MU News Bureau

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MU orders inspection of all facilities in wake of balcony collapse

Saturday, February 22, 2014 | 7:19 p.m. CST; updated 6:28 p.m. CST, Sunday, February 23, 2014

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin speaks at a news conference held after Lt. Bruce Britt, of the Columbia Fire Department, was fatally injured in a fall from a second-story walkway early Saturday morning at University Village apartments. "We immediately brought in a structure engineering firm to examine the affected facility first and next all those like it in University Village," Loftin said. "With advice from the firm we've done appropriate actions to guarantee that the other buildings in that facility (University Village) are in fact safe."— SARAH ROTHBERG

BY JOE GUSZKOWSKI

COLUMBIA – MU has hired an engineering firm to inspect all facilities owned and leased by the university after a balcony collapsed at MU-run University Village apartments Saturday morning.

The firm inspected all other MU Residential Life buildings, along with the rest of the apartments at University Village, MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said at a news conference for a firefighter killed in the collapse.

Vertical supports were installed beneath other University Village walkways on Saturday to give them additional support, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

Inspections of all other facilities owned or leased by MU will begin Monday, Loftin said.
"We are very concerned about the ongoing safety of all the Mizzou family, especially our students," he said.

Shortly after 4 a.m., part of a second-story balcony collapsed at University Village apartments building 707. Lt. Bruce Britt of the Columbia Fire Department became entrapped while responding and died from his injuries at University Hospital. MU hired an engineering firm to perform the inspections, Basi said.

"We do have experts on our campus, but we routinely rely on external experts for additional review and inspection from time to time," he said.

Built in 1956 and virtually unchanged since, the two-story brick apartments were designed to house graduate students and students with families.

MU Residential Life had been considering renovating or rebuilding University Village since 2008, according to previous Missourian reporting.

In 2012, Residential Life Director Frankie Minor told the Missourian he had spoken to private developers about the possibility of rebuilding University Village and University Heights, another university-run apartment complex, but that it'd been a struggle to find a financially feasible model for doing so.

COLUMBIA — Members of MU's Department of Residential Life and building engineers addressed residents of the MU-run University Village apartments, following Saturday's deadly walkway collapse.

Frankie Minor, Department of Residential Life director, said the university is still waiting on answers as to what caused the collapse and fielded a bevy of questions from concerned residents.
"We don't have all the information," Minor said. "We want to make sure we're doing a thorough analysis of what happened, but we're relying upon the experts to critically analyze this, to come up with the most accurate representation of what happened."

Residents living in the affected building have been evacuated, but they were able to retrieve essential items from their apartments Saturday night and Sunday morning. Minor said they have temporarily been placed at other campus facilities or in hotels.

Wooden structures have been placed beneath walkways on all buildings in the complex as a temporary preventive measure. The structures were recommended by engineers to guarantee safety and could remain in place for the next six to eight months.

"We're waiting on their analysis and their report to determine what corrective measures might need to be taken," Minor said. "Our bottom line concern is safety and security."

Early Saturday morning, part of a second-story balcony of building 707 at the University Village apartment complex collapsed. Columbia firefighter Lt. Bruce Britt was trapped while responding and later was pronounced dead at University Hospital. No residents were injured.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin ordered inspections of all other MU-owned or leased facilities. These inspections will begin Monday, he said.

Built in 1956 and virtually unchanged since, the two-story brick University Village apartments were designed to house graduate students and students with families. The MU Department of Residential Life has been considering renovating or rebuilding University Village since 2008.

Residents at the meeting Sunday expressed concern over the safety of their homes, and many questioned Minor about when a timeline of further action would be determined. Some wondered about the future of University Village given its old age.

"My guess is by the end of the semester, you'll know what the future of this place is," MU Vice Chancellor Cathy Scroggs said at the meeting.

Other residents were undecided if they would continue to live at the apartment complex.
Betsabé Castro Escobar and her fiancé Victor De Jesús Reyes were among the residents living in the collapsed building, and are unsure whether they will remain at University Village.

"I have the same feeling as every resident here," Escobar said. "I believe this could be avoided and something that could be worked on previously before tragedy happened."

Mo. firefighter killed at walkway collapse scene

February 22
The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. — A 23-year veteran firefighter was killed Saturday while helping evacuate students from a University of Missouri-run apartment complex after a second-story walkway collapsed, according to Columbia Fire Department officials.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN, JOSH BACHMAN University of Missouri workers gather outside the University of Missouri-run University Village Apartments to look into the structural collapse of a walkway that resulted in the death of a responding firefighter, Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014 in Columbia, Mo. No residents were injured, but the Columbia Fire Department says firefighter Lt. Bruce Britt, a 23-year veteran of the department, was killed Saturday when he fell while helping evacuate the apartment complex.
Columbia Fire Chief Chuck Witt said at a news conference that Lt. Bruce Britt became entrapped beneath rubble while responding to the collapse at University Village Apartments and was pronounced dead at University Hospital.

Firefighters responded at 4:45 a.m. to a structural collapse at the central Missouri apartment complex, Witt said. Some second-floor residents had to climb out of their windows and down ladders to get to safety. No residents were injured.

The chief didn't provide Britt's age and declined to answer questions after making a statement, saying his priority Saturday was helping the firefighter's family and the rest of his department cope with the tragedy.

Columbia officials issued a statement Saturday expressing their sorrow and noting that Britt's wife also works for the city.

"The City of Columbia family is devastated by this tragic loss of one of our own," City Manager Mike Matthes said.

Flags on all city buildings will be flown at half-mast for 30 days in the firefighter's honor, he said.

University Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin expressed his condolences to Britt's family and said structural engineers had been brought in to examine the building. He said that all other Residence Life facilities owned by the university were being inspected and that on Monday all of the university's buildings would be examined to ensure structural integrity.

The apartment complex, built in 1956, houses students with children, married students, single graduate students and students older than 21.

Residential Life director Frankie Minor, in a story published in The Columbia Missourian in December 2012, said his department had explored renovating or rebuilding four aging complexes known as University Student Apartments, which includes University Village, since 2008. A lack of financing prevented either option from taking place, he said.

