Education officials consider Nixon’s pledge to boost funding

By Rudi Keller

Sunday, October 27, 2013 at 2:00 am

Gov. Jay Nixon made big promises for education funding last week that could mean $17.3 million or more for public schools in Boone County over the next three years as well as a large influx of money for the University of Missouri.

Nixon did not say, either in his address to higher education leaders Tuesday or in his speech to public school leaders Wednesday, how much his promises will cost. But he did say that defeat of the tax cut proposed by lawmakers and a growing state economy will allow him to spend more on education after several years of stagnant or falling budgets.

For the first time since he took office in 2009, Nixon said, he could promise to ask lawmakers for enough to fully support the Foundation Formula, the state's basic aid program for public schools. To do so this year would cost $600 million, said Ron Lankford, deputy commissioner of education.

Nixon said he intends to reach the goal over three years. But he warned additional funding could be jeopardized by new efforts to cut taxes.

"And with higher funding come higher expectations," Nixon said to public school leaders.

In Boone County, Columbia Public Schools would receive the bulk of the new money — $13.1 million, or 27 percent more in state support. In the five smaller districts, state support would increase 16 percent to 24 percent, and the smallest district, Sturgeon, would gain about $290,000.

Columbia schools would start by dedicating money to building maintenance, keeping class sizes down and paying higher wages to attract the best teachers and administrators, Superintendent Chris Belcher said. "There is a huge pent-up demand in our district for services, and there is a lot of maintenance we are deferring," he said.
Nixon promised "substantial" funding increases for higher education, both in aid to public colleges and universities and for student aid. There is no state formula to set college funding as there is for public schools, but restoring the cuts Nixon made to balance past budgets would cost $102 million. Increasing funding for student aid to levels sought by the Department of Higher Education would require another $50 million, Commissioner of Higher Education David Russell said.

"It's a tricky situation because I don't know what kind of numbers he is thinking about, so I kind of have to reverse engineer it a little bit," Russell said.

The costs required to fund the formula change annually as attendance and other factors change. The formula sets a target for per-pupil costs and seeks to make up the difference between local taxes and that amount. The target should have been adjusted but has not been because of a lack of money, Lankford said.

This year, each district is receiving only 93 percent of its reduced allocation. "For businesses to really seek out Missouri, we have got to improve our math and science proficiencies," Lankford said. "School districts are in a position where they are going to need to catch up with things we would have to put off if we are really going to get the skills needed to get to family-sustaining wage rates."

Nixon took office just as the worst recession in 30 years was driving state revenue down. Almost $2 billion in federal support for the state budget helped cushion falling state revenue, but almost every program except the Foundation Formula was cut.

School transportation funding this year is $99.7 million, $68 million less than when Nixon took office. The $37.5 million Career Ladder program was eliminated, and support for the Parents as Teachers program is $21 million below fiscal 2009 levels.

**The University of Missouri System received $461 million from the state in fiscal 2010. It received an appropriation of $407 million this year. Through spokesman John Fougere, UM President Tim Wolfe declined to be interviewed for this story.**

The Coordinating Board for Higher Education will focus on college affordability, higher graduation rates and innovative ways to deliver programs in high demand, Russell said. "The board and I would both argue that we need to continue to invest in the performance funding model that would induce institutions to move in the direction of state goals overall," he said.

Across the state, education supporters are pleased with Nixon's spending proposals, said Brent Ghan, spokesman for the Missouri School Boards' Association. The toughest part will be getting lawmakers to go along, he said.

