Nixon uses school funding scenarios to fight veto override

NO MU mention

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, July 24, 2013 at 2:00 pm

House Speaker Tim Jones on Wednesday offered to drop plans to override Gov. Jay Nixon's veto of a tax-cut bill if Nixon would negotiate a new version he was willing to sign.

Jones said lawmakers could pass the new version in a special session and avoid the veto vote, which has become a high-stakes political fight.

"If the governor truly is serious about reducing the tax burden on all Missourians and not looking for excuse after excuse after excuse, ... then I would be more than happy to work with passing a bill right now to reduce taxes for all Missourians," Jones said in a telephone interview.

Nixon on Monday released two scenarios that show dramatic cuts in school funding if lawmakers override his veto. They showed every district would lose 8.5 percent to 14.6 percent of its foundation formula allocation, a loss of $4 million to $7 million out of the $48 million Columbia Public Schools expects this year.

Nixon budget director Linda Luebbering, however, said the figures are intended only to illustrate the bill's potential impact. "It doesn't mean that is what the governor would do," she said.

Lawmakers will meet Sept. 11 in Jefferson City to consider bills rejected by Nixon. The fight over Nixon's veto has already set new standards for how legislative battles are waged in Missouri. Supporters of the bill are using a $2.4 million ad campaign financed by wealthy activist Rex Sinquefield to persuade the public that the tax cut is good for the economy. The vote set to take place during the annual veto session will test Republican solidarity on a bill being given full-throated backing by GOP leaders.

The tax bill would cut income tax rates for individuals and corporations and exempt half of the money earned by a business from taxes. The cuts in income tax rates would take effect in 10 steps, and each step would be triggered by growth in state revenue.
The exemption for business income would take effect regardless of whether state revenue was increasing.

The scenarios Nixon presented are not tied to one another. The smaller scenario, showing 8.5 percent cuts, applies the bill's full impact in 10 years to this year's funding levels. The larger scenario shows a potential impact in the current fiscal year, but only if Congress acts by Dec. 31 to pass the Marketplace Fairness Act, a bill allowing state sales tax on Internet purchases.

Passage of that federal measure would, under the bill, trigger lower tax rates immediately. Opponents of the bill said its provisions also would inadvertently trigger $1.2 billion in tax refunds because those new tax rates would apply to past years, as well.

The figures, Nixon said in a news release, prove that passage of the tax cut over his objections "would drain hundreds of millions of dollars away from schools in every corner of our state."

Jones today accused Nixon of using "scare tactics" to give lawmakers a "false choice" between education and tax cuts. "The governor is trying to find a new excuse each week to not support this bill," he said.

In the House, Republicans will need all 109 members to succeed. Any defections would mean finding votes among Nixon's fellow Democrats.

Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, supported the bill when it passed 103-51 in May. He said yesterday that he's not certain how he will vote on the override. Its impact on education will be a major concern, he said.

Rowden said he is convinced that Congress will not pass a law this year allowing sales tax on Internet purchases.

"From a political perspective, fine, I get it, but it is not realistic," he said. "I am not going to make my decision based on whether the U.S. House passes the Marketplace Fairness Act because it is not going to happen."

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Posted in Politics on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 2:00 pm.
Research into nuclear reactions ignites interest

Research looks at excess heat.

By Karyn Spory

Wednesday, July 24, 2013 at 2:00 pm

In lieu of lunch on Tuesday, scientists participating in the International Conference on Condensed Matter Nuclear Fusion being held at the University of Missouri took the opportunity to tour MU's new Sidney Kimmel Institute for Nuclear Renaissance.

The institute known as SKINR, which is split up across campus in the Physics Building and the Engineering Building West, was created last year after Sidney Kimmel, founder and chairman of The Jones Group apparel company, donated $5.5 million to the university to study low-energy nuclear reactions.

