Engineers begin inspections of 1,300 University of Missouri buildings

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, February 26, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (2)

A local contract engineering company, Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc., was hired this week by the University of Missouri to inspect every building on campus.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university isn't giving the company a deadline for completion of the inspections to avoid rushing the work. He also said the cost of the outside contractor hasn't been tabulated.

Basi said the company was asked yesterday to expand its inspections to 1,300 campus buildings, including storage facilities or sheds in which people might work.

John Smith, a structural engineer with THH Inc., said the company has inspected between 30 and 40 buildings in the past few days. For each building, he fills out a report about what he sees, including issues requiring immediate attention, those that should be included in infrastructure planning and even some cosmetic fixes.

"I'm not seeing anything that's going to fall down tomorrow," he said of the inspection so far. "There are some things I'm going to request they be addressed sooner rather than later. If I saw something immediate that scared me, they would have gotten a phone call."

Smith said residential housing, including residence halls and on-campus housing complexes, were first on the inspection list. But, the buildings on the list — which Smith said should be compiled in the next day — are all across the state, including farms and MU Extension offices.

The inspection might take three or four weeks, and Smith said THH Inc. will put more crew members on the job in the next few days.
University Village walkway had 'severe rusting,' investigation says

COLUMBIA — The walkway at University Village apartments that collapsed Saturday, resulting in the death of Columbia Fire Department Lt. Bruce Britt, showed signs of "severe rusting" and deterioration, according to the partial death investigation from the MU Police Department.

MU Police Department Detective Sam Easley, who investigated the scene after the incident, documented what he described as a walkway "in a deteriorated state," according to the report, which was posted by the Columbia Daily Tribune on Wednesday afternoon. The Tribune received the report as the result of a records request.

Easley wrote that he observed "severe rusting on the metal, underneath the existing walkway, where the collapsed portion of walkway separated and exposed a portion of the remaining concrete."

"The concrete of the remaining walkway looked to be flaking and distressed," Easley said.

In the report, Easley said MU Police Officer Dustin Heckmaster overheard engineers say the walkway was "severely deteriorated over time due to age, elements and salt."

Ghazwan Alwan, a resident at University Village, called 911 after he heard a loud noise he thought was coming from the roof. Before the collapse, Alwan noticed a "significant dip" in the walkway floor and an unknown object hanging from the walkway.

MU Police Sgt. Alan Fish was walking behind Britt when he heard a "loud bang" and "observed the concrete walkway collapsing towards (him) and brick being pulled off the front of the building," according to the report.
After the collapse, Fish "reached the area where Britt had fallen and discovered he was trapped under the walkway," according to the report.

Britt was taken to University Hospital where he was pronounced dead Saturday morning. 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 of the walkway collapse, according to previous Missourian reporting.** No residents were injured during the collapse.

The official cause of the incident was still under investigation Wednesday night.

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**Reports detail response to Columbia collapse**

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - **Police reports show that a firefighter killed in a Columbia walkway collapse was going door-to-door looking for trapped residents apparently because emergency responders thought they were dealing with a roof collapse.**

Lt. Bruce Britt was on the second-floor walkway of University Village Apartments, a University of Missouri-run apartment complex, when the walkway collapsed Saturday morning. Britt, a 23-year veteran of the force, was pronounced dead at a hospital. No residents were injured.

Details of the Saturday collapse are included in incident reports provided by the university police after a public records request by The Columbia Daily Tribune.
According to the reports of several officers, dispatchers said residents were trapped inside an apartment. Responders didn’t know which apartment and later discovered the walkway was close to collapse.

Columbia Fire Department announces plans for Britt's memorial service

Wednesday, February 26, 2014 | 7:07 p.m. CST; updated 6:56 a.m. CST, Thursday, February 27, 2014

Columbia Fire Department Battalion Chief Brad Fraizer gave a press conference concerning Lt. Bruce Britt's memorial service at Fire Station No. 1 on Wednesday. "If he wasn't wearing his uniform he was wearing a cowboy hat," Frazier said. Lt. Britt often forgot to take his spurs off while on duty. Britt's memorial service procession will begin at 8:45 a.m. Thursday at Memorial Funeral Home, with services starting at 10 a.m. at The Crossing.

KATIE BELL
BY ELIAN PELTIER

No MU Mention

COLUMBIA — The memorial service for Columbia Fire Department's Lt. Bruce Britt will be a large-scale event involving many firefighters' traditions, Fire Department Battalion Chief Brad Fraizer said at a press conference on Wednesday.

