognize early warning signs, train law enforcement how to handle mental health crisis situations and teach people how to care for family members who suffer from severe mental illnesses.

“We must do everything in our power to get folks the treatment they need, before it’s too late,” he said.

Missouri House Speaker Tim Jones of Eureka has been picked to give the GOP’s response via a pre-recorded speech that will be broadcast five minutes after Nixon’s speech.

Last week, Jones told reporters that he hoped Nixon would discuss transportation funding and job creation strategies.

“I’d like to hear some commonality and some specifics on some of the issues the governor and I have previously discussed,” he said. “I think those areas will benefit all Missourians.”

Jones has been a rising star in the state Republican Party and — facing a term limit in the House — is likely weighing his future political options. Coming off an unopposed re-election bid, Jones has more than $675,000 in his campaign coffers, according to the most recent data available. He
made stops across the state last month on a policy and listening tour that also helped boost his public profile.

“It appears - at least at the outset - that the governor is reaching out to those of us in the House more than he has in the past,” he said. “I take that as a good sign.”

Jones said there have been signs that Nixon “has been tentatively moving toward my positions on some education reform.”

“That’s something I’d like to hear in his speech,” Jones said.
In State of State speech, Nixon urges more spending

Republicans lawmakers skeptical that federal funds will cover what state money can't

January 28  By JASON HANCOCK  The Star's Jefferson City Correspondent

MU MENTION P. 2

For his first four State of the State speeches, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon called on lawmakers to slash government spending, including $500 million in cuts last year.

Times have changed.

In a joint session of the General Assembly, Nixon on Monday called on lawmakers to use $900 million in federal funds to add 300,000 Missourians to the public health insurance program for the poor. He also wants to increase funding for K-12 public schools by $108 million, higher education by $34 million and more than double funding for the state’s preschool program.

Besides the federal funding, Nixon said an improving economy and past fiscal restraint allow Missouri to invest more in its key priorities.

Republican lawmakers, who hold veto-proof supermajorities in the House and Senate, did not immediately embrace the Democratic governor’s proposals. But Nixon called on lawmakers to set aside political differences for the betterment of all Missourians.

“We now have a unique opportunity to build a better future for our children,” Nixon said. “We must seize it.”

Nixon’s budget proposal relies heavily on the expansion of Medicaid envisioned by the federal health care law. Recipients of federal Medicaid money — most prominently the health care industry — would pay an additional $15.5 million in Missouri income and sales taxes, Nixon said, and the state would save $31 million when the federal government picks up much of the tab for mental health services and programs for disabled residents and pregnant women.
It also assumes that millions of dollars would be saved or raised if lawmakers pass certain pieces of legislation — such as a bill that would make it easier to collect sales taxes on online purchases.

All told, the governor’s budget relies on roughly $164 million in funds that would require legislative action.

In the past, Republican legislative leaders have been cool to many of the proposals, including the expansion of Medicaid, which calls for the federal government to pay 100 percent of the additional cost initially with the state picking up 5 percent beginning in 2017 and 10 percent by 2020.

“We continue to have misgivings about the federal government’s ability to meet the additional spending, since they haven’t passed a budget in four years and borrow 40 cents for every dollar,” said Senate President Pro Tem Tom Dempsey, a St. Charles Republican. “None of that has changed.”

Nixon said that persuading Republicans to go along with the expansion is part of an education process he already has begun. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the law, and despite misgivings, it is not within a state’s power to rewrite federal law, he said.

**Nixon pointed to a University of Missouri study that found expanding Medicaid would create more than 24,000 jobs in the state in its first year.**

“Will we bring the tax dollars that Missourians send to Washington back home to strengthen our Medicaid system here in Missouri?” he asked. “Or will we let the tax dollars that Missourians send to Washington be spent in other states instead? Other states would get the benefits, and we’d get the bill.”

To help soothe GOP concerns, Nixon said he would support a provision to roll back the expansion if the federal government doesn’t live up to its promises.

House Speaker Tim Jones, a Eureka Republican, seemed to dismiss any possibility of expanding Medicaid, saying that Missouri has a governor who “believes bigger government is the answer.”

“We will not follow the lead of out-of-touch bureaucrats whose reckless spending has pushed our nation to the brink of financial disaster,” he said.

Nixon’s plan to fund higher education comes with strings attached, basing all increases on a new performance funding model.

“We expect better test scores, better graduation rates, more college degrees and more Missourians ready to compete for the best jobs in a global economy,” he said.

The additional $100 million for K-12 schools would put funding at record levels but would still fall $620 million short of what is called for under Missouri’s school funding formula.
Nixon is also asking lawmakers to extend Missouri’s school year six days, pointing out that the state has the fourth-shortest in the nation.

“Adding six more days to the next school year will give teachers more time to work with their students, and give kids more time to learn.”

The governor also expressed support for borrowing money to pay for capital improvements at public schools and universities, state parks and the Fulton State Hospital. Nixon’s plan would pay for the bonds by cutting state spending on tax credits, including those for low-income housing and redevelopment of historic property.