In November, Graham Hubler, a former Naval Research Laboratory nuclear physicist, was named the director of the institute. Hubler said his main role at SKINR is directing the research toward the "right direction."

"Rather than just repeating getting excess heat, we're trying to do mechanistic measurements to try to get to the bottom of what's going on," Hubler said.

The experiments conducted within the institute, Hubler said, are not designed to create excess heat but to "find more clues" as to what is causing the excess heat in the low-energy nuclear reactions.

"That's the biggest question," Hubler said. "If we can figure out what is causing" the excess heat, "then, and I think only then, can you go out after" building a reactor.

Hubler said there are five scientists working directly in the lab on experiments such as gas loading and glow discharge, which are done in the Physics Building.

Bill Isaacson, lead research technician, is in charge of the equipment that helps to run the two experiments. Isaacson, who served as a tour guide for the Physics Building yesterday, said both
experiments worked to get hydrogen into the metal; the glow discharge uses voltage to ionize the gas, and the gas loader uses pressure.

Hubler said six or seven faculty members and their graduate students are supported through the institute to do experiments.

"Most of these experiments are designed to support SKINR, to make different types of cathodes, to do physical measurements on materials that we think might lead us to the right direction," he said.

Orchideh Azizi, lead chemist for SKINR, said she has enjoyed the international conference taking place on campus this week.

"It is amazing having all these people together and sharing results," she said. Azizi added that she has picked up some ideas for future work as well.

Hubler said he has seen a lot of "good science" being presented and discussed at the conference. He said it is those discussions about research and experiments that can lead a scientist to a new idea that enhances his or her own work, which is the purpose of the conference.

This article was published in the Wednesday, July 24, 2013 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Institute is igniting interest: Research looks at excess heat."

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Posted in Education on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 2:00 pm.
MU plans to test new emergency alert system Thursday morning

By Mollie Barnes
July 24, 2013 | 8:04 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **MU has scheduled to test a new system with text messages and social media alerts through Blackboard Connect at 8:50 a.m. Thursday.** The system would be used to alert the campus community to emergencies.

Although the vendor is new, the program is "actually the same as the old one," said Terry Robb, a Division of Information Technology spokesman at MU.

He said there have been problems in the past with messages not being delivered because sometimes when cellphone companies received thousands of messages at the same time they would treat them as spam and not send them through.

But he said the new vendor has had a good relationship with cellphone companies.

"We're hoping we will see some improvement with the delivery of text messages because I think they use slightly different technology," Robb said. "The new vendor uses a method that we hope will allow the cellphone companies to send the messages through and not treat them as spam."

People who receive the texts will no longer be asked to reply to alert test messages like they have in the past. Robb said a report feature on the program allows MU to see who receives the message and when they receive it. The old program had this, too, but people were still asked to reply to the message.

He said he didn't know exactly how long the old program took to send out all the messages, but "anecdotally it took some of them a lot longer than we would expect."

**MU had to put out a new request for vendors** for a competitive bid for the system because the old system's contract was about to expire. Because it is a public institution, MU can't just choose a provider, Campus Facilities communications manager Karlan Seville said.
The new program is run through the same company as Blackboard, which has provided online technology for MU courses for several years.

Seville said Blackboard is a good match for the campus because its technology has worked well in classrooms.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the alert system won’t be used "unless we feel there's a significant event to notify campus community."

An example from the recent past is when the university canceled classes and closed the campus in February because of winter storms.

Only university students, faculty and staff who have signed up for the alert system will receive the messages. Basi said MU is constantly encouraging people to sign up for the program.

Robb said currently across the four University of Missouri campuses, about 63,000 people are signed up for the alerts, and of those, 14,741 have opted for the text messages. When the fall 2013 semester starts, 90,000 to 100,000 people will be signed up for the alerts and about 23,000 for text messages, he said.

Basi said MU realizes the program has limitations, but it is just another tool for helping the university communicate with the campus community in an emergency.