Minor was not available for comment Saturday afternoon. A telephone message left with the Residential Life office was not immediately returned.

Leaky windows, cracked ceilings and chipped paint are common complaints about the complex, the newspaper reported in the 2012 story. But it also said the apartments are close to campus, have a day care for children of residents, and rent for a two-bedroom apartment was under $500.
On Saturday, university student Ghazwan Alwan said he woke up to a loud crashing noise at 4:15 a.m. and thought something had fallen onto the roof. When he looked out his window, he saw that the walkway had collapsed.

"I saw the sparks. Almost everything was hanging down," Alwan told the newspaper. He said fire trucks and emergency personnel arrived about three minutes after he called 911.

Alwan said he saw the firefighter fall and appear to lose consciousness. He said the man was taken away by an ambulance.

"He was walking on the hanging part," he said. "Then he suddenly fell down, and he didn't wake up."

It was unclear when residents would be able to return to their apartments, even briefly enough to gather personal items such as cellphones and car keys, said Christian Basi, a university spokesman. Basi said about 18 people were in the building at the time of the collapse.

"We may ask them to make a list of the belongings they need, and have a professional go into the buildings and get them," Basi said.

It's also possible the building will be declared safe and residents will be able to go back into their apartments, he said.

In the meantime, the university gave residents the option of staying in on-campus residence halls, hotels or university-owned apartments.

UPDATE: Firefighter killed after walkway collapses at MU's University Village apartments
Saturday, February 22, 2014 | 10:48 p.m. CST; updated 6:27 p.m. CST, Sunday, February 23, 2014

COLUMBIA — A Columbia firefighter died after responding to a collapsed balcony walkway early Saturday at an MU-run apartment complex.
Shortly after 4 a.m., the floor of the second-story balcony walkway at University Village apartments collapsed at one of the buildings, which are near the southwest corner of Providence and Stewart roads.

Lt. Bruce Britt, a 23-year veteran of the Columbia Fire Department, died from injuries sustained while trying to evacuate residents.

**Around 4:15 a.m. Saturday, MU student Ghazwan Alwan said he woke up to a loud crashing noise. He thought something had fallen on the roof of his new apartment, maybe an animal from the surrounding woods. Other residents said they thought it might be an earthquake.**

But when Alwan looked out his window, he saw that the walkway of his building had partially collapsed.

"I saw the sparks. Almost everything was hanging down," Alwan said.

Fire trucks and emergency personnel arrived about three minutes after Alwan called 911, he said.

The balcony walkway fully collapsed while Lt. Britt was on it, Alwan said. He lost consciousness and was taken to University Hospital, where he was pronounced dead on Saturday morning.

"He was walking on the hanging part. I tried to warn him," Alwan said. "Then he suddenly fell down, and he didn’t wake up."

Lt. Britt is the first Columbia firefighter to be killed in the line of duty since 1986.

**MU spokesman Christian Basi said he thinks there were 18 people in the 12-unit building at the time. No residents were injured during the collapse.**

Firefighters evacuated the building. Residents on the second floor had to climb out of their windows to go down ladders behind the building. They had only a few minutes to put on clothes and gather essential belongings before evacuating. Most residents left their car keys in the building.

"The firemen told us to put on clothes and to get out," resident Victor de Jesus said. De Jesus lives in the apartment with his girlfriend and woke up to a firefighter banging on
his door. When he opened the door, he saw the concrete floor of the walkway lying on the ground by his door.

"We have just the clothing we had on," he said. "I have my phone. There were some people who didn't even have their phones."

Most residents waited in the complex's nearby laundry room while emergency crews and MU Department of Residential Life officials assessed the situation.

In the laundry room, Residential Life Director Frankie Minor told residents it would be at least several hours, and possibly days, before they could get back into their apartments. Their options for temporary accommodation included staying in on-campus residence halls, hotels or MU-owned apartments.

Minor also told the residents that the Department of Residential Life would arrange for residents to eat at the dining halls for the next few days and ensure that they have everything they need at least until they can go in and retrieve essential belongings.

De Jesus said that he will go to the Hampton Inn and that other residents are going to residence halls on campus or to other hotels. He said one family will stay elsewhere in University Village because they have children who need to take the school bus every morning.

At the time he spoke to residents, Minor said the university was still trying to assess what happened and when, if ever, residents would be allowed to move back into the building.

**In a statement issued about 8:30 a.m. Saturday, MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said he was "deeply grateful to City of Columbia firefighters and University of Missouri Police Department officers for their rapid response to the incident that occurred early this morning at University Village Apartments."

"Because of their quick and effective response, no residents were injured, and all are being moved to alternate locations," Loftin said in the release.

In a Saturday press conference, Loftin announced that MU Residential Life facilities were inspected for safety after the collapse. He also announced that MU had hired a
structural engineering firm to check on the safety of all buildings leased and owned by MU starting Monday.

Basi said he did not know when the building at University Village had last been inspected before the collapse but that he has requested the information.

"In addition to the investigation into the cause of the collapse here, we are also inspecting all the other buildings in the complex," Basi said.

Vertical supports have been placed under all of the walkways at University Village, Basi said.

University Village, a complex of MU-run apartments for older students and families, is located near the southwest corner of Providence and Stewart roads. The "structural emergency" occurred in building 707.

It is one of four aging complexes that the Department of Residential Life has considered renovating or rebuilding since 2008, according to a 2012 Missourian article. At that time, Minor told the Missourian that he has spoken with private developers about rebuilding the complex but that it’s been a struggle to find a financially feasible way to do so.

Columbia firefighter dies working at scene of walkway collapse

By Justin Willett

Sunday, February 23, 2014 at 2:00 am

Lt. Bruce Britt, a 23-year veteran of the Columbia Fire Department, died yesterday morning while working at the scene of a walkway collapse at a University of Missouri apartment complex.
Britt, 48, suffered fatal injuries while trying to assist residents at University Village, 601 S. Providence Road, Columbia Fire Chief Charles Witt said. Columbia Fire Department units responded to Building 707 of the MU apartment complex at 4:41 a.m. yesterday.

