Multi-million dollar development plan to be announced Thursday

Wednesday, May 7, 2014 | 4:52 p.m. CDT; updated 8:24 p.m. CDT, Wednesday, May 7, 2014

BY SAMUEL HARDIMAN

COLUMBIA — City staff remained tight-lipped Wednesday afternoon about an important economic development in Columbia that will be announced Thursday morning.

A news release from the city said the announcement will reveal "a medical science company's multi-million dollar development plan in Columbia."

Civic Relations Officer Toni Messina declined to comment on the specifics of the announcement Wednesday afternoon.

Regional Economic Development Inc., a semi-public company whose goal is facilitating economic development in Columbia, issued a news release Tuesday inviting the public to the announcement.

The director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, local leaders, officials from a medical science company and representatives from MU and REDI will attend the 11 a.m. news conference Thursday, according to the news releases.

The news conference will be at the Daniel Boone City Building.

Mo. Senate Committee passes capital improvements plan

By Alex Stuckey astuckey@post-dispatch.com 573-556-6186
JEFFERSON CITY • New college buildings and voting machines across the state are included in a budget plan passed by a Missouri Senate committee today.

The Senate Appropriations Committee voted on the bill this afternoon. The House passed the bill with a vote of 137-9 earlier this month. Legislators have until Friday to pass all budget-related bills.

The measure includes funding for projects on various college campuses where the cost is split evenly between the school and the state.

Some projects included in the bill are:

• $7.5 million for voting machines.

• $10 million for the construction of the College of Business Administration building at University of Missouri-St. Louis.

• $25 million for a new State Historical Society of Missouri building.

• $10 million for the construction of an Applied Learning Center for University of Missouri-Columbia's College of Business.

Initially, the House included $4 million for Kansas City to host the 2016 Republican National Convention. The city is a finalist. The committee, however, stripped this money from the budget plan because $5 million for this purpose is included in the economic development budget bill.

The bill now moves to the Senate floor.

The bill is HB 2021.
COLUMBIA, Mo. — The University of Missouri has rented a former design showroom to house up to 600,000 moldy books as they are cleaned and restored.

The university began leasing a former Rust & Martin design showroom on Thursday, at a cost of $16,965 a month. The books will be stored there but cleaned by Belfor, a global disaster recovery and restoration company, at a location in Texas, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported.

University of Missouri Libraries staff discovered the mold problem in October at Subtera, an underground storage site in north Columbia. Health officials said the mold was not a type that endangered public health.

MU Libraries spokeswoman Shannon Cary said the building is significantly more expensive than the underground space the university leased at Subtera but it has improved climate control. The university has to move out of its Subtera space by June 1.

The warehouse, which is owned by D&D Investments, was renovated to hold the books. Most of the work included taking down walls and creating spaces to separate the clean and contaminated books, said Dave Drane, who owns the building.

The remediation process is expected to last until at least June 2015 and cost $2 per book.

Library administrators have applied for grants to help fund the cleanup. A fundraising effort has raised $3,230 of the $50,000 goal.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/07/5007960_cleanup-of-missouris-600000-moldy.html#storylink=cpy
Most MU weekend nurses sign on to incentive pay change

Incentives change for weekend work.

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (7)

Tami Verner has worked as a registered nurse on weekends with University of Missouri Health Care for 31 years. Come July 6, she's opting to leave rather than sign an agreement that would cut her incentive pay in half.

The majority of weekend nurses at MU Health have signed agreements to receive 24 percent incentive pay, which is a cut for people who, like Verner, were making 54 percent and others who were making 30 percent.

The nurses found out about the incentive pay program changes in late March and were asked to sign on to the agreement's new terms by April 18. The agreement terms included decreased incentive pay for some nurses and a decreased number of weekends the nurses can take off.

About 250 of the 292 weekend nurses signed the new agreement, MU Health spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said. Those who chose not to sign the agreement won't receive incentive pay. Jenkins said there are still a few nurses out on leave who will likely sign the agreement when they return.

"We are delighted with the response so far," Jenkins said.