"It is not just education that has faced state funding issues," Ghan said. "There are going to be lots of competing demands."
The Mizzou Alumni Association honored 16 outstanding faculty and alumni at its 46th annual Faculty-Alumni Awards Ceremony at the Reynolds Alumni Center. The Distinguished Service Award, the Distinguished Faculty Award and 14 Faculty-Alumni Awards were presented to outstanding MU faculty and alumni. Harold Hook, who received a bachelor’s degree in business administration in 1953, a master’s degree in accountancy in 1954 and an honorary doctorate in law in 1983 from the University of Missouri, received the 58th annual Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor awarded to an MU alumnus. Established in 1956, the award recognizes outstanding service by an individual whose efforts have added to MU’s excellence. Hook is a recognized scholar and inventor. He now works in Houston as founder and president of Main Event Management Corp., which provides management training, consulting and organizational development services to all types of organizations. Ruth Stumpe Brent Tofle, BS HE ’72, a professor and chair of the Department of Architectural Studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences at MU, has been honored with the 54th annual Distinguished Faculty Award. Established in 1960, the award recognizes a faculty member whose sustained efforts in teaching, research and service have added to MU’s excellence. The award places special emphasis on the faculty member’s relationships with students. Tofle led one of the first accredited interior design programs and developed the first and only online doctoral program in interior design. Her program at MU was named the fourth-most admired graduate program in interior design in the United States by DesignIntelligence, a design council publication. MAA Faculty-Alumni Awards recognize the achievements of faculty and alumni. Assistant, associate and full professors are considered for their work as teachers and researchers and their relationships with students. Alumni are considered for their accomplishments in professional life and service to their communities and alma mater. This year, 14 awards were presented: Shawn Askinosie, founder and CEO of Askinosie Chocolate (alumnus); Marybeth Brown, professor of physical therapy, MU (faculty member); Glen Cameron, professor and Maxine Wilson Gregory chair in journalism research, MU (faculty member); Ward Chambers, executive director of international health, professor of internal medicine (alumnus); Tyrone “Ty” Christian, managing partner, TRC Consulting Group, (alumnus); Jay Dade, attorney and shareholder, Polsinelli, PC (alumnus); Major Garrett, chief White House correspondent, CBS News (alumnus); Steven Keller, associate professor of chemistry, associate director of MU Honors College (faculty member); Linda Kovachevich Klein, president and CEO, Klein & Co. (alumna); Lynda Kraxberger, associate dean for undergraduate studies and administration, chair of convergence journalism faculty, MU (alumna and faculty member);
Michael LeFevre, professor of future of family medicine, vice chair director of clinical services, MU (alumnus and faculty member); Pat Okker, professor of English, MU (faculty member); Ed Rapp, group president and executive office member, Caterpillar, Inc. (alumnus); Steven Zweig, M.D., endowed professor and chair of family and community medicine, director of MU Interdisciplinary Center on Aging (alumnus and faculty member).

Dale Fitch, an assistant professor of social work at the University of Missouri, recently received an award from the Council on Social Work Education for the ways in which he has incorporated ePortfolios into his classes’ curriculum as well as the school’s curriculum. Essentially, ePortfolios allow students to create online displays of their classwork. Fitch said senior-level classes at colleges and universities often include some type of portfolio component in which soon-to-be graduates compile their most impressive work into some type of tangible artifact, such as a three-ring binder or ePortfolio. However, Fitch has students begin working on their portfolios during their first social work class and throughout their entire degree program.
Parade draws lively crowd to MU campus, downtown

Football performance is driving the excitement.

By Alan Burdziak

Sunday, October 27, 2013 at 2:00 am

The University of Missouri football team is soaring in its second year in the Southeastern Conference, and the excitement about the on-field performance seemed to give a boost to attendance at Saturday's Homecoming parade.

Thousands of people lined the streets on the MU campus and in downtown Columbia for the parade, which is part of the university's 102nd annual Homecoming celebration.

Marching bands, fire trucks and cheerleaders delighted the crowds of students, alumni and Columbia residents along the parade route. Several spectators said the turnout was much higher than last year thanks to warmer temperatures and the football Tigers' No. 5 ranking.

Katie Crowe, 21, who works at Kaldi's Coffeehouse, was selling coffee in front of the Ninth Street business. When the football team is doing well, she said, it attracts more people on game days and to the Homecoming parade.

"It makes sense because we're doing so well and now we're in the SEC and the alumni are more likely to come back," she said.

The parade also provides a boon for downtown business, said Crowe, a senior journalism student at MU.

Homecoming is a tradition for Michael Quinn. People will show up for the annual parade regardless of the football team's record, he said, but the recent success on the field does add to the excitement.

"I think this year it's a little more electric because the football team is doing well," said Quinn, 34. "I think the SEC has been a help as far as bringing Mizzou kind of to a wider audience."
Since he was a kid he's been coming to the parade every year, he said, and this year he brought his two children with him, a 6-year-old girl and 9-year-old boy.

