MU group earns honor for Bangladesh activism

By KARYN SPORY

Thursday, August 15, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Members of a local atheist group were recently honored for their participation in a global movement.

Members of the University of Missouri student group Skeptics, Atheists, Secular Humanists and Agnostics — known as MU SASHA — received the Center for Inquiry's 2013 Campus Affiliate Group Award for Defense of Free Expression for their involvement in a worldwide protest. The protest, held in late April, was to promote freedom of expression as well as protest the incarceration of four Bangladeshi bloggers who were arrested on charges of blasphemy after publishing criticism of Islam.

The local protest took place at MU Speaker's Circle; others were held in New York; Washington, D.C.; London; and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Aaron Underwood, president of MU SASHA, said he was surprised to receive the award. The group went to the Center for Inquiry student leadership conference in Amherst, N.Y., last month, where they were recognized.

"It was all very exciting, but it didn't seem like an award was necessary for something we should be doing," Underwood said.

Underwood said although the award recognized MU SASHA, he said the Columbia Atheists group also deserved credit. "We couldn't have done it without them," he said of the protest partners.

Underwood said what made MU SASHA's protest successful wasn't just that it was making people aware of the situation but that the protest made it to the people of Bangladesh.

"Actually, the day after" the protest, the people of Bangladesh "had been given enough images and reports from world news outlets that lots of citizens rounded up and protested around the prison," Underwood said.
Paul Fidalgo, communication director for the Center for Inquiry, said the leaders being cultivated in MU SASHA will go on to become lawyers, teachers, parents and other contributors to society. "They're going to represent our community and our worldview," he said.

He said he was pleased that MU SASHA was taking initiative on promoting global freedom of expression, a value important to the Center for Inquiry.

"The student part of the secularist free-thought movement is absolutely crucial," Fidalgo said. "The fact that they are committing so much of themselves to our various causes is extremely important for the long-term prospects of the secular movement and, we think, society as a whole."
Fenton-based Kaiser Electric was awarded the electrical work on the University Physicians-South Providence clinic project under way as part of the University of Missouri Health System in Columbia, Mo.

The clinic is being built in South Providence Medical Park in Columbia. The general contractor on the $35 million project is East Peoria, Ill.-based River City Construction.

Kaiser Electric will be installing the main electrical service, indoor and outdoor lighting, branch circuiting, a nurse call system, lightning protection and a fire and security system in the new two-story, 85,500-square-foot clinic. Construction on the facility is expected to be completed in spring 2015.

The new clinic will house pediatric primary care services, family medicine services and expanded outpatient behavioral health services. University officials expect the new clinic’s more than 50 physicians and 100 staff members to receive more than 100,000 patient visits in its first year of operation.
UM President Tim Wolfe urges GOP to reconsider tax-cut bill

By James Gordon

August 15, 2013 | 8:29 p.m. CDT

SEDALIA — University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe is actively lobbying Republican legislators to preserve Gov. Jay Nixon's veto of a bill that would cut the state's income tax rate, urging them to weigh the potential costs to higher education.

Members of the Missouri House are scheduled to head into a House caucus meeting this weekend in advance of the September special session where they could vote on the override.

Wolfe said he's working closely with the governor's office in the lobbying effort. Nixon vetoed the legislation, House Bill 253, on June 5, less than a month after the Republican-led legislature passed the bill. Supporters of the bill argue it would attract economic development to Missouri by lowering income tax rates on individuals and businesses.

One of Wolfe's main points was that Missouri didn't want to be like Kansas. Facing a $600 million revenue shortfall after reducing tax rates last year, the Kansas state government cut its spending on higher education, Wolfe said. As a result, tuition rose by 7 percent at Kansas State University and by 5 percent at the University of Kansas, Wolfe said.

"It puts us in a more competitive position," Wolfe said. "If we ... keep our tuition low, we'll attract more students from Kansas to come to MU."

State Reps. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, and Caleb Jones, R-California, each confirmed they have met with Wolfe within the past few weeks. Rowden and Jones voted for HB
earlier this summer, but neither would say whether they favored overriding the veto.