Thirty-two firetrucks from around the state, including nine firetrucks from Columbia Fire Department, will be in the memorial procession that will travel along Business Loop 70, Providence Road and Nifong Boulevard, Fraizer said.

The procession is scheduled to begin at 8:45 a.m. at Memorial Funeral Home, 1217 Business Loop 70 W., and end at The Crossing, 3615 Southland Drive.
Columbia Police Department Sgt. Joe Bernhard said the Traffic Division of the Columbia Public Works Department will provide an officer at every intersection of the procession, but traffic could still be interrupted.

Once the procession arrives at The Crossing, Fire Department personnel and firefighters from around the state will stand outside the church and form a "sea of blue" to honor Britt's memory, Fraizer said.

Along with the 1,600 seats in the church, The Crossing will have additional areas where people can stand. Columbia Public Works Department spokesman Steven Sapp said 860 parking spaces will be available at the church, and he highly encourages carpooling.

The Fire Department is planning to provide a live feed of the service in the church, as family has requested that no media be filming inside the church.

Fraizer said the memorial service is scheduled to end around 11:30 a.m. He encouraged drivers to show respect for Britt by pulling off to the right of the road during the procession and waiting until all vehicles have passed.

Fraizer said firefighters from Jefferson City and the Boone County Fire Protection District will be manning city fire stations while fire department personnel participate in the memorial service.

Williamsville Volunteer Fire Department Chief Brian Mendenhall said he will come to the memorial service to honor Britt's memory with three other firefighters from Williamsville. Williamsville firefighters will be present with a firetruck at 7:30 a.m. at Cosmo Park, to participate in the procession.

Britt started his firefighting career at the Williamsville Volunteer Fire Department. Although Mendenhall joined the fire department after Britt left,, he plans on making the trip for the memorial service.

"You sometimes wonder why you put yourself in such extreme situations," Mendenhall said. "That's a special thing that we have as firefighters that pushes us to extreme limits to save a person's life."

Another service will also be held at 10 a.m. March 8 at the Williamsville United Methodist Church.
University of Missouri System president takes part in Washington meeting on protecting students from sexual assault

February 26
BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
The Kansas City Star

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe was in the nation’s capital Wednesday as part of a White House task force to protect students from sexual assault.

Wolfe was one of 20 university presidents who participated in what will be nine such meetings called for by President Barack Obama.

“The safety and security of students on our four campuses is an absolute priority of my administration,” Wolfe said in a statement after the meeting.

Last month, Wolfe directed chancellors of the system’s four campuses to lead comprehensive reviews of the policies, training and procedures involved in reporting sexual assaults, plus the availability of mental health resources.

The system’s focus on sexual assault came after reports surfaced alleging that the University of Missouri in Columbia mishandled the alleged rape of former university swimmer Sasha Menu Courey. The university learned about the allegations after Courey committed suicide.

Wolfe told The Star earlier this week that after reports come back on the systemwide review and on an investigation being done by independent counsel that University of Missouri curators hired to look into the Courey case, he will devote “any necessary resources, including increased funding from the UM System budget,” to address the issue.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/02/26/4851382/um-president-takes-part-in-washington.html#storylink=cpy
Tim Wolfe attends session on sexual assault in Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, February 26, 2014 | 7:52 p.m. CST
BY MADISON FELLER

COLUMBIA — University of Missouri System president Tim Wolfe was one of 20 university presidents invited to attend a "listening session" on sexual assault Wednesday in Washington, D.C., according to a news release from the system.

The gathering was one of nine outreach sessions facilitated by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault. The nine sessions will occur over a period of 90 days, hosting meetings not only with university presidents but also with health workers, social workers, law enforcement and victims of assault.

During the session, Wolfe and other university presidents talked with senior White House officials about the task force and discussed how to prevent future assaults on campus, UM System spokesman John Fougere said.

On Jan. 22, President Barack Obama announced the creation of the task force, which will focus on developing better ways to respond to and prevent assaults at universities and other institutes of higher learning.

Wolfe announced the formation of the University of Missouri System Sexual Assault and Mental Health Task Force last month. The task force helps the four chancellors of the UM System review current policies and procedures surrounding the reporting of sexual assaults as well as the accessibility of mental health resources on campus.
WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of science, higher education and business organizations concerned about cuts in federal research dollars are hoping a new video focusing on what it describes as the "innovation deficit" will go viral.

The video put together by a team at Colorado State University features quickly drawn images and text. It says there's a widening gap on what is spent on research and what should be.

The video urges viewers to "tell your member of Congress to close the innovation deficit by supporting strong funding for research and education."