"Homecoming is just a big deal," Quinn said. "It just is, especially for Columbia kids."

Annie McClay, a senior at MU studying English and religious studies, said she came out mostly to support her sorority and her boyfriend's fraternity, which both had floats in the parade. Originally from Omaha, Neb., McClay, 21, said the excitement around the parade was palpable.

"It's just so cool to see the entire town come out and bond together and all the alumni coming back," she said.

Quinn was one of many people who brought their families to enjoy the festivities. Justin Wineinger stood on Ninth Street holding his 14-month-old daughter, Ella.

Wineinger said the nicer weather and the football team's winning ways likely helped the turnout.

MU food sciences graduate Charlie Brockway said spirits were high as he stood on Broadway watching the parade.

The football team's "high ranking helps this year, and the new SEC crowd probably boosts the morale," he said.

Quinn said the parade seems to grow every year and has become more coordinated. Whether people are affiliated with the university doesn't matter, he said. Many of his friends in the area who are also parents come to Columbia for the parade every year.

"You don't miss the Homecoming parade," Quinn said.
MU alumni, Columbia community come out for Homecoming Parade

BY Elise Moser

COLUMBIA — MU Homecoming started off with a bang Saturday morning as the annual parade took off down Ninth Street.

Marching bands from around mid-Missouri, Missouri sports teams, local businesses and MU fraternities and sororities were just some of the many marchers celebrating the 102nd MU Homecoming. The parade started at 9 a.m. and drew crowds from Columbia and beyond.

Parade highlights included Marching Mizzou, which started things off with 'Every True Son' and the MU fight song, 'Fight Tiger,' and the floats decorated by sororities and fraternities as part of their annual Homecoming competition.

Each float was decorated to represent a different American city, from the extraterrestrial-themed Roswell, N.M., float to papier-mache Truman the Tiger riding on a horse on the race track in the Louisville, Ky.-themed float.

Parade as tradition

For lifetime Columbia residents and MU graduates Jessica and Michael Crews, the parade is a long-standing tradition. The siblings said they have been going to the parade for as long as they can remember.

"It's been ingrained in our blood to go here," Jessica Crews said. She graduated in 2008 with a degree in communication. Her brother, Michael Crews, said he wouldn't miss the Homecoming celebrations for the world. He graduated from MU in 2003.

Attending MU was a given for both siblings, whose father, Doug Crews, graduated from MU in 1973 and was president of the Mizzou Alumni Association in 2004.

Both siblings said coming to MU gave them a different perspective on the city they grew up in.

"When you live on campus, it's like a city within a city," Jessica Crews said.
Michael Crews said attending MU gave him a new sense of pride in Columbia. "We know the town but we're still enjoying it with all the other students," he said. "I'm proud to be from Columbia and proud to have gone to Mizzou."

**Coming home**

After spending eight years as a student at MU, Lisa Brennaman graduated from the School of Medicine in 2004 and moved to St. Joseph. But Brennaman, an OB-GYN at University Hospital, said she and her family moved back to Columbia in 2012 because she loves the city.

"We just really enjoy it," she said. "There's a sense of community."

Brennaman said her children, Jack, 7, and Lucy, 3, are big Tiger fans and enjoy the festivities of the parade.

For Brennaman, Homecoming is a time to celebrate her years at MU.

"I have lifelong relationships and friendships from my time at Mizzou," she said.

**Becoming a part of the community**

Although she graduated from Lincoln University in 2004, Columbia resident Dana Vaughn said MU Homecoming is a fun tradition for her.

Vaughn has three children who all love the parade. Her favorite part is the floats.

"I like seeing how creative they are (each year)," she said.

Although Vaughn isn't an MU graduate, she said she still feels welcome during Homecoming weekend. She said Homecoming is like "a big pep rally where everyone is interacting and the community comes out and supports all of the teams."
Homecoming activities start this evening

Greek Town skits, parade highlights.

By Karyn Spory

Friday, October 25, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Downtown Columbia storefronts have been painted black and gold in honor of the University of Missouri's 102nd annual Homecoming celebration — "The Black and Gold Standard."

Alyson Friend, coordinator of alumni activities at MU, said this weekend will be packed with traditional Homecoming activities.