Rowden said the situation in Kansas wasn't all that relevant to Missouri's budget debate. Whereas the Kansas state government made a large cut in one fell swoop, HB 253 calls for a series of smaller cuts over 10 years undercalculated provisions. According to the bill, the decrease in tax rates will go into effect only if there is a corresponding $100 million increase in revenue in any of the three preceding fiscal years.

Still, Rowden said he is reconsidering his support for HB 253, largely because of the potential impact to K-12 and higher education.

"I'm philosophically in favor of a tax cut, but I want to be sure it is the right one with the right impact," Rowden said.

For Wolfe, the fiscal situation at the UM System remains uncertain and is complicated by Nixon's imposed state funding freeze in response to the potential override to his veto. Given the $33.7 million dent in the fiscal 2014 budget and the possibility of HB 253 passing, Wolfe said, UM administrators have been forced to make contingency plans, including possible tuition increases, caps on enrollments and employee layoffs.

Rowden pointed to the budget surplus that already exists, saying it was "ripped out from under our schools" as a political maneuver by the governor intended to pressure legislators to sustain the veto. Rowden also called the governor's withholding "blatantly unconstitutional."

State Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, said he was optimistic that the governor’s veto would stand as long as a few Republican legislators who previously supported the bill are won over and none of his Democratic colleagues break from their party.

Webber said he was surprised some legislators failed to see the connection between the tax rate and the level of state government revenue. He said some seem to think the lower tax rate won't affect higher education.

"I have not had any business owners coming to me telling me they want to decrease the income tax rate," Webber said. "But I have tons telling me what we need is an educated workforce."
Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.
Stankowski Field set to reopen Monday

By T.J. Thomson

August 15, 2013 | 5:42 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA—Stankowski Field is expected to reopen Monday, despite weather delays, said Larry Bennett, senior associate director for facilities at MizzouRec Services.

MizzouRec officials pushed back the opening one week after rain hindered construction.

"It rained here virtually every day for two weeks," Bennett said. "It came at the worst time."

Construction upgrades at Stankowski Field began May 19 with the primary goal of resurfacing the track's surface. Additional improvements include: dirt work to resolve drainage issues, fencing upgrades, and kickboard installation for use by soccer players.

Bennett said each layer of the track's three-layer system requires dry conditions before a new layer can be added, and rain kept the site too wet to continue work.

Construction workers plan to paint stripes on the track surrounding the field this week, Bennett said.

"As of now, it does appear we can open sometime this Monday," Bennett said. "We're going to do more of a soft reopening; it won't be a major event."

The opening ceremony is scheduled for 3 p.m. Aug. 22, weather permitting, Bennett said.

Student fees funded the field's upgrades, which cost about $1.2 million.
"We think we're going to be coming out at less than $1.2 million for the entire project," Bennett said.

For the fall semester, both undergraduate and graduate MU campus students enrolled in more than 6 credit hours during the fall or spring semesters pay a flat-rate $138.69 recreation facility fee.
Midnight BBQ signals start of fall semester

By Lauren Elliott

August 15, 2013 | 12:24 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — MU students crowded Rollins Street for the Midnight BBQ with beef brisket and glow sticks in hand. Sophomore Nick Hughes watched from the sidewalk, accepting students’ requests to take pictures of his 150-pound, black-and-white spotted Great Dane, Truman.

Hughes, a civil engineering major from San Diego, stuck around in Columbia over the summer and was looking forward to finishing up his schooling in the next few years so he could move back to California.

This was his second time at the barbecue, but bringing Truman meant he couldn’t participate in the large dance party taking place in front of the MU Student Center.

Students waved their arms to the music as they crowded in front of two large video screens, and a DJ got the party going. A bungee run, football toss, mechanical bull and other inflatable games lined the street, and glowing beach balls bounced across the crowd as students recited lyrics to the bass-filled music.

Hoss's Market & Rotisserie, a regular vendor at the Midnight BBQ, drew lines as early as 9:30 p.m. Wednesday with baked beans, potato salad, pulled pork and chopped beef brisket. A newcomer to Columbia, the Sunflower Waffle Co., served chicken, waffles, carnival corn dogs, Mexican Coca-Cola and thick-cut maple bacon.