Witt said Britt became entrapped after the collapse of a section of second-floor exterior walkway and was taken by ambulance to University Hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Witt talked about the incident during a brief news conference yesterday afternoon at Fire Station No. 1 on Orr Street.

Britt is the first Columbia firefighter to die in the line of duty since Donald "Hector" Crum was killed Dec. 1, 1986.

Witt was joined by MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, City Manager Mike Matthes and other officials. Witt said he spent the morning supporting Britt's wife, Leigh Britt, who directs the City's Office of Neighborhood Services, and he said the fire department is working with the family to meet their immediate needs.

Loftin also offered his condolences.

"Let me offer, on behalf of the entire university community, the heartfelt thanks we feel for the Columbia Fire Department, for the first responders who this morning ensured the safety of a number of students and their families who were in the affected facility," he said. "These are difficult times for all of us. We are especially ... sending our condolences to Lieutenant Britt's family in this very difficult time."

No residents of University Village were injured during the incident. MU spokesman Christian Basi said there are 12 units in the building, and there were approximately 18 people home at the time of the incident.

Residents were evacuated, and Basi said they are being housed in multiple hotels and being offered assistance to meet their immediate needs.

Loftin said the university started "a thorough inspection" of all buildings in the University Village complex after the incident. He said all MU residential facilities were being inspected, and tomorrow all campus buildings will be inspected.

"It's for peace of mind and to make sure we have no other issues," Basi said.

MU Facilities crews and construction workers braced the remaining sections of walkway on Building 707. Crews also were working on other buildings in the complex.

MU graduate student Ghazwan Alwan, who said he has lived at University Village for a month and a half, said he heard a loud crash about 4 a.m. He said he and his wife, who is pregnant, were asleep. "We were shocked, we didn't know what to do," he said.
Alwan said when he looked out from his second-floor apartment in Building 707 he saw the walkway was falling. It had not yet fully collapsed. He called 911.

Alwan said shortly after the first responders arrived, a firefighter was on the walkway outside his apartment trying to communicate with him through a window. He said he told the firefighter not to come on the walkway because it wasn't safe, and shortly after that the walkway collapsed with the firefighter on it.

"I was just telling him … and suddenly he fell down," Alwan said.

Alwan said firefighters evacuated residents out of back windows using ladders. He and his wife are now staying with friends, and he said they were told they should be able to get into their apartment to get their belongings today.

Alwan said he and his wife came here from Iraq for this semester. He said they will be moving out and will not live in a university apartment again. "I will not stay in this kind of apartment anymore. I will not feel safe here," he said.

Alwan said about three weeks ago the building was evacuated because of high levels of carbon monoxide. He expressed concerns about the building not being properly maintained.

Basi said he doesn't know the last time the building was inspected but it has been within the past couple years.

University Village is near the southwest corner of Providence and Stewart roads adjacent to the MKT Trail. It was built in 1955, Basi said. It has one- and two-bedroom units and is for students who have children, single graduate students and undergraduates older than 21, according to the MU Residential Life website.

Yesterday evening, about 75 people, many of them residents of University Village, gathered for a candlelight vigil at the apartment complex to honor Britt.

Lina Trigos, who said she has lived in University Village for three years with her husband and son, organized the event.

"It's very sad this happened," she said. "It's something you don't expect … because it could be any of us, but it was this person who came here to serve the community. He was brave."

Resident Nayereh Ghazanfarpour, who has lived at University Village with her husband since this summer, was among the attendees. "It was respectful for us to come here because he put his life at risk "to save people. He saved my friends," she said.
University Village unit evacuated

By Jacob Bogage and Ted Noelker

Building 707 of University Village was evacuated early Saturday morning due to what MU Alert called a “structural emergency.”

A Columbia fireman, Lt. Bruce Britt, died responding to the incident, according to a fire department news release. Britt, a 23-year veteran of the department, was pronounced dead at University Hospital. MU spokesman Christian Basi said no students were injured.

University Village is owned by the Department of Residential Life and houses graduate students and their families. Approximately 18 residents, including children, live in the 12 apartments, Basi said.

Resident Mehdi Orouji, a graduate student who lives in building 703, said his friend was evacuated from the second floor of 707 early Saturday morning. The two have connected and his friend is safe, Orouji said, and neighbors are scrambling to provide food and clothes until she can return to her home.

“It was early in the morning and she heard a really loud noise,” he said. “Someone had called 911 because he saw cracks in the walls.”

Police arrived 2-3 minutes later, he said, but by that time, the upper balcony had already collapsed.

Orouji received a University Village email that said it could be days until an inspection of the complex is complete and residents can collect their belongings.

Hein Nguyen arrived at about 11:30 a.m. to try to connect with friends — a family of four — who lived in the damaged building. Their apartment, he said was one of the first evacuated. Its walkway had collapsed.

Orouji said emergency workers smashed in windows at the back of each unit to evacuate residents since the walkway was unsafe or no longer present.

“The challenge with University Village is that it was built in the late ’50s and was probably designed to last only 25 to 30 years,” Director of Residential Life Frankie Minor told The Maneater in 2009.

Only building 707 appears to have sustained significant damages at this time. In a statement, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said the university began an inspection of all buildings in the
complex Saturday morning. Basi said the university is working quickly to provide residents with temporary housing.

“We are working to accommodate them and provide them with anything and everything they need,” Basi said.

In a later statement, Loftin extended his sympathies and gratitude to Britt and other first responders. No residents or other responders are known to be injured at this time.

At a 2 p.m. press conference, Loftin said the university has finished examining other living facilities and will further inspect other MU buildings Monday.

“We’ve already inspected all residence life facilities belonging to the University of Missouri,” Loftin said. “And beginning Monday, we will in fact look at all facilities owned and leased by the university to ensure their structural integrity.”

Orouji said most residents at the complex are international graduate students. Many have families. The complex features several swing sets and a volleyball net strung up between two trees in a grassy traffic circle.