The program can send messages in multiple formats including email, telephone calls, pages, SMS messages, RSS feeds, and Twitter and Facebook messages. Robb said the program sends all the alert types at once.

Robb said MU will see soon if the alerts come faster than the old program. Although speed is one concern, accuracy is also a focus, he said.

"We want to get a point where we have enough people so the message gets out, and by word of mouth, the message continues," he said.
Price tag for finding a new chancellor? $100,000

Chancellor Brady Deaton is retiring in November.

Staff St. Louis Business Journal

The University of Missouri has inked a $100,000 contract with a California search firm to guide the hiring process for a new chancellor for its Columbia campus.

Los Angeles-based Storbeck/Pimentel & Associates will screen prospective candidates to succeed the retiring Chancellor Brady Deaton, the News Tribune reports.

Storbeck/Pimentel recently was involved in the search for a new chancellor at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and presidential searches at Carnegie Mellon and California State University, Los Angeles, as well as aiding in the appointment of Hank Foley, the Missouri System’s new vice president for academic affairs.
WARRENSBURG — An inspired and excited crowd poured out of the recreation center at the University of Central Missouri after President Barack Obama delivered a speech Wednesday.

Attendees waited an hour longer than expected for a speech that lasted about half an hour. A lot of people in the crowd were fanning themselves because of the warm temperature in the auditorium. The speech was scheduled to begin at 4:05 p.m., but it did not start until 5:07 p.m. The room erupted in cheers when Obama jogged in and hands shot in the air holding phones and cameras in an attempt to capture his entrance.

At least three people fainted in the heat. Presidential staff quickly responded with water and walked people to less crowded areas.

"I know it's hot," Obama said as he stepped to the podium. "That's why I took off my jacket. If you've still got yours on, feel free to take it off."

Gov. Jay Nixon and Sen. Claire McCaskill, celebrating her 60th birthday, were also in attendance. When McCaskill arrived, some of the crowd sang "Happy Birthday."

Even before the arrival of the president, the atmosphere in the auditorium was buzzing with excitement. Hours before his entrance, security officials started closing the area around the Student Recreation and Wellness Center about 11 a.m., at which time the line to enter the venue already consisted of more than 100 people.

Secret Service agents in dark suits and polka dot ties and local police officers were posted around campus to maintain security.
To enter the building, everyone had to go through airport-like security. Guards checked individuals with hand-held wand detectors as sniffer dogs went through bags.

There were several eruptions of applause while waiting for Obama's arrival, and students on stage did the wave a couple of times. When the official seal was placed on the podium about 4:40 p.m., the anticipation in the room built. Eyes were fixed on the stage and chatter grew silent, but the president still didn't walk on stage for another 30 minutes.

**A focus on education**

After he arrived and dispensed of the usual presidential thank yous, Obama's speech focused on the American dream, building the middle class and **improving higher education**.

"If you think education is expensive, you should see how expensive ignorance is in the 21st century," the president said.

Obama outlined four steps to improving education in the country. The first step was to make "high quality preschool education available to every 4-year-old." This was followed by shouts of agreement from the crowd toward the back of the room.

Rethinking high schools and addressing the increasing cost of higher education was another aspect of reform that Obama addressed. He also said he wants to upgrade the technology in schools across the country.

Heidi Moore, 37, said that as a teacher and mother, making technology readily available in schools is important to her.

Moore, a mother of three, is an elementary teacher at Warrensburg's Maple Grove Elementary School and came to the event to give her children a chance to hear a sitting president speak.

**Obama applauded the University of Central Missouri's efforts to provide real-world job experience to high school students, wanting colleges to “take a look at what is going on here.” he said.**

He loved the idea of students graduating debt-free because of the collaborative efforts of the university, Lee's Summit R-7 School District and Metropolitan Community College.