Maya Hernandez, area coordinator for Residential Life, was attending the BBQ for the second time. “We just had an amazing move-in and got lots of positive feedback,” she said.
A Los Angeles native, Hernandez said the summer atmosphere was calm with students away. “There was more construction and less traffic,” she said.

Sophomore Emmi Goetz and senior Marissa Asfour were volunteering for STRIPES, a student-run organization that gives safe rides home.

“It was really weird coming back and realizing just how many people I met last year,” Goetz said.

Asfour, who was at her third Midnight BBQ, said she did “typical Mizzou stuff” over the summer such as working for the MU Alumni Association. She also went to Jamaica with her best friend, who has nearly the same birthday as her. The trip was a 21st birthday gift from their parents.

Stephanie Smith, a 2006 MU graduate, remembered attending the event when she was a student. “It was on Hitt Street or something,” Smith said, as she passed out glow sticks and signed up students for the Columbia Mall Club, the mall’s email newsletter.

Smith stayed busy over the summer, helping to put on several events for the mall. At the barbecue, mall representatives in sequined, glowing party hats gave students glow sticks for signing up for the newsletter.

By 11 p.m., some of the food and game lines dwindled, but the dance party with a scheduled finish of 1 a.m. Thursday was still going strong.

*Supervising editor is* John Schneller.*
ESPN's John Anderson plans College Avenue Mile race

By Rebecca Dell

August 15, 2013 | 7:52 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — John Anderson is up for a one-mile challenge, so if you're running in the John Anderson College Avenue race, you better watch your back. "I will beat someone, you can bet," Anderson said.

Don't worry too much, though: "Look for me to start out slow and then taper off."

The ESPN SportsCenter anchor and MU graduate is organizing the charity race in Columbia on Sept. 8., to benefit the Anderson Family Charitable Foundation.

Starting at 9 a.m., runners will race down College Avenue from Broadway to Stadium, passing through parts of Stephens College and MU. Registration is available at www.ultramaxsports.com/collegeave for timed and untimed categories and group categories for college affiliates.

Anderson, a former Missouri high jumper, joked about his non-record high jump heights — he attributed his captaincy senior year to the fact that unlike many of his international teammates, he had "a valid U.S. driver's license" — but said his involvement with athletics in college eased the transition from high school by providing structure. Now Anderson, 48, is taking on a whole new set of competitors.

“My biggest competition might actually be my 11-year-old son,” he said.

The foundation, started by Anderson in 2009 with his wife, Tamara Anderson, benefits running clubs and other programs in Columbia public schools, as well as Anderson’s hometown of Green Bay, Wis.
Ed Schumacher, principal of Russell Boulevard Elementary School, started its running club in 2011. Money from the Anderson’s foundation has paid for registration and transportation for students to participate in the GO! St. Louis Read, Right and Run Marathon.

The popular club draws more than 150 kids on a good day. “It just reduces all kinds of problems in the morning, and (the children) love it,” Schumacher said.

Many children come to class with more energy and focus after a 20-minute morning run, and goal-setting is a priority. “We set it up so that every kid would be successful,” Schumacher said.

Anderson and his wife have elementary school-aged children of their own, and they wanted other children to be similarly equipped for and excited about school from an early age.

“We’ve just been really lucky,” Anderson said in regard to their careers, and they did not want to be “hoarders.”

In 2010 and 2011, the Anderson’s foundation ran the John Anderson Celebrity Golf Invitational in Columbia, but a busy schedule prevented Anderson from repeating it last year. He wanted to have another event in Columbia, so the race was born.

Susan McNay works with the foundation as the events coordinator in Columbia. She said there has been more than $130,000 raised for children in need in Missouri since the foundation started, including a $20,000 school supply and cash donation to Joplin schools following the tornado in 2011. Now she’s gearing up for the race. “We hope it’ll be an annual event,” she said.

A $20 donation, also the cost of registration, will pay for a child in one of the Columbia school running clubs to participate.