His proposal did not, however, mention any transportation funding.

Senate Appropriations Chairman Kurt Schaefer, a Columbia Republican, said that for the most part he liked what he heard from the governor.

“I was happy to see a push for higher K-12, higher education and mental health funding,” he said. “But obviously, the devil is in the details, and we have to see where that money comes from.”

Apart from the budget, Nixon made his strongest call yet for lawmakers to pass comprehensive campaign finance reform. Missouri is the only state that allows unlimited campaign contributions and unlimited lobbyist gifts.

“This year, if the legislature does not send a campaign contribution limit bill to my desk, I will do everything in my power to get it on the ballot and make sure it passes,” Nixon said.

“The people of Missouri have voiced their opinion on this matter already at the ballot box and their support for contribution limits was overwhelming. We all know it would pass once again.”
Nixon outlines priorities in address

By Andrew Denney
Monday, January 28, 2013

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposed $25.7 billion budget for the state’s fiscal 2014 figures in enough new Medicaid spending to add 259,000 low-income Missourians to the program and increased funding for K-12 and higher education.

The proposed budget, unveiled Monday night during the annual State of the State address, includes more than $900 million in federal funding through the Affordable Care Act to expand the state’s Medicaid program and $150 million in new spending for education, which includes a more than $100 million increase for K-12 education, a $34 million increase for higher education and $17 million for early childhood education programs.

With respect to the Medicaid expansion, Nixon said in his speech, presented in a joint session of the General Assembly, that state leaders shouldn’t spend time debating the Affordable Care Act, saying it is the “law of the land,” and that accepting the federal funds amounts to a “business decision” rather than a political one. Nixon touted support from business groups in the state, such as the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry, for expanding Medicaid.

“For these business leaders, this is not a political decision,” Nixon said. “It’s an economic one. And we shouldn’t let last year’s politics get in the way of next year’s economic growth.”

Nixon’s remarks on expanding Medicaid were met with applause from Democrats, but Republicans were silent. Republicans did cheer when Nixon said he said he knows some are skeptical that Washington would “live up to its commitment” to provide funds for Medicaid expansion. Nixon said he would propose a sunset provision for the expansion if the feds don’t hold up their end of the bargain.

Families of four making roughly $32,000 a year or less would qualify for Medicaid. The University of Missouri estimates that taking the federal funding could create 24,000 new jobs in fiscal 2014.
Nixon’s proposed increase in higher education funding would be doled out through a performance-based system proposed by the state’s Coordinating Board for Higher Education. The proposed budget calls for a $4 million cut to the University of Missouri System’s core funding, but it would provide the system with a $16.9 million increase for meeting performance standards such as student success, degree production, financial responsibility and graduate achievement in the workforce.

In a news conference before the speech, Linda Luebbering, the state’s budget director, told reporters that more than $160 million in spending contained in the governor’s proposed budget would depend on the approval of measures outside the budget by the Republican-controlled General Assembly.

In statements to reporters after Nixon’s speech, House Speaker Tim Jones, a Eureka Republican, said Nixon’s health care proposals fail to address the “true health care crisis” in the state: a lack of caps on plaintiffs’ awards for malpractice lawsuits, which he says opens the state’s health care industry to “limitless” and “endless” litigation. The Missouri Supreme Court threw out caps on lawsuit awards, calling them an unconstitutional encroachment on the rights of juries.

Jones also warned that expanding Medicaid with federal funds could be difficult to reverse in the future.

“Medicaid is an entitlement and anytime you expand the categoricals of an entitlement it’s extremely difficult if not impossible to ratchet those back,” Jones said.

In his speech, Nixon also called for a bond issue to pay for state construction projects that could be paid for with a bond issue funded from reforms in the state’s tax credit system.

Luebbering said the governor has not yet determined the total value of the bond issue or whether he would seek legislative approval or voter approval.

Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, and Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, have filed bills that would borrow $950 million, with $750 million going to building projects on college campuses. Kelly, who has pushed lawmakers on taking up a bond issue in past sessions, said although he was pleased the governor cast his support behind a bond issue, he suspected Nixon would support a smaller borrowing amount and likely would use funds to finance projects for state buildings.

“We’re in the ballgame on this subject now,” Kelly said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Nixon proposes increased funding for education, new bond issue in State of State address

By Fedor Zarkhin
January 28, 2013 | 11:08 p.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — Speaking in the House Chamber before the House and Senate at the Missouri Capitol on Monday, Gov. Jay Nixon outlined his budgetary goals for fiscal year 2014.

The proposed budget included an increase of $150 million to education and more than $1 billion to health care, most of it from federal funds. Nixon also proposed a bond issue to pay for statewide projects and changes to tax-credit programs. House Speaker Tim Jones, R-Eureka, delivered the response for the Republican Party.