“It meant a lot to have the program recognized nationally and by our president,” Brian Green, who introduced the president, said.
The collaboration, named the Missouri Innovation Campus, aims to help high school students graduate with an associate’s degree and internship experience. The program was one of the reasons Obama said he chose Warrensburg as the location for his speech.

Green, 17, a student of the Missouri Innovation Campus, introduced the president, an opportunity he said he was honored to have. Green was informed Monday night and felt rushed with the time constraints to prepare his speech. But speech writers from both the University of Central Missouri and the White House helped him construct it.

Green is set to graduate in 2014 with an associate degree. In addition to interning this summer, Green is taking two college classes and runs cross-country.

Obama’s emphasis on anyone being able to achieve the American Dream if they worked hard especially resonated with two University of Central Missouri students: Madan Gopal Kesavabhatla and Swetha Kesavabhatla.

As someone who is working to make his American dream a reality, Madan said, “People can come from anywhere and make it here in America.”

Linda Angweye, 62, came into the event to see what the president had to say and was appreciative of him “trying to mend things” amidst a contentious political environment in Washington.

“Honestly, he had a lot on his plate going in, but he's trying to do everything he can for the people,” she said.

**Crowd reactions**

Sarah Kramer, an incoming University of Central Missouri freshman, was one of about 80 students standing behind the president’s podium while he spoke and considered the opportunity to be “jaw-dropping.”

“He hit a lot of positive points and also brought up issues he said he was going to work on,” she said.

Dale Stringer, 47, thought the president’s speech was “very politically oriented to get the Congress to work together.”
“I agreed with him wanting to lower expenses, but I wanted to hear more specifics about his ideas,” Stringer said. “He’s a politician though, so he won’t give specifics, which I can understand.”

Stringer, who retired as an Air Force captain, also wanted to hear how the president planned to improve the economy and reduce college interest rates.

Meghan Reeb, Green’s girlfriend, considered the speech to be very inspirational.

“It was an amazing experience,” she said. “I’m so glad I got off work. I stood for six hours but it was completely worth it.”

Reeb, 18, also got the opportunity to shake Obama’s hand after his speech, of which Green said, “She’s not washing her hand or letting me hold it.”

_Supervising editor is Zachary Matson._
Classical music patron keeps genre vital

By Trevor Harris

*This week's Mizzou International Composers Festival is largely sponsored by a gift to the MU School of Music from Dr. Jeanne Sinquefeld.*

Some of the music playing in the Missouri Theatre this week will be heard publicly for the first time ever. That’s because starting Thursday, the University of Missouri School of Music’s annual Mizzou International Composers Festival takes the stage.

Nightly performances from Thursday through Saturday will feature selections from MU faculty and students as well as the 20-member-strong ensemble Alarm Will Sound. The festival will introduce new works by eight composers, works that may not have seen the light of day were it not for Dr. Jeanne Sinquefeld.

Formerly a professional statistician, Sinquefeld worked in academia before retiring and developing an investment management company with her husband Rex. Through the Sinquefeld Charitable Foundation, Jeanne and husband Rex are supporting programming for the Boy Scouts of America, autism research and advancing the creation of “new music”. For the latter goal, the MU School of Music has been the main beneficiary of the Sinquefeld’s awards. Last year, the Sinquefelds awarded the University of Missouri $1 million to further develop a culture of composition in the state. The award funds K-12 and high school composer camps as well as scholarships for collegiate composers of new music.

Also with the donation from the Sinquefelds the MU School of Music created the Sinquefeld Composition Prize in 2006. It is an annual competition open to University of Missouri students. Winners pen an original work that is later performed by one of Mizzou’s faculty and student ensembles. The winning composition is later recorded. Through this prize Sinquefeld is encouraging composition of new music that might best fall into the classical genre. We talked with Sinquefeld earlier this week.