Orouji, who has lived in the complex since August, said he is generally satisfied with his unit and the service provided. He has had no problems with maintenance requests, he said, though his building was recently renovated.

His friends who live in the damaged building have not had the same experience, he said. Visitation to their building was often restricted, he said, and maintenance requests were not kept up.

“They’re very strict here, but not very strict about the structure of the buildings,” he said.

In wake of deadly collapse, a community mourns firefighter

Saturday, February 22, 2014 | 10:10 p.m. CST; updated 6:27 p.m. CST, Sunday, February 23, 2014

COLUMBIA – Most of them never met him.

They’d never seen him before, wouldn't have recognized him if they passed him on the street, and certainly couldn't know that members of his family saw him as a modern-day
Most had never heard his name before. All they knew was that he was a firefighter. All they knew was that he died because he was trying to save their lives.

**But they gathered Saturday evening near the spot where he was fatally injured to honor him. The residents of University Village and members of the community banded together in the cold, holding flowers and candles that flickered in the wind.**

Why were they out there?

"Community," Dorothy Atuhura, a University Village resident, answered. "Someone has given to the community; we ought to give to them."

Lt. Bruce Britt of the Columbia Fire Department died Saturday morning because of injuries he sustained while trying to evacuate residents from the MU-run apartment complex when part of the complex's balcony walkway collapsed. Britt was trapped under the concrete debris when more of the balcony gave way.

"He dedicated his life to save our lives," said Ibrahem Jasim, the resident manager of University Village who organized the vigil. He sent an email to residents earlier on Saturday inviting them to light candles and express their grief over Britt's death.

About 70 people — mostly students and residents of the complex — gathered outside building 707, where the walkway collapsed early Saturday morning. Candles were lit and silently passed among members of the group, who huddled around a picnic table and helped keep one another's candles burning in the sharp February wind.

"I'm very pleased to see this sort of student-generated memorial," said MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who was also in attendance. "It's both heartbreaking and heartwarming."

Britt was a 23-year veteran of the Fire Department. There hasn't been a Columbia firefighter killed in the line of duty since before Britt joined the force.

The last time a Columbia firefighter died while trying to save others was in 1986, according to Steven Sapp, a former spokesman for the Columbia Fire Department.
In response to Britt's death, civic and community leaders marked his passing and expressed condolences to his friends and family.

"The City of Columbia family is devastated by this tragic loss of one of our own," City Manager Mike Matthes said in a statement released Saturday. "As an organization and as individuals, we will do everything we can to support the Britt family, the men and women of the Columbia Fire Department and employees who mourn for Lieutenant Britt."

Mayor Bob McDavid reached out to mourners on behalf of the city of Columbia, saying the City Council extends its "deepest sorrow and condolences" to Britt's family.

"This is a family matter," Loftin said at a press conference Saturday. "A family of a man, a family of a firefighting department and a family of an entire community."

Britt is being memorialized — by these officials and the mourners gathered at University Village — as someone who was willing to sacrifice himself for others.

This was the side of Britt his family was accustomed to. But they also saw beyond the rough exterior and heavy jacket of a firefighter. He was a modern-day John Wayne, his daughter Katlyn Garrett said. He'd always dress in a cowboy hat and Western attire when he wasn’t in his Fire Department uniform.

Funeral set for Columbia, Mo., firefighter killed while evacuating students

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The firefighter who died while helping to evacuate an apartment complex in Columbia will be remembered with services on Thursday.

Memorial services for Lt. Bruce Britt will be Thursday at 10 a.m. at the Crossing Church in Columbia.
Britt, a 23-year veteran of the Columbia Fire Department, died Saturday when a walkway collapsed as he was evacuating people from the University Village Apartments. He was trapped beneath rubble when the walkway collapsed.

The apartment complex, built in 1956, houses students with children, married students, single graduate students and students older than 21.

Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission approves student housing complex near university

Infrastructure issues remain.

By Jacob Barker

Friday, February 21, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (16)

The developer behind a 718-bed student housing complex near the University of Missouri campus is moving forward despite the failure of Columbia city staff's plan to pay for upgraded infrastructure in the area.

The Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission last night voted 8-1 to recommend approval of the project, but at the request of staff it added a laundry list of conditions. Many of those were prompted by variances to city rules sought by the developer, American Campus Communities, to accommodate the large project tucked between Providence Road and the western edge of campus.

Although the zoning board's vote gives the project momentum before it reaches the Columbia City Council, the development's fate ultimately depends on a solution to the central city's infrastructure crunch.
On Monday, the city council voted against a resolution that would have advanced a plan from the city manager's office and Mayor Bob McDavid to create a tax increment financing, or TIF, district covering roughly a square mile of the central city.

The vote was seen as a barometer of the council's willingness to pursue the plan, which was endorsed by city leaders as an efficient way to finance utility upgrades they say can't handle more development. The council vote, though, has effectively killed the TIF effort, and city leaders are exploring other options for sewer, electric and stormwater fixes.

Even with uncertainty over utility upgrades, American Campus Communities was already in the process of asking to rezone 3.8 acres along Fourth Street and Conley Avenue. City staff asked the zoning commission to focus on the land use question, not potential utility issues.

Chuck Carroll, vice president of development for American Campus Communities, said after the vote that infrastructure and zoning are "two completely separate issues."

"We're going to keep moving forward with the land use process until we get told the utilities won't be provided," he told the Tribune.

Still, American Campus Communities' rezoning request does include a proposed development agreement that would bind the city to providing utilities in time for the apartment complex to open in the third quarter of 2016. Although Planning and Zoning commissioners generally agreed that it made sense to put students next to campus, the city council will have to decide whether it is comfortable committing to utility service for more than 700 people by 2016.

"What if staff finds a funding source?" American Campus Communities' attorney, Robert Hollis, said. "If so, why wouldn't they agree?"

The project could also run into normal sources of opposition from the council — appearance, density and parking. Almost every commissioner ultimately supported the project, but many did raise concerns regarding those issues.