The 14 organizations behind the campaign include the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Council on Education, the American Heart Association, the Association of American Universities and groups supporting the aerospace and semiconductor industries.

View the video at: http://www.innovationdeficit.org/
Flag arrives to honor Columbia, Mo., firefighter killed on duty

Members of the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 2665 Honor Guard escort the United States Honor Flag through Lambert-St. Louis International Airport after arriving from Dallas on Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2014. The Honor Flag, conceived in honor of the many fallen first responders to the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, will proceed to Columbia, Mo., to be a part of funeral services for Columbia Fire Lt. Bruce Britt. Britt was killed in the line of duty on Saturday when a walkway collapsed at a University of Missouri-run apartment complex. The flag made two ceremonial stops along the way: a ceremony at the Professional Fire Fighters of Eastern Missouri Hall in St. Peters and the Fire Fighters Memorial in Kingdom City. Photo by Christian Gooden, cgooden@post-dispatch.com

Columbia, Mo., Fire Lt. Bruce Britt
Inspection of MU facilities extends beyond campus

By Crystal Duan

In the wake of the collapse at University Village, MU will inspect all university-owned or leased buildings, regardless of age and area.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the Columbia structural engineering firm Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc., which constructed Mizzou Arena, assisted by St. Louis structural engineering firm Alper Audi Inc., will examine all buildings not just on campus but also remotely located throughout Missouri.

MU owns other extension buildings and experimental firms around the state, Basi said. The total number of facilities the university is in charge of amounts to more than 250.

After the second story balcony of University Village’s building 707 collapsed Saturday, MU immediately brought in Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc. to inspect the housing complex for further danger.

Basi said the firm found the remaining buildings to be structurally sound, save for concerns with the walkways. Shoring under walkways was immediately put up as a result.

The university also took action to inspect buildings on campus.

“We also inspected any residential building that was older than ten years,” Basi said. “And those were all structurally sound. There were a few minor maintenance issues that were immediately fixed.”

Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc. is also currently investigating what caused the collapse at University Village.

Basi said the time frame for the investigation is uncertain, as the university has never had to deal with what it called a “structural emergency” of this sort. It could take up to days or even weeks.

“We will release more information as results from the report come in,” Basi said.

Based on the results, MU will also make both a short-term decision and long-term decision about the state of university facilities.
Director of Residential Life Frankie Minor said the university is currently focusing on responding to residents’ needs.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said the students who resided in University Village were being placed in alternative housing for the time being.

“We are very concerned about the ongoing safety of all of the Mizzou family, especially our students,” Loftin said in a press conference Saturday. “They were provided alternative housing and additional support by the university.”

MU’s investigation might also extend to buildings discussed at the January UM System Board of Curators meeting.

MU had proposed $3.2 million in renovations to Lafferre Hall at the meeting. The facility currently has a score of 0.91 on the Facilities Conditions Needs Index, which means 91 percent of its systems need replacing.

The university had also looked at $15 million in renovations and additions to McKee Gymnasium, which scored 0.8 on the FCNI, $22 million for Waters Hall and its score of 0.8, and $24 million for Mumford Hall, which scored a 0.5.

University Village residents placed in temporary housing

By Kevin Graeler

Residents of University Village building 707 have been left scrambling to adjust following the collapse of the structure’s balcony that occurred early Saturday morning.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said there are approximately 18 people who lived in the affected building. All of them have since been transferred to alternate housing locations in hotels, Residential Life facilities or other apartment complexes.

“We have been working with all of the students who were in the building when the collapse occurred, and we have secured alternate housing for them based on their specific needs,” Basi said. “Some of them are in hotels, others are staying in other residential facilities and some asked for specifically an apartment setting. We were able to fulfill all of those requests.”
In addition to this help, Basi said MU provided the displaced residents with gift cards so they could purchase any necessary items Saturday because they were unable to get into their apartments immediately following the incident.

“We are taking care of any extra costs that were incurred due to the collapse,” Basi said. “That also includes food and any temporary items that they might have needed immediately following the collapse. It’s my understanding that nearly all of the residents were able to get back into their homes several hours following the collapse.”

Resident Ghazwan Alwan, a graduate student who has lived with his wife in University Village building 707 since the start of this semester, said he was awoken by the sound of a loud crash around 4:15 a.m. Saturday. At that point, he said, the walkway outside of his room had already partially fallen down.

“After the firefighters and police came, one firefighter walked on this specific walkway, and the second collapse happened, and he fell down,” he said. “They smashed some windows, took out the frames and took everyone out the back of the building.”