Any composer can apply. [Winners] come for a week. They get their music performed by the professional group Alarm Will Sound. We didn’t put any constraints on age. We thought some college students would apply. We had people in their 30s and 40s from all over the world apply. The quality was
overwhelming. This is our fourth year of the International Composers Festival. Last year the St. Louis Symphony heard some of the pieces that we had performed and they have agreed to perform two of them this year as part of their regularly scheduled St. Louis Symphony program.

Sinquefeld’s overall goal with her donation to the MU School of Music? Grow Missouri’s own crop of composers. She sees the annual School of Music-led K-12 composers’ camp as the Little League of composition. Getting a piece played by the St. Louis Symphony means a composer has “entered the big league,” according to Sinquefeld. One piece that won a previous Sinquefeld Composition Prize was a composition by MU alumni and Kansas City-native Stephanie Berg. Berg’s 2009 composition Ravish and Mayhem will be performed this winter by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Jeanne Sinquefeld is most proud of works like this that her gift to MU helped to create. She has commissioned or supported the creation of 350 pieces of music that have been composed, performed and recorded.

It takes time to grow things. Stephanie Berg worked at our high school summer camp. She was a composition grad student. She was intimately involved in the K-12 program. And she is giving back because one of our high school winners who won the Columbia Civic High School Orchestra award, she tutored him. We are finding and growing our composers in a whole variety of ways.

Sinquefeld’s support for the arts comes from a personal passion for creating music. She plays string bass and performs in genres ranging from country & western to jazz. At their rural Osage County, Missouri home Jeanne and Rex Sinquefeld have built a performance space for Jeanne to play bass. Each summer, the Sinquefelds host the members of the ensemble Alarm Will Sound. The group rehearses pieces selected for the annual Mizzou International Composers Festival. Winning composers are also invited to do residencies at the Sinquefeld Reserve.

Asked how curious listeners might access the music she has created through her patronage Jeanne Sinquefeld admitted “we are trying to figure out how to sell and distribute new music. How do we get it played a second time?”

Hear the debut of compositions by emerging composers this week at the Mizzou International Composers Festival. Alarm Will Sound performs this Thursday and Saturday evening at the Missouri Theatre. Friday, the Mizzou New Music Ensemble takes the stage to perform works by guest Composers Augusta Read Thomas and Daniel Kellogg along with Mizzou composers W. Thomas McKenney and Paul Seitz. Details available at http://newmusicsummerfestival.missouri.edu/.
WASHINGTON • Borrowing for tuition, housing and books would be less expensive for students this fall but the costs would start climbing almost immediately under a deal the Senate was poised to pass Wednesday.

The bipartisan proposal lawmakers were considering would link interest rates on federal student loans to the financial markets, providing lower interest rates right away but higher ones if the economy improves as expected. Senate aides said lawmakers were on track to finish work by late Wednesday afternoon.

Liberal Democrats labeled the White House-backed proposal a bait-and-switch measure that would lure in new borrowers with low rates now but would cost future students.

"The bill before us today offers students and families lower student loan interest rates in the near-term but we can fully expect higher student loan interest rates in the years to come," said Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis. "Why on earth would we want to expose our students to higher rates?"

The White House and its allies said the new loan structure would offer lower rates to 11 million borrowers right away and save the average undergraduate $1,500 in interest charges.

But there was no denying the new structure could cost future students if the economy improves as expected and interest rates climb. The White House's allies instead suggested the new formula is better than the status quo.

"At the end of the day, we have a very clear choice to make: stick with the 6.8 percent interest rate or lower it," said Sen. Dick Durbin, the Illinois Democrat who oversaw the negotiations.

Durbin said senators' concerns could be part of talks this fall on the Higher Education Act. But for students right now, he said, students needed the compromise to pass to dodge higher costs.
Rates on subsidized Stafford loans doubled to 6.8 percent July 1 because Congress could not agree on a way to keep them at 3.4 percent.

Under the bipartisan deal, undergraduates this fall could borrow at a 3.9 percent interest rate. Graduate students would have access to loans at 5.4 percent, and parents could borrow at 6.4 percent. Those rates would rise as the economy picks up and it becomes more expensive for the government to borrow money.