The developer asked for a variance to allow a maximum building height of 80 feet. The commission added a condition capping the structure at five stories, the number the developer said it intended to build. The height of the building coupled with the land's elevation near Providence Road and Turner Avenue will make it a prominent structure along one of the heaviest-traveled roads in the city.

Commissioner Tootie Burns, the lone dissenting vote, said the community should be able to see what the structure will look like before approval. Commissioner Doug Wheeler echoed that, saying many of the city's residents will drive by the new complex. "I have serious concerns of what the finished product is gonna look like," he said.

Paul Hinshaw, whose family owns the apartment building along Providence Road at the bottom of the hill beneath the proposed complex, spoke against the proposal. So did his attorney, Tom Schneider.
"It will tower over and loom over my client's property," Schneider said.

Commissioner Stephen Reichlin said the building's height is a matter of perspective. It won't
look as tall to motorists traveling south on Providence Road, he said, and he warned against
"trying to legislate aesthetics."

"What we become accustomed to is just a function of familiarity," he said.

The commission recommended giving the developer a smaller setback than normally required on
the condition that it move the building as far to the east as possible and landscape the property
from the building to the sidewalk along Providence Road.

American Campus also plans to build a 546-space parking structure, which isn't as many spots as
potential tenants but meets city parking requirements. That gave Commissioner Andy Lee pause,
but, he said, "You can't stop growth."

This article was published in the Friday, February 21, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily
Tribune with the headline "Housing plan is approved with changes; Infrastructure issues
remain."

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redistributed.

Posted in Local on Friday, February 21, 2014 2:00 pm.

Kelly: Expansion is right business move

By CHRIS KELLY

Sunday, February 23, 2014 at 2:00 am

From the financial well-being of the University of Missouri, and the state of Missouri and
the people of Missouri, the No. 1 question facing the 2014 legislature is whether to expand
the state health care program, that is the Medicaid program, to cover people whose income
is less than 138 percent of poverty.
That means every single person being covered, almost without exception, is working. So you are talking about the working poor, people who are in jobs that are such that their employers cannot pay for health insurance.

This issue has been studied by four objective, independent, private-sector research companies, including the Kaiser Foundation. They have all come to roughly the same conclusion — that is, that the cost of not expanding Missouri health care will be somewhere in the neighborhood of $3.5 billion by 2019. And, that the positive effect of expanding it would be both that you wouldn’t lose that money and that the actual general revenue of the state would go up by a minimum of $40 million a year, not including any secondary economic benefit.

Expanding Medicaid … would be the equivalent of 20,000 new jobs in the state of Missouri and, by 2019, employment income of more than $5 billion. Now those aren’t my numbers; those numbers are from the Regional Commerce and Growth Association, which is the St. Louis Chamber of Commerce.

The same objective analysis has led the state Chamber of Commerce, Associated Industries of Missouri and more than 50 local chambers of commerce all to support expansion. The reason they do is because they are dealing with facts, not political talking points. They understand what happens in both rural and urban Missouri if we don’t expand.

Let’s use Columbia as an example. We know as a matter of fact that if Medicaid expansion doesn’t happen in Columbia, Mo., the Columbia economy loses about $30 million a year, between Boone Hospital and University Hospital and some smaller ancillary services.

You can take that and blow it up statewide, and you get the bigger picture. We also know that University Hospital and Boone Hospital can survive that kind of a hit, as can Barnes in St. Louis and Truman in Kansas City. These great big hospitals are going to make it.

The people who are most at risk are the rural hospitals, where our health care needs are most intense. Some of these rural hospitals are just plain going to die if we don’t do expansion. The first beds to go are going to be the mental health beds. They are already starting to go. … They are the most expensive for these rural hospitals to maintain, mental health beds, because of the relationship between the cost of the bed and the federal reimbursement rates.

When mental health beds go away, it means the county sheriff has nothing to do with the local crazy person who he has to catch because they are being a nuisance in the community but they are not a criminal — they are mentally ill.

You have no mental health bed in your community, so that means you have to drive them for 2½ hours to the place where there is a bed, spend the time of a deputy, take that deputy or deputies out of law enforcement in the community, take a car out of law enforcement and devote all that effort to deal with that person, who you could deal with if we had expansion.

… What do county sheriffs end up doing with people who are mentally ill and they can’t get them to a hospital? They put them in the county jail. So you have people who are mentally ill in
an inappropriate facility, and you are using that facility for inappropriate people, a tremendous
waste of dollars.

The other way that money gets wasted and passed on to middle-class people is that when the
working poor don’t have any health care, they go to the emergency room. The single waitress
with two kids, the kid gets an earache at quarter after 5 on a Friday afternoon — because that’s
when kids get earaches — takes him to the emergency room because there is no other health
care.

Now you are paying for the earache treatment in the most expensive and most inappropriate
setting conceivable rather than to have a pattern of a doctor and real care and an ongoing family
physician — because that’s the sensible way to deal with it, because that is what we could do if
we expanded.

Very much the same thing is true of mental health.

Republicans are very right about one aspect of this, and that is the need to reform the system.
There are a bunch of places where we could save money and run a much more efficient Medicaid
system.

The best example of that is ... the emergency rooms. One-half of all Medicaid money is spent in
hospitals, and one-half of that is spent in emergency rooms by 5 percent of the emergency room
patients because the same people keep coming back time after time after time. … Just last week I
talked to a guy who said he had an emergency room person show up more than 25 times in one
month. The person is crazy as they can be, and it’s a mental health issue. It is not an emergency
room issue.

But because of the way the law is structured, the emergency room has to treat them. And it is
completely inappropriate, and we should fix that.

People who overuse emergency rooms ... there’s three major categories. One is the mentally ill.
Two are people with severe alcohol and drug addictions. And three are people with chronic
illnesses with nowhere else to go.

All three are manageable if you expand Medicaid, and none of them are manageable if you don’t.

This whole argument about we won’t have money in future years has no basis in fact, and the
reason for that is that we know, by our own study and the study of independent, objective people,
that expanding Medicaid brings more money into general revenue rather than less. So there is
actually more money for schools and other general revenue needs if you expand than if you don’t
expand.