Education

Among his suggested $150 million increase for education, Nixon proposed a $17 million increase in early childhood education, $100 million in new funding for K-12 classrooms and an increase of $34 million in higher education funding.

The proposed increase for K-12 education would go to fund the K-12 foundation formula and to support programs such as Access and Bright Flight scholarships, the A-plus Scholarships program, special education for high cost students and opportunities for low-income school districts. The governor's suggested $34 million increase in funding for Missouri colleges and universities would be distributed according to each school's performance against certain measures, which would mean an average funding increase of about 4 percent for each school.

Medicaid expansion

Nixon included Medicaid expansion in his budget proposal, saying it is the right thing to do not only from the human standpoint – the budget office predicts another 259,000 low-income working adults would be insured in 2014 – but also from a business standpoint.
"Friends, let's put the politics of health care aside," Nixon said to chortles in the chamber, "and look at this as a business decision for the state of Missouri."

The governor argued that Missouri would forfeit federal assistance if it fails to expand Medicaid and that its tax dollars instead would fund expansions in other states. Expansion, he said, would bring $5.7 billion to the state over three years. He cited an MU study that found Medicaid expansion in Missouri would generate an additional 24,000 jobs health-care jobs in 2014 alone. About 300,000 more people would be covered by the insurance plan.

"Strengthening Medicaid will strengthen our economy," Nixon said. "Without question, it's the smart thing to do." Nixon's remarks about Medicaid stirred raucous approval from his Democratic colleagues but drew silence from Republican legislators — until Nixon pointed out that some members of the legislature have criticized the federal government for not living up to its commitments.

"Let me address that directly," he said to laughter from the left side of the chamber. If the federal government fails to meet its commitment to Medicaid, Nixon said, he would roll back any expansion.

If the legislature agrees to expand Medicaid, Missouri will receive about $8.2 billion over the next seven years. To get that money, the legislature must agree to raise eligibility limits to cover those earning income 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. Nixon's proposed fiscal 2014 budget includes about $908 million in federal dollars for Medicaid expansion.

In the Republican Party's response, House Speaker Jones said he was disappointed that the governor didn't address what he considered to be the real crisis in the Missouri health care industry: the lack of medical malpractice award limits. Jones has stated before that reinstating limits will be one of his priorities this session.

**Bond issue**

The governor called for a new bond issue, citing low interest rates and Missouri's AAA bond rating as reasons why now is a good time to do so. The bond issue Nixon outlined is similar, though not identical, to the one Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, and Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, have been working to get passed in previous legislative sessions.

The governor's version would fund projects in K-12 classrooms, college research labs, mental health hospitals, state parks and state buildings. Nixon did not mention using the bond issue
for higher education buildings, which was a major portion of the bond issue Kelly and Schaefer have been trying to pass.

Nixon said the money also could be used to establish a fund that schools could borrow money from at low interest rates. Once loans are repaid, money would be available for other schools. The bond issue also could pay to rebuild Fulton State Mental Hospital.

"We have a moral responsibility to these patients and their caregivers to provide the best possible environment: one that is safe, secure and conducive to healing," he said.

Funding for Missouri's highways would not be part of the bond issue proposed by Nixon, Linda Luebbering, budget director in the Office of Administration, said. Jones said he held common ground with the governor on the bond issue, though he was disappointed that the State of the State address did not mention transportation funding.

**Tax-credit reform**

Nixon outlined no specific changes to tax-credit programs he would like to see, though he did say that a 2010 report would serve as a benchmark for reforms. Money saved by reducing tax credits, which Nixon said took one-twelfth of the general revenue budget in 2012, could be used to repay the bond issue he proposed. Tax credits cost the state $629 million in fiscal 2012, Nixon said.

The governor has been working, without success, to scale back and eliminate some tax-credit programs since 2010. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle have joined Nixon's effort, but some caution that cutting too much from programs that have benefitted Missouri would obstruct economic development. Tax credits give businesses and residents breaks for certain kinds of projects. Historic preservation and low-income housing are the state's most expensive credit programs.

Some legislators have promised to try to scale back tax credits this session, and a handful of bills to do so have been prefiled in the Senate. Bills prefiled by Sen. John Lamping, R-St. Louis, and Sen. Brad Lager, R-Savannah, would cap historic preservation and low-income housing credits. Lager's bill would eliminate some credits entirely.

Nixon also repeated his call for campaign finance reform, saying that is the single most important ethics move the legislature can make. If the General Assembly fails to act, he said, he'll "do everything in my power" to put the issue on a ballot for voters to decide.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Gov. Jay Nixon proposes increases in education funding

MU Mention on Pg. 3

By Caroline Bauman, Katie Yaeger
January 28, 2013 | 11:14 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — During his 2013 State of the State address, Gov. Jay Nixon proposed more than $150 million total in increases to education throughout Missouri.

Among the variety of issues Nixon addressed in his speech, the suggested increases to education were applauded by both Republicans and Democrats.