Alwan said he has no intention of continuing to live in university housing but that the collapse is not the only reason. He said that one week after he and his wife had moved in, their apartment was evacuated due to high levels of carbon monoxide. He sent in an application to transfer on the very first day he moved in.

“(MU’s Department of Residential Life) called me and asked me if I wanted to transfer this time to another apartment,” he said. “I told them, ‘No, because I don’t feel safe with you.’”

Basi said the university is taking a case-by-case approach to how it handles contract negotiations with the affected residents.

“We are working with residents and making sure that all of their needs are taken care of,” he said.

Alwan said MU has treated the affected residents well since the incident. He said he and his wife have been staying in the Hilton Garden Inn near Memorial Stadium since Saturday and their search for a new apartment has already begun.

“I think I found a good apartment, but I have to consider the proximity of the new apartment because I don’t have a car,” Alwan said.

Alwan said he has one hope for ResLife throughout this entire situation.

“I just hope that they will take care of the students better,” he said.

Graduate student Adriana Boersner Herrera, another University Village building 707 resident who lived on the second floor, said she was not in her apartment when the incident occurred, but she received a phone call early Saturday during which she was asked if she was OK.
“Now, I am looking for a new apartment,” she said. “(MU) offered me a transfer to other university buildings or even another apartment in the same group of residences at University Village. I do not feel safe being in these buildings. Other residents have the same fear.”

Boersner Herrera said her main reason for not wanting to continue living at University Village is the fear of another incident similar to the collapse.

“The building where I lived in University Village is not safe,” she said. “I have no guarantee that another incident will not happen living there.”

Despite those fears, Boersner Herrera said MU has been helping her find an apartment off campus and offered help with monetary expenses for medication and food.

“I am hoping I can move my stuff from the apartment elsewhere,” she said. “Getting a place to live off campus is not easy, but I will continue trying. Fortunately, I had the support of friends. I have been staying with friends until the situation is solved.”

Boersner Herrera said the old age of the University Village building was visible when she initially decided to move in.

“My interest on these apartments is because they are university residences, and at the time of the contract, the maintenance policies made me feel comfortable to move there,” she said.

The immediate future of the affected building and the ones surrounding it remains unclear.

“We’re still waiting to determine what the short-term plan is for the buildings in University Village,” Basi said.

MU health system to open walk-in clinics at Hy-Vee
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri's health system plans to open walk-in medical clinics at the three Hy-Vee grocery stores in Columbia.

The university says two of the clinics should open in August and the third in west Columbia by October. The clinics will be open seven days a week and known as Mizzou Quick Care.

MU Health Care officials said the clinics will treat patients with sore throats, skin rashes and other minor ailments that don't require a visit to a hospital emergency room or a doctor's office.

The clinics will also provide flu shots and physicals required by employers, schools or youth sports teams.

Missouri joins other states with bill that would enable businesses to discriminate based on religion

February 26
BY LEWIS W. DIUGUID
The Kansas City Star

Letting Kansas go down the yellow-brick rat hole alone seems to never be good enough for some Missouri lawmakers.

Missouri Sen. Wayne Wallingford, a Cape Girardeau Republican, on Monday filed legislation that would allow Missouri business owners to cite religious beliefs as a legal justification for refusing to provide service. Although it doesn’t mention sexual orientation, the bill could provide legal cover for denial of services to same-sex couples.

They did it in disastrous, but thankfully failed, efforts to cut state taxes to the bone. Now, Missouri Sen. Wayne Wallingford, a Cape Girardeau Republican, has filed a bill that, if passed, would enable Missouri businesses to use their religious beliefs to refuse to provide service to people. What kind of people?

Good question. The proposal doesn’t mention sexual orientation, but it is similar to a measure that was passed by the Kansas House. That measure fortunately is held up in the Senate, where more reasonable heads have prevailed.
The Arizona Legislature passed a similar proposal. Gov. Jan Brewer is being urged by groups nationwide to veto the legislation or face losing millions of dollars in conventions canceling and even the Super Bowl picking another place to play next year.

Missouri joins the pack of people willing to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation at a time when several states are making same-sex marriage legal and federal courts are overturning state laws against gay marriage. Texas was the latest state where a federal court overturned the law.

Others include Utah, Oklahoma and Virginia.

It seems incongruous that lawful discrimination against gays would be proposed in Missouri using religion as the justification. **The second most popular religion in Missouri — Mizzou football — embraced Michael Sam, an all-American defensive end at the University of Missouri, when he went public earlier this month, telling the world that he is gay.**

If it is all good in sports, it should be just as acceptable everywhere else.