The compromise could be a good deal for students through the 2015 academic year. After that, interest rates are expected to climb above where they were when students left campus in the spring, if congressional estimates prove correct.

As part of the compromise, Democrats won a protection for students by capping rates at a maximum 8.25 percent for undergraduates. Graduate students would not pay rates higher than 9.5 percent, and parents' rates would top out at 10.5 percent.

Using Congressional Budget Office estimates, rates would not reach those limits in the next 10 years.

But even among those who planned to vote for it, frustrations remained evident.

"The bill that is before us represents a number of compromises that were made on both sides," said Sen. Tom Harkin, the Iowa Democrat who chairs the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Harkin said the legislation is not what he would have written if he had the final say but he also said that he recognizes the need to restore the lower rates on students before they return to campus for classes.

"It's the best that we can do," Harkin said on the Senate floor. "If we don't pass this today, there will be one sure effect: student loans will be almost twice what they would be under this bill."

Most Senate Republicans who pushed for interest rates to be linked to the financial markets were likely to vote for the measure. It was negotiated by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and GOP Sens. Richard Burr of North Carolina and Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, the top Republican on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

"They may come from different political parties, but they all really care about students. And this bill proves it," said Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. "And there's something else this bill proves, too: That Democrats can work with Republicans when they actually want to do it — when they check their partisan, take-it-or-leave-it approaches at the door and actually talk with, rather than at, us."

The compromise negotiated in the Senate closely hews to what House Republicans passed this year, and that's a sticking point for some liberals.
Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., pushed for an extension of the current 3.4 percent rate so lawmakers could address the subject this fall during the revision of the Higher Education Act. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., has objected to students paying higher interest rates than the Federal Reserve offers to big banks.

"I understand that compromise isn't always pretty, but there isn't any compromise in this bill," Warren said last week when the deal was announced.

"In fact, I think the whole system stinks," she added during a Senate speech.

Sens. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Al Franken, D-Minn., planned amendments that would redirect any profits made through the bill to help low-income students.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated the bill as written would reduce the deficit by $715 million over the next decade. During that same time, federal loans would be a $1.4 trillion program.

"We've got to get out of the business of making profits of struggling families who want nothing more than to be able to send their kids to college," said Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent who caucuses with Democrats. "This legislation only makes a bad situation worse."
By DAVID ROSMAN
July 24, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

Between budget cuts, layoffs and an improving economy, Missouri’s budget surplus may be as much as $400 million. Give the citizens their money back. Yeah, that’s the ticket to make Missouri legislators look like heroes.

So it goes as one listens to the commercials voiced by Daniel P. Mehan, president and CEO of the Missouri Chamber of Commerce.

That appears to be at odds with state Rep. Rick Stream, R-St. Louis, Missouri’s House Budget Committee chairman.

As a fiscal conservative, he, too, would like to give the money back to the people: “But sometimes, you also have to spend money on big capital improvements to move the state forward.”

Thus the conservatives are once again fighting to see how conservative one can be.

Missouri is not the only state struggling with a few extra bucks, but eyes are focused here on what our legislators will do during their not-so-special session come September.

**A bad idea**

It is unfortunate that the “Give it Back” movement has the money, thus the voices, to make one think that returning money to the citizens is a good idea.

It is not.
Consider these three facts about small fiscal windfalls for citizens:

1. It is expensive to write all of those checks. Even if the state could return the majority of the money electronically (all cheer for technology!), the cost of returning the funds is wasting the very good money that is being designated for the citizens.

2. Low- and lower-middle-income families will not spend their money on new material goods. Most will spend the few extra bucks paying past-due bills, purchasing medication or food or, if the timing is right, buying clothes for their children in school.

3. There will be no new jobs. The money will not stimulate the economy, and it will not create jobs, as the fiscal conservatives believe. To do that, the money must be put to work, repairing the damage caused by past budget shortfalls.