His proposals include a $17 million increase in early childhood education, $100 million in new funding for K-12 classrooms and an increase of $34 million in higher education funding.

Early childhood education

Early childhood education is a smart investment with a big return, Nixon said. He’s spent the past few weeks visiting preschools and talking with early childhood education leaders about the best ways to enable students to succeed.

“We want every child in every Missouri community — no matter their family’s circumstances — to get the best possible start,” Nixon said.

The proposed $17 million increase in funding means more money would be allocated toward programs such as Early Head Start, whose budget was cut nearly in half last year, and the Missouri Preschool Program, whose budget would nearly double under Nixon’s proposal this year.

“We know the early years of a child’s life are critical,” Nixon said.

K-12 education
Although Missouri's high school graduation rate is now the seventh highest in the nation, Nixon said the state must commit to even higher goals in K-12 education.

“That’s why my budget includes $100 million in new funding for our K-12 classrooms,” Nixon said. “We’ll use it to train more teachers, modernize equipment and lengthen the school year.”

Among that increase, $65 million would be for the K-12 foundation formula, according to a document listing Nixon’s proposed budget increases. But Nixon also proposed increases for several other programs, including:

- A $10.3 million increase for K-12 special education for high-cost students and educational opportunities for students in low-income school districts.
- A $1 million increase to the A+ Scholarship Program, which covers tuition and fees at all Missouri public community colleges.
- More than $75 million allocated for Access Missouri and Bright Flight scholarships, merit-based scholarships available to top-ranked Missouri high school seniors.

“The dream of a college education should be within reach for all Missouri families because education is the best economic development tool there is,” Nixon said.

Another way to improve local schools is by establishing a low-interest loan fund through bond issuance, Nixon said.

“With our perfect AAA credit rating intact and interest rates at all-time lows, we now have a unique opportunity to move forward with bond issuance,” Nixon said. “Which is why I am proposing the creation of the BOOST Fund. BOOST stands for Building Opportunities in Our Schools Today.”

But Nixon has been absent when it comes to leadership on the issue of education, Missouri House Speaker Tim Jones said in the Republican response. Especially at a time when Missouri’s two largest school districts are failing, and universities are struggling to find ways to prepare young people for the jobs of the future, he said.

“Each year, (Nixon) has responded by withholding millions of dollars from our schools,” Jones said. “Pledging your commitment to our children and then failing to support them flies in the face of good governance and leadership.”

Higher education
The 2014 fiscal year is the first year additional funding for Missouri colleges and universities will be tied to certain performance measures, such as increased graduation rates, increased student retention and improved learning.

Distributed according to schools' performance in those measures, Nixon's proposed increase of $34 million to public colleges and universities is an average increase of 4 percent for each school.

The University of Missouri System met all of the performance measures and would receive a 4.3 percent increase in funding under Nixon's plan, according to the document listing Nixon's proposed budget increases.

"We will achieve higher academic goals with greater accountability," he said.

Nixon also addressed helping nearly 750,000 Missouri residents complete their college educations.

Students will be able to begin enrolling in Western Governors University-Missouri, a nonprofit online institution offering bachelor's and master's degrees in business, health care, information technology and teacher preparation.

"We'll be helping Missourians who never finished college, who are underemployed and who need degrees to move up, reach their full potential," he said. "Now that's a mission we can all get behind."

Students at WGU-Missouri will be able to take tests at night and on weekends, pay a flat rate for courses and complete courses at their own pace, Nixon said.

“It's designed to meet the needs of real people with real lives,” he said.

Supervising editor is Zach Murdock.
Gov. Nixon called for increased education, Medicaid funding

By Matthew Flores

Published as a part of Maneater v. 79, Issue 31

Gov. Nixon proposed a $25.7 billion budget in his State of the State address.

Gov. Jay Nixon called for increases in education funding and an expanded Medicaid program during his State of the State address Monday.

Nixon, freshly inaugurated after winning a second term in November, recommended the ambitious spending plan as part of his proposed state budget for the fiscal year 2014.

"Together, we've kept our fiscal discipline, and our economy is gaining ground," Nixon said. "We now have a unique opportunity to build a better future for our children. We must seize it."

The budget calls for a $17 million increase for early childhood education, a $100 million increase in K-12 funding and an additional $34 million for higher education funding in the state. Nixon cut $9 million from the higher education budget in the previous fiscal year.

"We don't have the numbers because the budget hasn't been actually released," said Ben Levin, Missouri Students Association Legislative coordinator. "But it's a lot better than it was last year. It's a lot better trying to find the bad news in what will be about a $4.5 million increase in higher education funding than finding any glimmers of hope in what was a 13 percent cut (last year)."

"We're wary, but we're in a much better place than we were at this point last year, and for that we are thankful," Levin said.

Nixon also allotted more than $75 million for the state's Access and Bright Flight Scholarships as well as $1 million in funding for A+ scholarships.

"This year, we'll help even more Missouri families afford college," Nixon said. "That's been a top priority of mine since day one."