Today from noon to 5 p.m., Homecoming Headquarters was to be open at the Reynolds Alumni Center at Tiger and Conley avenues.

"This is the kickoff to the weekend," Friend said.

Friend said alumni association staff planned to be at the headquarters with light refreshments — including kettle corn popped by the Bates County alumni chapter — to greet visitors and show them the alumni center. Friend said Homecoming merchandise is on sale at the headquarters.

From 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., fraternities and sororities in MU's Greek Town will perform skits outside of houses decorated in Homecoming regalia.

At 9:30 p.m., the Mizzou Spirit Rally will begin. Friend said during the rally, the Homecoming directors will be introduced and will share statistics about the results of the Homecoming blood and food drives.

"Service is a large component of Homecoming for us," she said.

A free, campuswide concert will follow the rally, featuring Youngblood Hawke, an indie pop band based in Los Angeles. The concert will be on Rollins Street in front of the MU Student Center.

Game day activities will begin tomorrow at 9 a.m. with the 102nd anniversary Homecoming Parade, which will start on Rollins Street, snake around downtown and end at Elm and Sixth streets.
No on-street parking will be allowed along the parade route.

Preferred parking garages for the parade are Virginia Avenue Garage, University Avenue Garage and Hitt Street Garage on the MU campus and city parking structures at Eighth and Walnut; Tenth and Cherry; Sixth and Cherry; Fifth and Walnut; and Eighth and Cherry. Parking in downtown garages is free tomorrow and Sunday.

The Romp, Chomp and Stomp tailgate at Carnahan Quadrangle south of Jesse Hall will begin at 11 a.m. tomorrow and end at 2 p.m. Friend said a limited number of walk-up tickets will be available at $15 per person for members of the alumni association and $20 per person for nonmembers. Admission includes a tailgate meal, beverages including two Bud Light beers, entertainment and games. Friend said participants can come and go as they please and that the alumni center will have ESPN's "College Gameday" on so visitors can catch up on other games.

The Homecoming football game against the South Carolina Gamecocks begins at 6 p.m. at Faurot Field.
Loaner clothing allows MU students to dress for success

By Karyn Spory

Friday, October 25, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Allysen Adrian needed an outfit for a class presentation but wasn't sure what was appropriate or whether she had anything in her closet that would work. That's where Truman's Closet came in.

The Missouri Student Association, or MSA, project allows University of Missouri students, faculty and staff to borrow professional business attire free of charge.

Adrian, a freshman hospitality management major, said she is not the best shopper and doesn't trust her judgment when it comes to putting an outfit together. She thought Truman's Closet could help.

Upon entering the shop at 1400 Rock Quarry Road, No. 8, Adrian was greeted by two volunteers — Brianna Donahue, a freshman international business major, and Lauren Alexander, a freshman accounting major. The women, who also serve as stylists, asked Adrian what she was looking for, what kind of event she was going to and whether she wanted them to avoid certain colors.

Adrian was handed several options — all clothes that have been donated — and tried them on in a dressing room. Adrian ended up choosing a black, three-quarter sleeve blazer she could pair with items from her own closet. Adrian said Truman's Closet was a huge help and that she felt less stressed about her class presentation next week.

Donahue, one of 18 volunteers at the facility, said she has experience in retail sales and has enjoyed bringing that experience to Truman's Closet.

Truman's Closet opened Sept. 30 and has helped 13 students since, said Charlie Hall, sophomore business major and volunteer chairman for the project.

Sean Joy, director of student services and a graduate student studying occupational therapy, said there is more to Truman's Closet than just borrowing clothes. "A big part" of the service "is an educational component and working with different departments, schools and colleges on campus
to increase students' awareness about professionalism, etiquette and to really make every Tiger successful," Joy said.

Joy said two education co-chairs are working on curriculum to go along with Truman's Closet. Joy said the educational component will include success tips for interviews and defining the difference between business casual, business professional and when wearing those are appropriate. He said MU's Trulaske College of Business has been a big help with the project and might do some co-programming with them in the future. The business school "has a lot of amazing things for their students," Joy said, and MSA hopes to "figure out how we can stretch that out to all students."
'Big technical flub' slowing health insurance sign-ups in Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The opening slide for a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services presentation today on the launch of the healthcare.gov website said it best.