… We can treat people with federal money that we are now treating with state money. … There
are prisoners who we are paying 100 percent of their medical care with state dollars today, and
we could pay 100 percent of their medical care with federal dollars if we were to expand. And
that’s a big chunk of money.
There are also similar kinds of savings, which aren’t as great, in mental health and a couple of other areas. But our corrections budget is one of the biggest areas where we could save a substantial amount of money if we were to expand.

The opposition is simply based on, “We hate Obama, and then we are going to look for trees to hide behind while we say that.”

If you walk out any of the Republican arguments against this, they all run into blank walls. There is no factual underpinning for any of their arguments.

And you can tell that the way the private sector has gotten on board here. The private sector doesn’t do that because Obama or Nixon want them to do it; they do it because they make objective judgments about what’s best in the business climate.

It is very popular around here to say that government should behave more like a business. There is no question that were business making this decision, we would expand today.

Keller: One of the big arguments that is regularly used against expansion is that the federal government can’t be relied upon to keep this promise. The Congressional Budget Office projection of the federal deficit in fiscal year 2022 shows the deficits will be $1 billion by the time we transition to Missouri paying the 10 percent share. Why should we rely upon Congress facing these kinds of deficits to keep the promise that Missouri and the other states are relying on?

Kelly: If that argument is true then we also need to get out of federal highway money, and federal law enforcement money and a number of other federal money. You don’t see the same people ringing the alarm bells about those things. It’s all federal money.

And they’re not saying, quit taking the highway money, or the law enforcement money because the feds are running out of money. The feds are not running out of money, the feds have run out of money, and they have done so a long time ago.

We in Missouri have to live in the real world. And the real world is that if we don’t expand, we lose hundreds and hundreds of millions a year and our taxpayers pick up the brunt of that.

Keller: You talked about there are some changes that are needed, but there are some who think the program cannot be changed at the state level to really make it an efficient, effective program for the people it is intending to treat, so we should not take part until we get the kind of changes that are necessary for the national system.

Kelly: How many billions of dollars do you want to give away waiting for the federal government to get its house in order? I agree with that thinking — the federal government should change the law regarding ambulances, today. That’s a terrible and ridiculous law that was done bipartisanly in Washington. They should fix that.
We can do some minor things about it, but this is not going to get fixed only by the states or only by the feds. It is going to get fixed as a joint, cooperative effort by the states and by the feds. The feds can only get smarter if there is more state participation.

I am not holding the feds up as any management panacea, I am just saying we have to live in the real world and the real world my district loses $30 million if we don’t do this.

Keller: You talked about the costs in emergency room treatment. Some recent studies of expansion in places like Oregon seem to suggest emergency room use goes up when people have access to Medicaid coverage. Other people say it is not an issue of who gets health care, it is an issue of who pays for it and that there are plenty of options. There are emergency rooms and federally qualified health care centers, and though that is not a perfect system, that is what is available now, and we should concentrate on making that a more adequate system.

Kelly: The emergency room problem is a federal problem, not a state problem, and we can do some things to change it. I would do pretty radical things and I would have a big fight with the feds if it were up to me, but we can only do that if we are in the game.

And this putting your head in the sand and hoping it will go away business is nonsense.

The willingness to ignore fact, I believe, is one of the detrimental results of term limits. We’ve got too many people around here who are just thinking of higher office and not willing to take fact into consideration.

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Open Column

Times' Sam profile left out his education

Saturday, February 22, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (1)

Editor, the Tribune: The recent article about Michael Sam in The New York Times was interesting, as is the situation he has placed himself in by his admission that he is gay.
Will it affect his NFL career? In the article, he sounds like a decent fellow with an interesting family history.

As a retired University of Missouri faculty member, I have an interest in the football team and have watched them play when they have been on television. Sam has played well — very well at times — as the article and Sam's football honors make clear.

However, I do have a problem. In more than a full page of print, there is not a single mention of Sam's education at Missouri. That seems strange to me.

He's leaving the university. That's clear. Is he going to graduate? What was his major? What courses did he take? Was he a good student?

If none of these questions is relevant to Sam's time at MU, it says something about the football program at Missouri, or perhaps something about education at MU, or perhaps even something about the reporters who wrote the story.

David Vernon

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Editor's note: The Tribune reported Feb. 10 that Sam graduated from MU in December with a degree in parks, recreation and tourism.

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#BOOM conference brings together entrepreneurs

Summit grows in fourth year.

By Jacob Barker

Saturday, February 22, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (1)

Kim Stading is in her third semester in the University of Missouri's Entrepreneurial Alliance, a program launched by the business school in 2011 to encourage entrepreneurs.
But she's found plenty of support for young people with business ideas — and she has a few — off campus, too. Most recently, it was Friday at the city's fourth annual entrepreneurial summit, organized by Regional Economic Development Inc. and held at the Holiday Inn Expo Center.

Between the lineup of speakers and breaks to mingle and network with others who want to be their own boss or develop new business models, she found plenty to keep her occupied throughout the day.

"I'm stacking up my business cards right now," she said in between conference sessions.

Columbia's annual entrepreneurial summit — dubbed #BOOM — had a packed auditorium yesterday, and event organizer Sean Siebert estimated about 400 people attended throughout the day.

The audience definitely skewed younger, aided by Siebert — who also is a consultant for higher education institutions — who said he worked with schools around the state to bring people to Columbia from Springfield, Kansas City and St. Louis as well as smaller locales such as West Plains, Linn and Fulton. Even some high schools let their students attend for the day.

There was "great representation from more than 40 different learning institutions," Siebert said.

Not everyone was a student. Robert Brunk was in Columbia from Rolla, where he runs a business startup consultancy. He said he didn't know what to expect, but he was impressed with the lineup of speakers, which included Beyond Meat founder Ethan Brown and Missouri Secretary of State Jason Kander. "It blew my expectations, actually," Brunk said. "Usually with smaller events, it's hit or miss."