The proposed budget totals $25.7 billion.
The governor proposed an expansion of Medicaid through federal funds, something that was met with applause from the Democratic side of the House Chamber and consternation from the Republican side.

"Strengthening Medicaid will strengthen our economy," Nixon said. "Without question, it's the smart thing to do."

An expanded Medicaid program, Nixon said, would bring a total of $5.7 billion to Missouri over the first three calendar years and would make health care available to 300,000 Missourians. He also said he supported a provision that would roll back Medicaid expansion if the federal government didn't honor its financial commitment to the state.

"If Washington drops the ball, we'll do what's right for Missouri," Nixon said.

Nixon proposed $10 million more for mental health services in the state and a 29 percent increase in funds to provide more resources at domestic violence shelters in the state.

"No mother who has been the victim of domestic violence should ever be turned away and left to fend for themselves during these moments of crisis," Nixon said.

In one of his more forceful moments of the speech, Nixon called on the General Assembly to institute campaign finance reform.

"We must re-institute strict campaign contribution limits," Nixon said. "This year, if the legislature does not send a campaign contribution limit bill to my desk, I will do everything in my power to get it on the ballot and make sure it passes."
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) -- A federal Medicare regulator has dropped its inquiry into deficiencies at the University of Missouri Health System after the university pledged to make changes.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services outlined violations at the university health system's allergy clinic in October. The university responded with a list of planned fixes but also pointed out that the clinic is considered a doctor's office and not part of University Hospital, which requires federal certification.

The federal agency accepted that explanation and decided in late November against further penalizing the university.

The health system provided The Associated Press with copies of the letters to and from the Medicare oversight agency but did not release the list of deficiencies or its responses.
Mizzou tabs Lexington for 1st rural arts project

16 hours ago

The Lafayette County town of Lexington has been chosen as the first site in a University of Missouri effort to promote the arts in rural communities.

Officials from Lexington and the university's Extension office will kick off the program Tuesday afternoon at Wentworth Military Academy and College's Groendyke Hall. The 90-minute ceremony begins at 4 p.m.

School officials say the project will pair university experts with local artists and community arts leaders to create and promote various projects in the northwest Missouri city.

Organizers hope to broaden the program to a statewide effort and say they also want to tap the arts to help bolster economic development.
MU Extension begins community arts projects for rural communities with ceremony in Lexington, Mo

By Sarah Leituala

Published as a part of Maneater v. 79, Issue 31

Lexington, Mo. is the first Missouri town to begin MU Extension’s program for improving local economies with community arts projects.

The University of Missouri Extension began a new initiative Tuesday to bring rural communities together and improve rural economies through art.

The Community Arts Pilot Project kicked-off with a ceremony Tuesday at Wentworth Military Academy and College in Lexington, Mo. The program is a partnership between MU Extension, a collaborative learning initiative making university resources available to rural areas, and the town of Lexington, according to a MU News Bureau news release.

“The whole idea is to build bridges between various art departments and students on the campus with the Extension and other Missouri communities,” MU Extension advisory council member Lee Ann Worley said.

Though the program officially began Tuesday, the planning started in 2010, Worley said. MU Extension worked with multiple communities to build their network and inform them about the project so officials could visualize what it would look like in their own town.

The Community Arts Pilot Project began with the “Art’s Café,” a meeting of community leaders and MU faculty to plan for the project, Worley said.

The MU theater and science departments were also involved in the project.

Lexington is the first community to be awarded the Community Arts Pilot Project, Worley said. The MU Extension is providing funds as well as a package of engagement and resources for the project. The results will vary from place to place, but MU Extension’s goal is to replicate the program through the state to provide resources and services to all communities.

The project will benefit businesses in Lexington by promoting the community, creative team member Abigail Tempel said.
Students working with the program could conduct research, be considered for internships and scholarships and have the chance to put their artwork on display. Graduate students and faculty teaching in those rural communities could lead workshops and master's classes.

"It's a benefit for them (Lexington students) to appreciate Lexington's architecture and history and experience art in their day-to-day life," Tempel said.

The project's advisory board is focusing on how to utilize art through community and economic development with engagement opportunities. The aim is to improve lives through the economy, Worley said. The project follows MU Extension's mission to improve lives, communities and economies through relevant, reliable and responsive education.

"Creative minds and energy come together to create a synergy," Worley said.

Worley, who has worked as both an administrator and artist, said discovery is a large part of the mission as well.

"We recognize that discovery is often about fracturing world views or acquiring acceptance of uncertainty about absurdity," Worley said. "The arts are a perfect tool to break those barriers to new creations and innovation."

MU Extension has a representative in every county in the state, Worley said. Mexico, Mo., Sedalia, Mo., Montgomery County, Mo., Warren County Mo., and Callaway County, Mo., are also engaged with the program but have not officially begun work due to lack of funding.