“Oops.”

That curt assessment of the error-prone federal insurance marketplace came from Kit Wagar, an Affordable Care Act specialist in the agency’s regional office in Kansas City (and a former state capital correspondent for The Kansas City Star, a background that may contribute to his candor.)

The marketplace’s debut will “go down in history as one of the big technical flubs. But we’ll get past it.” Wagar told a group assembled for the annual conference of the Center for Health Policy at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Since the balky website went live Oct. 1, the federal government has declined to say how many people have actually enrolled in private health plans in the 36 states where the federal agency is running the marketplace.

But 700,000 people nationwide have set up accounts and begun the process, Wagar noted. And “the whole website is not dysfunctional,” he said. For example, the webchat feature works and the site is loaded with information to help consumers prepare to sign up, he said.

If you’ve got all your data handy, you can complete the process in about 20 minutes – at least in states with state-run websites that “actually work,” he said.

In Missouri, which relies on the federally run site, the system is still moving slowly.

Two Columbia, Mo.-based insurance navigators said they haven’t signed up anyone yet, but they’re getting closer.

Aaron Swaney, who counsels consumers at Family Health Center in Columbia, said that for the first time, he helped a consumer get through the whole application process on Thursday, though, in the end, the person decided not to sign up. Swaney said the process took about 45 minutes.

Jeremy Milarsky manages navigators for Primaris Healthcare Business Solutions, which got a $1 million federal grant to coordinate a statewide network of counselors.
In the first two weeks, he said, the network’s navigators helped 250 consumers, either in person or by phone. Out of that group, 24 people set up accounts. But for various reasons, none enrolled.

Some just wanted information, he said.

Others fell in a coverage gap: Their income is below the federal poverty level, meaning they make too little to be eligible for tax credits to buy private insurance but aren’t eligible for Medicaid because Missouri didn’t expand the program to include the working poor.

For those in the gap, the only good news was that they will be exempted from federal penalties for not carrying health insurance next year. That’s “not exactly a sunshine-and-rainbows story, but at least they know where they stand,” Milarsky said.

There also were some bright spots, he said, such as the small-business owner who found a low-cost “bronze” plan that will cost her less than $100 a month in premiums, thanks to federal subsidies.

“No, she couldn’t get through healthcare.gov...but she walked away happy” because once the computer glitches are fixed, she will get insurance for the first time.

“Healthcare.gov is a broken door,” Milarsky said. “It’s not a broken store.”
Slogging and blogging through a family austerity plan

23 hours ago • By Jim Gallagher jgallagher@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8390

Michelle and Jeff McDowell and their three young children live in Wildwood. He’s an IT engineer. She’s a stay-at-home mom.

Until a couple of years ago, they’d been living a little over their head. They had run up $22,000 in credit card debt, not thinking much of it. After all, making the payments was no problem. “We thought credit card debt was normal,” he said.

Then trouble hit. Their third child was born, and with the baby came a $10,000 medical bill. Michelle had been working. But given the cost of day care for three children, the job no longer made sense.

Just then, Jeff’s company canceled its annual employee bonus.

With less household income, that $22,000 in credit card debt started to look very scary.

“The biggest panic was the realization that, if we didn’t change, we wouldn’t be able to pay for the kids’ college. We’d be eating dog food in retirement,” Jeff said.

So, the family came up with a financial austerity plan.

Then, they did something really unusual. They let the world in on it. They launched seedebtrun.com, a blog to chronicle their climb out of debt and share tips on saving and frugal spending.

“It was really about the accountability thing. We didn’t know if anybody would read it,” Jeff said.

The McDowells put a graph on the website to show their progress in paying down debt. If they started to slip, the graph would be an embarrassing reminder.

They hoped the blog might also encourage other people trying to dig out of debt.

There are dozens of similar blogs on the Internet in which people who aren’t financial experts share stories and tips for dealing with money.

They are generally a good thing, because they motivate readers to improve their finances, says Rob Weagley, who chairs the department of personal financial planning at the University of Missouri-Columbia.
“I think these bloggers can sometimes get people excited, turn the switch on and get them to actually do something.”

That said, he notes that not all the advice is good. The kind of blog that promises too much, like retirement at age 40, is probably not helpful.