Anderson said he looks forward to a good turnout on the short race course.

“We want to just flood, flood College Avenue,” Anderson said.

"I probably will be trying to recruit runners right up until the gun goes off."

Supervising editor is Greg Bowers.
Study: All 107 U.S. Nuclear Reactors Vulnerable To Terrorists

CBS NEWS)-- Every commercial nuclear reactor in the United States is insufficiently protected against "credible" terrorist threats, according to a new report (PDF) from the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project at the University of Texas at Austin.

The report found that facilities were vulnerable to the theft of bomb-grade nuclear materials and sabotage attacks designed to cause a meltdown.

While all 107 commercial nuclear power reactors were thought to be vulnerable, the report spotlighted 11 that were most at risk. That included eight reactors that were deemed unprotected from attacks from the sea: Diablo Canyon in California, St. Lucie in Florida, Brunswick in North Carolina, Surry in Virginia, Indian Point in New York, Millstone in Connecticut, Pilgrim in Massachusetts, and the South Texas Project.

Three civilian reactors fueled with bomb-grade uranium were also deemed particularly vulnerable. They are housed at the University of Missouri in Columbia, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology - which is within 25 miles of the White House. Unlike military facilities that hold bomb-grade uranium, the report found, these facilities are not sufficiently defended against a credible terrorist threat.

As a release announcing the report notes, the Sept. 11 hijackers considered flying a passenger get into a New York City-area nuclear reactor.

"More than 10 years have come and gone since the events of September 2001, and America's civilian nuclear facilities remain unprotected against a terrorist attack of that scale," said report co-author Alan J. Kuperman. "Instead, our civilian reactors prepare only against a much smaller-scale attack."

The facility near the White House, Kuperman added, is not required to even protect against the smaller-scale attack, known as "design basis threat."

"We know where the weak spots are when it comes to nuclear facilities, so it would be the height of irresponsibility to fail to take action now," he said.

The report found that some U.S. government nuclear facilities are protected against most or all threats, but others remain unprotected because they are seen as having little appeal to terrorists or because officials believe an attack would not be catastrophic.
The report's authors take issue with that calculation, saying it is impossible to know which sites terrorists favor or which could be used to cause the most harm. They recommend that all facilities be upgraded to defend against a maximum credible terrorist attack.
Report: All U.S. Nuclear Facilities Vulnerable to Terrorism

University of Texas report finds facilities will not protect against numerous types of large-scale attacks

More than a decade removed from the 9/11 attacks, all 107 nuclear reactors in the U.S. are vulnerable to acts of terrorism, according to a new report from the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project at the University of Texas—Austin.

The report states that the combined private and public security operations at facilities licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission would not be able to defend against a "maximum, credible, non-state adversary."

Nuclear reactors are not required to defend against numerous types of attacks because they are deemed to be beyond the "design-basis threat," which draws a line between small-scale and large-scale attacks.

Threats that meet the design-basis threat involve multiple groups attacking from multiple entry points, the willingness to kill or be killed, knowledge about target selection and a broad range of weapons and equipment, including ground and water vehicles, according to the report.

Airborne attacks, for instance, are excluded "because the weaponry needed to defend against such a threat, surface-to-air missiles or fighter aircraft, cannot be possessed by the private security forces that protect commercial nuclear plants."

The NRC finds the government responsible for protecting nuclear reactors from such attacks.

"Less than two dozen miles from the White House and Capitol Hill, a nuclear reactor contains bomb-grade uranium, but it is not required to protect against even the lesser 'design basis threat' of terrorism," said Alan Kuperman, report co-author and coordinator of the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project, in a news release.

That facility, located in Gaithersburg, Md., along with two other civilian reactors at the University of Missouri—Columbia and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are...
supposed to convert to non-weapons-grade, low-enriched uranium fuel, but will continue to be fueled by bomb-grade uranium for the next decade, according to the report.

"We know where the weak spots are when it comes to nuclear facilities, so it would be at the height of irresponsibility to fail to take action now," Kuperman said.