Though it is beneficial to have the faculty spread throughout the state, the younger generation is just as important, Worley said. The rural communities are struggling with financial and human resources and keeping the youth involved to further economic opportunities could create a positive outcome.

"Within the community it's a portal to really building upon and creating vibrancy and enthusiasm and passion for community members about their community," Worley said. "This is a community driven project, which means we're not doing it for the community. They're doing it. We're just providing the resources and support to help build upon what existing strengths they already have."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU police investigating report of November rape at Center Hall

By MISSOURIAN STAFF
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COLUMBIA — MU police were still investigating a report of a rape that took place Nov. 1 at Center Hall, Capt. Brian Weimer said Friday.

Weimer called the incident "an acquaintance situation" and said he did not know when the investigation would be complete.

The incident was originally reported in a Jan. 10 Clery Report.

"The most important thing is working with the victim and making sure their needs are met," Weimer said.
Facebook activity may reflect mental health issues according to MU psychology study

By Elissa Chudwin

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The study focused on the correlation between certain Facebook activity and schizotypy, a personality disorder.

Facebook activity may reflect more than one's social life but also mental health, according to a recent study conducted by a MU doctoral student.

The study began when Elizabeth Martin discussed why a person would opt not to participate in social media and use content on Facebook pages with another graduate student, Drew Bailey, who does not have a Facebook account.

Martin and Bailey coauthored a study on social networks and schizotypy, or personality disorders. The study says the way people interact on social media sites is an indicator of personality and psychological well-being.

The study focused specifically on the correlation between Facebook and schizotypy.

“Schizotypy encompasses a range of personality characteristics,” Martin said. “Some people who endorse symptoms of schizotypy report decreased pleasure from social situations and others report odd beliefs.”

Social anhedonia — the reduced ability to find pleasure in social interactions — is one aspect of schizotypy, she said. Variables like a decrease in number of friends and number of photos and an increase in length of time since communication with a friend indicate social anhedonia, according to an MU News Bureau news release.

“Social anhedonia, one aspect of schizotypy, was also associated with an increase in profile length,” Martin said. “Odd beliefs, another aspect of schizotypy, and paranoia were associated with the increased amount of information black-outs.”

Students in introduction to psychology courses volunteered to participate in the study online, Martin said.
Participants answered questionnaires about their personalities and then researchers printed out parts of their Facebook profiles. Participants were then given the opportunity to "black out" any of their own information. Researchers coded the information and compared it to the information that was given in participants' personality profiles.

Facebook could also potentially serve as a source of information for therapists and counselors whose clients self-report, according to the study. Self-reporting can be an issue because a person's recollection of experiences can be different depending on the time, said Dr. Christy Hutton, MU Counseling Center Outreach and Communications coordinator.

"A person may feel comfortable sharing some aspects of their life while being uncomfortable sharing others," Hutton said. "Stigma around mental illness may also cause a person to feel reluctant about sharing everything they are experiencing."

Hutton doubts she will use Facebook to diagnose clients, because it is important for the student to make decisions about what they are willing to share with a counselor, she said.

"If I am checking up on them via Facebook, that takes some control away from the client," Hutton said. "At the same time, I do believe Facebook is an excellent tool for friends and family to be able to recognize changes in behavior that may indicate an emotional crisis or thoughts of suicide."

MU senior Lakeisha Gilcrease said Facebook doesn't always show who people really are.

"Some people collect friends but don't actually talk to them," Gilcrease said. "It could be a true judgment of who someone is, but not all the time."

Martin said the study is the first step in using information from social networks to potentially give psychologists a more complete clinical picture.

"This could possibly aid in treatment in the future," she said. "I think it is likely that social networking information could be related to many different aspects of personality, whether they are related to psychopathology or not."
New grant gives ICFS high hopes of improving state pantries with MU’s Food Pantry Nutrition Project

By Nate Atkins

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A $500,000 grant will allow MU’s Food Pantry Nutrition Project to move forward.

For more than two years, members of MU’s Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security have held hopes of tackling the state’s food insecurity issues in pantries.

Thanks to a five-year, $500,000 grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health last month, these IFCS members can now place their Food Pantry Nutrition Project into action.

“Our basic motivation is to help food pantries and the people who use pantries to access more fruits and vegetables,” project coordinator Bill McKelvey said. “This is coming out of a desire to help folks have healthier diets and improve their overall health.”

The project is a collaboration between ICFS and the School of Journalism’s Health Communication Research Center. The grant will allow the project to fund staffing and gardening for pantries in rural counties in northeast and central Missouri, McKelvey said.

“You could make the case that in rural communities resources aren’t as readily available as they are in a place like Columbia,” he said. “As you look at the data, you see there’s a great need across our state, whether it be rural or urban, but we decided to focus on rural food pantries.”

The need to improve pantries throughout the state is strong. Missouri ranks seventh in the nation for food insecurity and fifth for child food insecurity, according to a news release by the MU News Bureau.