Let’s use the money to repair our infrastructure. Missouri is the crossroads of the United States; we are the truly the middle of Middle America. With six interstates in the state and close to a dozen major federal highways crisscrossing, commerce is dependent on Missouri to maintain the byways.

**Better options**

*Let’s use the money to bolster education.* The state has woefully underfunded K-12 for years, tapping into education to balance budgets and placing additional burdens on local school districts. Buildings need repair, teaching materials need to be replaced and revised. Instead of using the crayons to write me a check, let’s give them to the kids to learn math, science and the arts.

Let’s use the money to reinvigorate the Missouri’s Second Injury Fund, which providing funding for those with pre-existing injuries or disabilities aggravated further through new work-related injuries. Yes, the governor just signed a bill that would “shore up” the fund, but as more men and women go back to work, the fund will once again be challenged.

Let’s use the money to help those in need to pay for health care. Wait. Our conservative legislature hates the idea of Obamacare so much that its members tried to make it illegal in Missouri, and they rejected the extension of Medicaid for millions of Missourians in need.

**No cure-all**

This list continues, but $400 million can only go so far, and it will not cure all of Missouri’s ills. But spending money to return money does not make a whole lot of sense.
It makes about as much sense as SB 253, which would have reduced state income taxes only to have them replaced by a sales tax. Doing the math, the sales tax would cost the lower- and lower-middle-income citizens more than they would save.

Taxes are an easy target, but they are a poor target if a state wishes to advance. It seems that our state Chamber of Commerce has forgotten the basic adage of all business: You gotta spend money to make money.

Giving money away can make you a short-term hero, but if the mission of the chamber is to “protect and advance Missouri business,” giving away money does neither.

I urge you to write your state representatives and senators and demand that they think with their heads and not their wallets. Use the surplus to put and keep Missourians at work, not make false heroes of legislators.

David Rosman is an editor, writer, professional speaker and college instructor in communications, ethics, business and politics.
Mizzou Store name change leads to mixed student feedback

MU’s University Bookstore officially changed its name June 1 and replaced the old sign with a new $5,800 one that reads “The Mizzou Store.”

This marks the second time the store has changed its name, which was last called the “Student Co-operative” from 1899 to 1939.

The store will keep the University Bookstore engraving on the outside of the building as part of MU’s history and tradition, said MU Marketing Manager Michelle Froese.

However, the name change itself was not taken lightly.

“It’s been the University bookstore for so long, but times are changing so that we offer more than just books,” Froese said. “Course materials are migrating more to a technological platform, so one of the questions we asked was, if you call yourself a bookstore, what happens 20-30 years from now when you don’t sell as many books? Does that limit what your customers look to you for?”

Shelby McGhee, junior and student store supervisor, said the store sells much more than just textbooks.

“They wanted to allow people to realize you don’t just get your books through the ‘bookstore’ now,” McGhee said.

Nevertheless, the new name entailed habitual changes for students.

“A lot of us thought it was kind of strange because it’s always been the University Bookstore, so it didn’t really make sense to change it,” Mizzou Store employee Campbell Thomas said. “I guess they wanted other stores to all have the same name, but it’s hard to remember to say.”

MU Summer Welcome leaders giving school tours to incoming freshmen were also affected by the change.

“I’ve definitely been practicing with my student groups as a Summer Welcome leader trying to say ‘The Mizzou Store,’ but ‘bookstore’ slips out sometimes,” McGhee, who is also a Summer Welcome leader, said. “It’s really just ingrained.”
Amy Sayers, a junior Summer Welcome leader, said it was hard to adjust at first because she was attached to the University Bookstore name, but the store staff helped the leaders adjust to the new name.

“Everyone was sad about it at first, but then they came in and gave us a presentation during our two weeks of training,” Sayers said. “And they explained the whole rebranding with moving away from textbooks, which does make sense.”