Coastal nuclear facilities in at least eight states are vulnerable to nautical attacks but are not required to protect against them because the NRC deems airborne and seaborne attacks beyond the design-basis threat.

The 9/11 Commission Report suggests that al-Qaida considered flying a commercial airline into a nuclear reactor in the New York City metropolitan area. They rejected the idea because they mistakenly believed that the airspace surrounding such a facility was restricted and any aircraft would be shot down before impact.

The report states that although there have not been any recent major acts of terrorism on nuclear facilities, there have been reported attempts to blow up reactors in Argentina, Russia, Lithuania, Western Europe, South Africa and South Korea.
Probe finds nuclear reactor near Columbia among most vulnerable to terrorism

NO DIRECT MENTION

By Ben Kamisar

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — All 107 nuclear reactors in the United States are inadequately protected from terrorist attacks, according to a Defense Department-commissioned report released Thursday.

The report, by the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Project at the University of Texas at Austin, warns that the current security required of civilian-operated reactors fails to safeguard against airplane attacks, rocket-propelled grenades and more than a small handful of attackers.

The research highlights the 11 most vulnerable reactors, including plants near Southport, N.C., Port St. Lucie, Fla., Columbia, Mo., and Gaithersburg, Md., less than 25 miles from the White House. It doesn’t mention the specific security plans for each plant because they aren’t publicly available and the report doesn’t contain classified material. Instead, it highlights the broader regulations that would apply to each type of plant.

“There are 104 nuclear power reactors and three research reactors, none of which are protected against a 9/11-style terrorist attack,” Alan J. Kuperman, an associate professor at the university who co-authored the report, said during a conference call Thursday.

He said current policies “leave U.S. nuclear facilities . . . vulnerable to credible terrorist threats of theft of bomb-grade material and sabotage that could cause a massive meltdown and release of radiation.”

Kuperman made multiple references to the 9/11 Commission’s finding that al Qaida had considered targeting a nuclear power reactor during the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, which he said was proof that this was already on “al Qaida’s radar screen.”

Three organizations control the safety of nuclear materials: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission oversees civilian reactors, the Department of Energy looks after its research reactors and the Department of Defense controls nuclear weapons and fuel, with the help of the DOE. Because
each group creates its own threat assessment, referred to as the “design basis threat,” security standards vary.

“Design basis threat should be the same for all U.S. nuclear facilities, public or private, that pose catastrophic risks,” Kuperman said, highlighting a conclusion from the report.

Civilian utility companies with reactors under NRC guidelines have been reluctant to spend significantly to increase protections past those guidelines, he added.

Matthew Bunn, a Harvard University professor who’s an expert on nuclear theft and terrorism, said the nuclear agency relied on security from other parts of the government to augment the reactors’ protection from aircraft crashes, due to either accidents or attacks.

“It’s not that the problem is being ignored,” he said. “The view at the NRC is that the measures other parts of the government are taking are sufficient to reduce that risk to an acceptable level.”

Bunn said the NRC had greatly increased its protection levels since 9/11.

In a statement, the NRC called its security requirements “robust” and said it was “confident that these important facilities are adequately protected.”

The Brunswick Nuclear Plant outside Southport, N.C., is among the 11 most vulnerable sites thanks to its proximity to the coast, which the report says makes it susceptible to attacks from the water. Rita Sipe, a spokeswoman for Duke Energy, the plant’s operator, said that while she couldn’t discuss security arrangements, the Brunswick plant was “robust” and the company had confidence in its plans.

Bunn said it was odd that the NRC’s threat assessment hadn’t included rocket-propelled grenades, citing their availability in other countries and a 1982 attack in France in which a grenade was fired at a nuclear plant.

Another issue for Bunn is what he calls the “security culture” at these plants – the need for all employees to take security seriously. He pointed to a situation last year when multiple protesters broke into a nuclear weapons plant in Tennessee and scattered human blood.

“It’s not an easy matter to maintain security culture at these places,” Bunn said. “Nobody ever attacks at these places. For most security guards, you will never see an attack during your entire career. Every alarm you will ever hear in your entire career will be a false alarm.”