The Missouri Food Bank Association provides for more than 950,000 Missouri residents per year, state director Scott Baker said. While economic factors create much of the need, Baker said that Missouri’s struggles are so large because they are so hidden.
“Missourians unite to tackle a challenge when they see it, but Missourians right now have no idea of some of those numbers,” Baker said. “... It’s in every county, it’s in every community. We have to get people aware of that and talking about that.”

Pantries currently lack the storage space for their items, many of which are not shelf-stable, Baker said. He said that pantry users can also be unsure of how to prepare the foods they receive.

ICFS members have spent the last two years researching these struggles, McKelvey said. They have found that pantry users in Missouri have higher rates of diabetes, cholesterol and hypertension than the state average.

The Food Pantry Nutrition Project will tackle these areas by implementing wellness programs into select rural pantries. These programs will consist of pantry volunteers, agency professionals and community members who will meet regularly to assess the health of the pantry’s consumers.

ICFS will start work this spring to educate community members on how to use the products as well as how to grow them in their own gardens. ICFS’s 2010 survey of pantry users in central and northeast Missouri found that 40 percent of pantry users get some of their food from a garden, McKelvey said.

“We want to be able to provide resources to people to help them make decisions on their own,” he said.

Matt Kuhlenbeck, program director for the Missouri Foundation of Health, said the foundation gives out around $42 million in grants annually. He said the foundation was particularly impressed by the long-term goals ICFS had to improve pantries in a variety of areas.

“What they’re trying to do is not just to buy food and supply food,” he said. “What they’re really focusing on is how the university can work with the food bank as well as these pantries to make the system stronger.”
Gov. Nixon: Medicaid expansion 'right thing to do'

The biggest economic decision facing Missouri is how to move forward on the issue of health care, Gov. Jay Nixon said during Missouri’s State of the State address Monday night.

Nixon called for expansion of Medicaid, citing studies from the University of Missouri that report an expanded system could bring as many as 24,000 jobs to the state, and a combined $5.7 billion to Missouri at no cost to taxpayers for the first three years of expansion, starting in 2014.

Nixon listed a number of business organizations across the state that are on board with Medicaid expansion, including Chamber of Commerce organizations in Independence, Springfield, Lee’s Summit, St. Louis and Kansas City. Nixon also mentioned Kirksville Regional Economic Development Inc. and Associated Industries of Missouri as backers of Medicaid expansion.

“For these business leaders, this is not a political decision. It's an economic one. And we shouldn't let last year's politics get in the way of next year's economic growth,” Nixon said.

Nixon addressed opponents' concerns, saying he's willing to put a provision in the Medicaid expansion that will hold the federal government accountable.

“I support including a provision that rolls back the Medicaid expansion if Washington doesn't honor its financial commitment,” Nixon said.

The federal government has committed to pick up the tab for Medicaid expansion for states for the first three years. By 2020, and subsequent years, the federal government will pay 80 percent of the expansion to those newly eligible individuals.

In Missouri, 300,000 individuals will be eligible for the newly expanded Medicaid program in 2014. These individuals, Nixon said, are working families trying to make ends meet. Nixon said that excluding those individuals from health insurance is bad for everyone, and "drives up premiums for those who do have insurance."

Governors in Nevada, Arizona, North Dakota and New Mexico, are working to expand Medicaid in their states even though it’s an unfavorable political move, Nixon said, "because it's the right thing to do."
Column: A botched investigation in a botched association

By Kalen Wagoner

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The failure of the Miami investigation isn’t surprising considering who is involved.

Finally, the National Collegiate Athletic Association is investigating the most blatantly broken and corrupt entity in college sports – itself.

NCAA President Mark Emmert announced the organization had suspended its 22-month inquiry into the University of Miami athletic department after he received a bill from the lawyer of Nevin Shapiro, a convicted Ponzi scheme artist accused of providing cash, cars and prostitutes (among other improper benefits) to Miami football and basketball players.

The lawyer, Maria Elena Perez, was promised cash from NCAA investigators if she would ask Shapiro questions pertaining to the Miami case during a sworn deposition that purportedly had to do with an unrelated bankruptcy case. Emmert said that any information obtained from the deposition will now be thrown out of the investigation.

A CBSSports.com report on the imminent conclusion of the Miami investigation first surfaced on Jan. 21, just three days before its indefinite suspension. Many speculated that the NCAA would charge the coaches allegedly involved in conferring illegal benefits to players – including current Missouri basketball coach Frank Haith, who previously filled the same position at Miami – with “unethical conduct and failure to promote an atmosphere of compliance.”

Punishment for such charges typically comes in the form of a multiple-year show-cause penalty, meaning any school that employed Haith or any of the other charged coaches would be penalized by the NCAA for doing so. Though institutions can appeal to “show cause” as to why they should avoid penalties, such efforts are rarely successful. Most coaches who receive a show-cause penalty never coach in college again. Had everything gone according to last Monday’s preliminary reports, Missouri would almost certainly have fired Haith before the beginning of the 2013-14 season.