Junior David Wettroth was not a fan of the change.

“I feel it’s unnecessary. ‘The bookstore’ was a good name that explained it,” Wettroth said. “Usually when you go to other university stores, it’s called a bookstore; you’re not looking for ‘The Mizzou Store’ or anything.”

Regardless, The Mizzou Store had collected input before proceeding with the rebranding.

“They talked to (the Department of) Student Life, and brought in a company to interview students, employees and staff to hear as many opinions as possible,” Missouri Students Association President Nick Droege said. “They did get a lot of feedback before they tried to change the name.”

Droege said the store, which is a member of the National Association of College Stores and the Independent College Bookstore Association, also talked to other university bookstores who had gone through similar rebranding.

Other name changes, such as the University of Oregon’s Duck Shop, were met with enthusiasm, and Froese hopes for the same with MU’s.

“The uniqueness of our brand is not that we’re a university bookstore; there are tons across the nation, and there are a lot of MU’s out there,” she said. “But the thing that sets us apart as a university is the name ‘Mizzou.’ It makes sense that we change that brand and reflect that as The Mizzou Store.”

The Mizzou Store is also redesigning its interior by removing walls and moving sections around. The store also created a new website and Facebook page, McGhee said.

Droege said he thinks current students will find it hard to adjust to the name change but that the reasons behind it are valuable.

“If you look at the physical changes that are taking place in the store, there’s a hang out space now, for example,” he said. “It’s an atmosphere change more than a product change.”
MU student takes county fair queen crown

Pageant was a first for winner.

By Laura Mazurak

Wednesday, July 24, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Tuesday night's Boone County Fair Queen competition featured the usual array of sequins and tulle. Breathy pop music blasted positive affirmations as contestants walked across the brightly lit stage: "You can do anything!" "It's your time to shine!"

But halting smiles and shy waves hinted at backstage anxiety for some, even for this year's winner.

"I was pacing and staring at the wall," said Holly Sias, the winner of the 2013 queen competition. "It was very nerve-racking."

Sias, 19, is a newcomer to Boone County. The University of Missouri sophomore hails from Springfield, Ill., and said she viewed the pageant as a way to get more involved in her community away from home.

"It was something fun to look forward to" this summer, Sias said. "I got an appreciation of Boone County."

The strategic communications major bested a field of seven to take home a $700 scholarship and the title of fair queen. Haley Hall of Ashland, Rynda Nichols of Columbia and Ashleigh Robertson of Ashland were first, second and third runners-up, respectively.

Although Sias said she has always had an interest in pageants, this was her first time as a contestant.

"A lot more goes into it" than people think, Sias said. "But it's really about personality."

To prepare for the competition, Sias focused more on her volunteer work than perfecting an onstage strut. This past year she has volunteered at the Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri, D&D Farm Animal Rescue and for her sorority's national philanthropy cause, the Ronald McDonald House. Sias also has interned as a page in the Illinois Senate, an experience she discussed during her onstage interview.
Over the course of the evening, queen candidates donned evening gowns, participated in a talent competition and endured interview questions, all in pursuit of the title. The finalists' question posed a challenge for the contestants, who were asked to name an important agricultural product. While the query elicited responses such as water and oil, Sias secured her crown by explaining that she thought corn's status as an export and source of byproducts made it a valuable agricultural resource.

When Sias was announced as the winner, she demurely smoothed her sleek, floor-length dress before stepping forward to receive her tiara and sash. After a barrage of photos, she retreated backstage.

Even away from the cameras and crowd, a smile continued to spread across her face.

Sias' mother, Kara, stood by the door waiting her turn to congratulate her daughter, the new Boone County fair queen.

"She's a very brave girl," Kara Sias said. "She does things I could never imagine doing myself."

The fair continues through Saturday at the Central Missouri Events Center, 5212 N. Oakland Gravel Road.

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