Nicholas Rodriguez, a local artist and jingle-writer who works out of the downtown incubator operated by Regional Economic Development Inc., or REDI, said the networking opportunities had been great throughout the day. "Everybody I meet is a connection," the 23-year-old said. "Even if they don't need anything done now, maybe in the future they need something done."

The conference is part of REDI's effort to foster entrepreneurship among young people. REDI and other organizations hope to add to a healthy local startup culture by convincing more students and graduates from area colleges to consider acting on innovative ideas.

A business plan pitch competition, #BOOM's sister event, is scheduled for April 11. Cash prizes are offered to teams with the most innovative startup ideas.

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Posted in Local on Saturday, February 22, 2014 2:00 am.
COLUMBIA — If you want it too much, you won’t get it. But if you realize how unimportant it is, suddenly you can have it. That’s the paradox of winning.

Mark Brownlee, a human performance consultant, has 25 years of teaching experience at the MU School of Medicine, and he currently trains athletic clients in the U.S. and abroad in what he calls "performance thinking." Brownlee has clients in a variety of sports, such as golf and white-water kayaking, and he trains them to compete to the best of their abilities.

As the Olympics come to a close, the Missourian spoke with Brownlee on Friday about what makes a winner.

Q: Could you start by giving a sense of what it is that you do within sports psychology generally?

A: I have what I call ... fundamental performance thinking. ... The idea is that people spend a lot of time worrying about things that they can’t control or are beyond their control. So you have to identify what is really important, what’s truly relevant for whatever activity you’re doing. ... But don’t people spend a lot of their attention, their concentration, their thinking about ... the things that they can’t control? So that leads to all kinds of distraction and interferes with your performance. ...

There are only two things that cause people mental difficulties in sport. The first one is being too concerned with the judgments and the expectations of others. The second one is being too concerned with the results and the outcome. That’s it. Those two things, you have a complete free will to think about them any way you want. But most people get a very distorted perspective of how important something is. And they create expectations, and they’re worried about how they’re going to be judged and evaluated.

Expectations are the stupidest thing in sport because they prevent you from being in the moment. If you could hear the interviews of all the people who win medals and perform very well, they almost always will
say something different from what the sports announcers and writers and everybody said. They don’t look at it as a life and death situation. ... When (figure skater Adelina Sotnikova) was getting ready to go out, ... she said, “I was getting ready, and as I was getting ready to step on the ice, I took a minute or two, and I thought how much I really like what I do,” and then she went and skated and won the gold medal.

Q: Something a lot of people are wondering is why Shaun White didn’t do well. Do you think that a lack of performance thinking might have been a factor there?
A: I’m just speculating, but all those pieces were in place for him to have a poor performance because the expectations were so high. It just matters how much he bought into that. Because everybody who had any interest in the Winter Olympics and USA, all that, they’re all expecting him to win. ... If he let his mind go to the future about expectations and judgments and worrying a little bit too much about what people were going to think and then the outcome, everybody’s expecting a gold medal. And if he’s got that in his mind, too, then that’s the kind of thing that leads to the problems that he exhibited.

Q: So it sounds like what you’re saying is that our culture of sports, the way we portray sports and even the way professional athletes sometimes act when they’re playing sports is detrimental to actually doing well at sports.
A: I agree. ... If you watch a lot of the pros, baseball and golf, they keep that kind of (premature celebration) to a minimum. ... It’s not over until it’s over. You save your celebration for after, when it’s over. Minimize that during the game so you can keep your emotional arousal level. That’s the job. You have to keep yourself at that optimum arousal level the entire time. ...

People are up and they’re down throughout an event, and I think that applies to most sports. But it comes just from how you choose to perceive it. If you have a bad experience during the event, you have to look at it in a neutral way. You just accept it. You don’t make it that important. And you don’t project into the future what your outcome is going to be. You just learn to let it go.

There are ways and strategies and techniques to do all this, and that’s part of what mental skills training is: How do you let go of that bad event? And it’s hard for people when you’re doing well, too. Everybody thinks you should get excited. You should be all happy and everything, but I’ve seen this hundreds of times. Someone’s done really well throughout an event and then the last ... five minutes of the game or whatever, their ... arousal level is off and their emotions change and the distractions come in because now they’re not focused ... and you’re not in the moment. You’re in the future, and errors happen.

Q: Has it been your experience that some people are more susceptible to those kinds of thoughts or less susceptible to the mental skills training, that they just struggle more with these kinds of things?
A: Everybody comes to these kinds of things with their own background and their own previous experiences. So, yeah, absolutely. Some people, growing up in life, whatever they've done, and they get into a sport and their thinking is a little more advanced. They've already learned to understand somehow in their mind that “I need to pay attention to this and not that,” and then there are some people who don’t get that. Their experience and background in life — they don’t have any foundation for that.

But the thing is, you can learn. There’s this thing about personality that I don’t like either. … I call it the “problem of personality.” The worst thing in the world I hear people say is “That’s just the way I am”… or “I just can’t do that.” Of course you can. You can be whoever you want to be, right? You think however you want to think. That’s such a self-limiting feeling and belief and attitude. … I’m good if I run into those kind of people; I can help them start thinking differently. I can structure the experience, so they will start thinking differently. ... It’s part of that being able to choose what you think, where you’re going to put your attention and where you’re going to put your effort, and how you perceive those questions about how important it is and what are the consequences and what you want to control.

Some people are a little better at activities because of the way they think than others, but I think the point is that can be learned. You can learn to change your thinking.

Beyond Meat brings ‘beef’ crumbles to market
Columbia is site of production.

By Jacob Barker
Sunday, February 23, 2014 at 2:00 am

Beyond Meat is moving beyond chicken substitutes with another meat analogue: Beef-Free Crumbles.

Beyond Meat launched with its Chicken-Free Strips a little more than a year ago. Beyond Meat CEO Ethan Brown said the beef product, which resembles ground beef that normally would be
used in tacos or pastas, is exciting because consumers looking to reduce meat consumption often start by cutting back on red meat.