While the future of the investigation remains unclear, it seems likely that all charges against Haith will be dropped, whether he was guilty or not, and he will continue to coach for MU. The
NCAA now cannot risk the further public humiliation it would face after an inevitable lawsuit from Haith.

Shapiro, the NCAA’s star informant in the case, had little opportunity to speak with investigators while serving a 20-year prison sentence for the aforementioned Ponzi scheme. All involved fully knew that the NCAA does not possess subpoena power and cannot use evidence compiled from such depositions.

The incentives, however, led those involved to interfere with the bankruptcy hearing. For Shapiro, it was a chance to get revenge against Miami, the university he feels didn’t appreciate all he did. For the NCAA, it was another chance to scare its subordinates with the sheer scale of its power. For Perez, it was the money (the only reason we even found out about all this is because she sent her bill to the wrong place).

For the NCAA to conflate its petty rules with the actual force of law is wholly ridiculous – and thoroughly unsurprising. An organization that makes billions of dollars off the backs of an unpaid labor force (which would be considered highly illegal in any other business) that doesn’t dare challenge its own rule tends to become reckless. And a bullying investigative arm that declared Miami players and coaches would be considered guilty until proven innocent will go to great lengths to fulfill its twisted prophecy.

Emmert, it must be noted, does not appear complicit in this affair himself. He is, however, ultimately responsible for an organization that claims modesty and morality but only operates with its bottom-line in mind. You can be sure that this case will not stop that.

You can also be sure that the NCAA will continue to allow millionaire coaches to job-hop as they please while their players are forced to sit a year before transferring, and that it will stop athletes from making money off endorsements or their likenesses in video games and other products. And you can be sure that there will be more scandals, more prematurely released bombshells and more incompetent investigations, until there is credible incentive for institutions to abandon the NCAA for a less restrictive, more humane form of oversight.

Regardless of the results of the now-ongoing NCAA investigation into itself, I think one can only recommend it receive the death penalty.
MU academic advisor Kathleen Kerr receives NACADA award for work with students

Academic advisor Kathleen Kerr sits in her office at the MU Student Success Center. Kerr has been recognized for her excellence in advising. David Freyermuth/Staff Photographer

By Leslie Howard

Kathleen Kerr, academic exploration and advising services academic advisor, is the latest addition to the list of MU advising staff to receive recognition from the National Academic Advising Association.

The association, which recognizes advisors on regional and national levels in four different categories, will give Kerr the award for ‘Outstanding Adviser in a Primary Role’ for regional district seven on Feb. 28 at a conference in San Antonio, Texas, according to a news release from TLC@Mizzou.

The seventh district of the NACADA includes schools from Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas.

Kerr has been at MU for 10 years. She worked in the plant sciences department for two years before becoming an advisor. Each semester she sees approximately 250 to 350 students, mostly undeclared, pre-journalism and pre-communication freshmen, sophomores and transfer students.
"I wanted to be a guide for students as they begin their academic careers," Kerr said. "As students are introduced to new subjects and have new experiences they grow and change, and their interests grow and change. It's always very exciting to see that process."

Kerr said she discusses strengths and weaknesses when meeting with her students, in addition to what they can do to balance and manage classes that might be more difficult.

"Helping students understand their degree requirements and teaching them to take control of their degree will serve them well in the long run," Kerr said.

While Kerr said her job as an academic advisor is based heavily on curriculum she also tries to help new and younger students understand how the university works as they live independently for the first time.

"As advisors we help with a lot of things that come up that could impede academic success," Kerr said. "(Students) are not just, book machines ..."

Kerr said that she and advisors help with troubleshooting and problem solving.

Junior Paige Fuerstel said she has used her advisor to help find internships and decide on a minor.

Freshman Tory Patrick said her advisor has helped her establish her class schedule and has also sent her helpful emails and notifications.

Kerr said she is very honored to receive the NACADA award and proud of the number of MU faculty and advisors who have received similar awards in the past few years.

Each spring, students, colleagues, supervisors and others around the MU campus nominate advisors to receive Excellence in Advising awards.

Rachael Orr, senior academic advisor for AEAS, said two letters of recommendation from students must be received for a nomination.

After advisors are awarded on the university level, the school can send one advisor in each category to advance to the state, regional and national levels.

According to the TLC@Mizzou news release, the three categories advisors can be awarded for are primary role, faculty role and advising administrator. This is the fourth year in a row at least one MU advisor has been recognized by the NACADA.

"We've known for a long time that advisors are doing good things on our campus and now we're getting more recognition," Orr said. "We've been more consistently nominating advisors at the state regional and national levels, but I think it also really speaks to the level of advising that is happening and that we've had this kind of run of quality advising."
Orr said the awards speak to a high level of advising at MU.

“Advisors really care about students and students being successful,” Orr said. “That’s what really shines in the awards is what the students are saying. It shows the advisors going above and beyond in many ways.”