**STRETCHING THEIR DOLLARS**

Austerity is not pleasant. “The first thing we did was tear apart the budget at the fine-grain level,” Jeff said.

They kept cable TV, but his “baseball addiction” suffered as they cut it to a basic tier. Michelle decided to cut the family’s hair, including her own.

They brought the kids in on the program, warning that there would be no vacation that year.

“I stopped buying coffee at work,” he said. “I asked the boss if I could work from home another day. It saved on gas.”

It was a shock to their sense of who they were.

“Growing up middle class, there are things you take for granted, like getting your hair done or getting the kids new clothes for school,” he said.

They turned down evenings out with friends if they would cost money.

On the blog, Jeff describes his decision to shop at Aldi’s, the discount food chain.

“I have trouble putting into words the feelings that have kept me from stepping into an Aldi up to this point,” he wrote. “I keep telling myself that I didn’t think that I was too good to shop in a discount store, but perhaps that feeling was inside of me somewhere.

“Perhaps I had the thought that since I grew up in a middle-class family, went to college, and worked hard for a living meant that I am entitled to only buy food in the bright, shiny — and completely overpriced — supermarkets,” he wrote on the blog.

He was happy with what he found: “A big bag of frozen chicken breasts for $5.99! Holy smokes! We regularly buy the exact same thing for $9.99!” he wrote.

From the blog, it is clear that Michelle and Jeff love and care for each other. Here’s a post by Michelle, from the middle of their struggle, written after a tiff over weeding their lawn:

“I began to realize how many times my husband had been the one talking me down off the ledge.

“How many times had I called him asking if it was really absolutely necessary to abstain from shopping? How many times had I needed emotional support when I felt so down about our financial situation that I’d considered giving up? How many nights did I need coaxing into the light? And who had been the one
who had lifted me up, dusted me off, and held my hand through those times? I realized that my husband and I have been taking turns being the strong one throughout this process.

They started looking for extra income. Jeff delivered flowers around Valentine’s Day. They signed up advertisers for their blog, but it’s “not a major income generator,” he said. They read books on personal finance to learn how to save and invest.

It took 14 months, but the credit card debt was gone by early this year.

Their credit score improved. That helped when they sold their home this year and moved up to one big enough for their expanded family.

Austerity is over. They’re planning a vacation again.

The experience turned them into committed cheapskates. On the Web, Jeff blogs about trying out running shoes, then buying them half-price on the Internet. They still shop at three grocery stores to catch the lowest prices.

It helps that they’re both good writers. The blog reads like a conversation over the kitchen table.

They’re continuing the blog in hopes of helping people in their former fix.

“People that have that helpless feeling can see that a family just like us was able to fight through it,” Jeff said.
MU business school adds risk management and insurance program

Trulaske to add RMI specialty.

By Karyn Spory

Saturday, October 26, 2013 at 2:00 am

In celebration of its centennial year, the University of Missouri Trulaske College of Business announced yesterday that a new program will be available for students.

The Trulaske College of Business will be offering a new program in risk management and insurance — RMI.

The program is funded by $1 million in donations from corporate and private donors including Duncan and Shirley Matteson, Tom and Betty Scott and Peter and Ellen Clune as well as Missouri Employers Mutual, Columbia Insurance Group and Shelter Insurance.

The program is for finance students interested in the specialized area and will graduate with specific skills in managing risk for corporations, business and individuals, according to a news release.

"RMI is about the management of risk for industries, firms and individuals," said Joan Gabel, dean of the Trulaske College of Business. "It ranges from the protection of risk through traditional insurances to sophisticated modeling of risk that is packaged for investments."

The announcement about the new program was made last night during the annual Davenport Society dinner.

"Insurance risk management is a booming industry and growth market with tremendous opportunity for student jobs, industry partnership and high-impact research," Gabel said in a prepared statement, adding that agencies offer three-dimensional career paths for students.

According to a news release, the program will begin once a director is identified. Gabel said the college is conducting a nationwide search for a director and once the director is selected, he or she will create a long-term plan for how to implement the curriculum.
She added that increased demand in the program would dictate if more faculty members would be needed long term. Gabel did not indicate when she hoped to have a director in place.