"Consumers feel more of an immediate need to pull off of beef," Brown said in an interview at Beyond Meat's Columbia factory.

**The company, based in California, manufactures its products in Columbia using techniques originally developed by University of Missouri researchers Fu-hung Hsieh and Harold Huff. Huff is now employed by Beyond Meat.**

Its factory, which it located in Columbia to be close to the researchers who came up with the process, is located off Vandiver Drive on Commerce Court.

Since announcing it would locate in Columbia in 2012, Beyond Meat has grown to more than 30 employees at the local factory and has the capability to make about 5 million chickens worth of soy-based chicken substitute. Hsieh, an MU professor of agricultural engineering and food science nutrition, said some of his former students have been hired at the company because of their studies involving food process engineering and extrusion. "We hope they will have more in the future," Hsieh said.

The Beef-Free Crumbles rollout starts this month, and the product initially will be available in Whole Foods stores before it hits shelves in general grocery stores. The Chicken-Free Strips rollout started the same way: on the coasts and in specialty grocers. But now they are available at more general grocers, even local Hy-Vee stores. In the fall, they will roll out in Target.

"It's more accelerated, for sure," Brown said. "We thought it would be in the natural channel much longer."

The company has attracted national media buzz and attracted investment from big venture firms. But for Brown, the company is about more than just sales.

Raising and feeding livestock is a less efficient way of obtaining protein than getting it directly from plants, and international studies have estimated around 20 percent of greenhouse gases are attributable to livestock production. After years working in the clean energy industry, Brown realized an easier way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions might just be getting people to eat differently. "It's as simple as changing what's at the center of your plate," Brown said. "There's all this doom and gloom about climate change, but there's a real simple way to address it."

He set out to find the best meat substitute possible, and he found it in Columbia. While the company has to protect how it makes its products, the process boils down to applying heat, pressure and water to rearrange amino acids, lipids and other compounds to resemble the molecular structure of meat.

"If you can source all those things outside the animal, which you can, then you can use science to reassemble the structure to mimic the texture," Brown said.
The company is constantly refining the process to make the chicken and beef more similar to the feel of meat. It's got more beef products to work on, and there's still plenty of other meat out there to replicate.

"We're working on sausage and stuff like that," Brown said. "The product that's coming out later this year is a burger."

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Posted in Local on Sunday, February 23, 2014 2:00 am.

Weather patterns wreak havoc on behavior patterns

By Jan Wiese-Fales

If you've suspected that Mother Nature has dished up a colder, windier winter than normal, you can rest your mind that you are correct. Pat Guinan, state climatologist with University of Missouri Extension, has confirmed that it has been almost 30 years since the winds howled as they did during the first month of the new year. The monthly average was 12.6 mph.

Guinan also reported that preliminary data for last month placed the average state temperature at 25 degrees, almost 5 degrees below long-term normal. January 2014 sits on the borderline of being one of the 10 coldest since temperatures have been recorded. Otherwise, it's just the 11th frostiest — like that's not already too darn cold.
Winds are spawned when Arctic cold fronts bring in lower pressure followed by high pressure rushing in to fill in the lows. The gradient between them determines wind force. Guinan likened it to releasing air from a tire where energy gushes from high pressure to low pressure.

I'm able to cope with the cold, adding layers to my wardrobe and by putting our large collection of throws in all the places we are immobile. And I can tolerate the wind, though I often find it more debilitating than either cold or hot temperatures when I am trying to accomplish some outside task. High winds are known to trigger dopamine production, but the human body can't sustain that response for very long without becoming exhausted. And the winds just wouldn't quit.

I'm used to a frisky weekend pace, soft-powering my way through my big-pile lifestyle to accomplish what's on the list. But in January, I either began hibernating or started to exhibit symptoms of seasonal affective disorder, self-diagnosed after identifying with some of its symptoms listed on the Mayo Clinic website: loss of energy, a leaden feeling in my arms and legs, social withdrawal, oversleeping, loss of interest in some of my favorite things, craving foods high in carbohydrates, weight gain and difficulty concentrating.

I watched — and dozed through — a lot of bad movies on a couple of January weekends, glued to the couch under a heap of blankets, surrounded by the detritus of my carbohydrate-rich diet. I found my behavior personally appalling, but the only energy sparked on that couch was static electricity in the blankets.

After reading Guinan's winter weather report and learning that it also has been an extraordinarily dry winter — the lowest average dew point since 1979 — I remembered reading that dry winds produce large numbers of positive ions with some very negative impacts on humans. Statistically, more suicides, road accidents and crimes occur during periods of prolonged dry wind.

There are some notorious winds that fit this profile, including the Santa Ana of Southern California, nicknamed "the bitter winds" by Native Americans; the Chinook of western Canada and the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains; the 50-days wind in the Middle East known as sharav or hamsin; the mistral of southern France; and the foehn, which blows from the Alps across Switzerland and Germany.

The Swiss Meteorological Institute conducted studies to measure the foehn's effect on people's physical and mental states and in the mid-'70s published its findings. It reported foehn caused an increase in body pains, sick headaches, dizziness, nausea, respiratory problems, asthma, heart attacks, slowed reaction time, irritation, exhaustion, listlessness, anxiety and depression, among others.

Subsequent research by others pointed to the electrical charge in dry winds — those pesky positive ions — as a source of these maladies. Some researchers have speculated that positive ions created by electronics and home-heating and air-conditioning systems also might be bringing us down.
Moist air, on the other hand, has more negative ions, which have been associated with increased mental function. The American Institute of Medical Climatology reports they also can be linked to reduced respiratory suffering and relief from migraines.

Certainly, the moist winds of this past week have changed the charge. And how about that sunshine? Short of visiting the nearest body of water to take in some uplifting breaths of moist air, basking in the steam created by your shower is a great line of defense against any additional sustained dry winds this winter has in store for us.

And as far as the cold goes, long-range temperature forecasts show that it's not quite time to put your long undies away for the season.

Jan Wiese-Fales lives and pulls weeds at Mole Hill in rural Howard County. You can reach her at fertilemind@sbcglobal.net.

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