Read more here: [http://www.kansascity.com/2014/02/26/4850740/missouri-joins-other-states-with.html#storylink=cpy](http://www.kansascity.com/2014/02/26/4850740/missouri-joins-other-states-with.html#storylink=cpy)

Columbia mom turns her love of storytelling into a business

Wednesday, February 26, 2014 | 3:30 p.m. CST; updated 6:29 a.m. CST, Thursday, February 27, 2014

BY ADITI SHRIKANT

COLUMBIA — In 2001, when her first son was born, Chris Willow resolved to avoid plastic toys and games. She wanted to surround her children with something warmer and more wholesome.

So when she couldn’t find what she wanted in mainstream toy stores, she took it upon herself to make them. That decision led to **mamaroots**, an online shop through Etsy.com that sells handcrafted wooden toys, stationery and birthday candle holders.
Small wooden toys shaped like animals and mythical creatures make up the bulk of her wares. Some are characters from children's books, while others spring from her own imagination and those of her two boys.

**Willow, a book buyer for The Mizzou Store, began selling her creations to local mothers in 2003 and moved to the artisan website five years later.**

Mamaroots originally featured sock monkeys and flannel teething dolls before Willow moved on to wooden toys in 2006. She estimates she's sold between 3,000 and 5,000 items in the last 10 years.

"Etsy is a really great way for me to connect with my customers and other mothers," she said.

**Back to the basics**
Willow’s success fits a growing trend among parents looking to find children's toys made from natural products and to promote imaginative play.

**Catherine Cooper, MU’s lead instructor for preschool child development, said a renewed focus on healthy living, combined with education and environmental awareness, helped the shift gain momentum.**

Cooper said a wooden block can be anything a child can fancy, while a plastic cell phone can only be one thing.

"I know children's imagination and what they are capable of," she said. "And when you hamper that by giving them a toy with one use, you are saying you don't trust their abilities as much."

Willow makes her toys using raw wood and nontoxic water colors. She transformed parts of her basement into a workplace to make and package the orders she receives from around the world.

Often, she makes toys that reflect seasons and holidays. She said a big seller for February was a wooden groundhog popping out of a felt hillside looking for its shadow.

During the Sochi Winter Olympics, Willow created Russian bears.

She also carves rabbits, baby chicks, love bugs, Yetis and leprechauns.
Creative workspace
Half of the space in Willow's basement is used to make toys; the other half serves as a play area for her boys, Jasper, 12, and Silas, 8.

She keeps her scroll saw, wood and other scraps in a closed-off room; the wood burner, paint and sealants are in another section. Many of her tools are kept in brightly-painted Mason jars and stored in simple wooden furniture.

Willow starts the process by penciling shapes onto a piece of wood. She typically chooses poplar but also likes to work with walnut. She uses a scroll saw to cut the shape she's drawn, then sands the piece to make it smooth. Using a wood-burning tool, she fashions the eyes and other features as needed.

She finishes her pieces with watercolors, sands them again and seals the toys with a homemade beeswax and jojoba oil mix. The process takes about an hour for each toy.

Willow said it is important that her sons know how things are made and what happens to them when they are thrown away. They are included in the process of crafting the characters, either from books they have read or their own imagination.

Mamaroots also prides itself on making natural toys that can decompose back into the earth, Willow said.

Promoting healthy play
Her business is a brand that pays attention to the physical health of children, Willow said, as well as the mental and emotional growth that hand-crafted toys promote. As an English major when she was a student at MU, she said she loves the aspect of storytelling that comes with her toys.

"Plastic toys tend to already have expressions on their faces," Willow said. "But kids aren't always happy or surprised. My toys don't have expressions, so kids can make up whatever emotions they want."

She said she wants her toys to inspire stories and stir the imagination rather than serving as a tool for a controlled activity.

Although children will outgrow her toys, the stories they create may be lasting. That is the real benefit Willow hopes families will get out of her products.
Alysia Beaudoin is a frequent costumer of mamaroots who has purchased at least 20 toys from Willow for her own 6-year-old sons. Her favorites are wooden tags that say "spend," "save" and "give" that teach children how to manage their money.

Overall, Beaudoin said she admires the simplicity the toys offer and their ability to encourage rich experiences. She also said she appreciates the hard work and passion Willow puts into each piece.

"When I buy from her I am buying from someone who loves what they do," Beaudoin said.

Because she works full time and is a mother of two, Willow doesn't want her toy business to grow too fast.

She has already cut back on the amount of merchandise she puts on her Etsy site, but hopes she can participate in local craft markets and trunk shows. She wants to keep the business close to home.

"I don't want to burn out," Willow said. "I want to feel like I have control and like my heart is always in it."