In April, Jenkins said 74 of the 292 weekend nurses would be receiving the incentive pay cut from 54 percent or 30 percent extra pay for weekend shifts to 24 percent. The rest were hired with the 24 percent incentive already in place. Incentive pay amounts have changed throughout the past few decades as the need for registered nurses has decreased.

"I understand, really." Verner said. "I know they are in a crunch financially, but I just thought that was pretty aggressive."
Verner will either retire completely or find a part-time job in nursing. Either way, she won't be receiving retirement benefits. Her husband, a farmer, agreed to help make it work.

"I'm 55, and I probably would've continued working until I was 62," she said. "The work is getting harder, and the patients are getting sicker. I just was not going to work harder with sicker patients for less money. Also, I wasn't going to come to work all that happy knowing I was making 30 percent less money this week than last week, you know?"

All 292 — even those already at 24 percent incentive pay — will be affected by the change because the health system is requiring all weekend nurses to work a minimum of two 12-hour shifts 48 out of 52 weekends every year. Previously, weekend nurses were able to take off as much as nine weekends per year.

Verner said the weekend schedule changes were never a concern for her — just the pay change. She hasn't skipped a weekend at work in more than two years.

Jenkins said that, during a few forums the hospital hosted to answer questions from weekend nurses, several people asked for more time to adjust to the new changes. Administrators have extended the implementation of the new program from May 11 to July 6.

"I hope things go well when they lose the more experienced help, and they will," Verner said. "It will work out; it's just going to be rough for a while. I'll be leaving a bunch of really young, smart kids. It will work out."

Molecule in soy sauce might help fight HIV

By Sophia Rosenbaum

HIV patients may soon get help from an unlikely source: a molecule used to enhance the flavors of soy sauce.

The molecule, EFdA, was discovered by Japanese soy sauce company Yamasa in 2001. Researchers believe it may prevent HIV patients from becoming quickly resistant to drug therapies.

"Patients who are treated for HIV infections with Tenofovir, eventually develop resistance to the drugs that prevent an effective or successful defense against the virus," Stefan Sarafianos, one of the researchers at University of Missouri School of Medicine, said in a press release. "EFdA, the molecule we are studying, is less likely to cause resistance in HIV
patients because it is more readily activated and is less quickly broken down by the body as similar existing drugs.”

Sarafianos and his team of researchers recreated the exact structure and configuration of the molecule, which is now being tested by the pharmaceutical company Merck.

“The structure of this compound is very important because it is a lock-and-key kind of mechanism that can be recognized by the target,” Sarafianos said. “Not only does EFdA work on resistant HIV, it works better on HIV that has not become Tenofovir resistant.”

AS I SEE IT

Near-peer college advising gives the next generation a leg up

May 6
BY JARED LAUNIUS
Special to The Star

The public has both an economic and moral imperative to support programs like the one through which I serve at a low-income high school in Kansas City as a full-time, near-peer college adviser — the Missouri College Advising Corps (MCAC.)

What the 25 advisers in Kansas City and around Missouri do is simple: In our state’s neediest high schools we help guide Missouri seniors toward their best-fit college and career opportunities.

We collaborate with counselors, principals and teachers to help students and their families research, apply to and pay for college. We help students identify majors and colleges. We host college application blitzes and this year piloted Missouri College Application Week in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Higher Education.

We assist our schools in administering test prep classes and, at this point, could probably walk a student or parent through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) blindfolded. We take students on college field trips, help them research scholarships, reach out to middle school students and did I mention we do a lot of FAFSAs?
Perhaps most importantly, the average college-going rate increase in partner schools over the last five years is up 10 percent compared with less than a 1 percent increase in that same time across the state.

This work has never been more important. The federal government says that more than half of the 30 fastest-growing jobs require a degree. Only 36 percent of Missouri’s workforce holds a degree and only 58 percent of 2012 Missouri high school graduates matriculated to a college — that’s below the national average.

The advising corps works in schools serving populations that don’t get students to and through college often enough: Only 8 percent of children from the bottom economic quartile get college degrees. I believe this creates cyclical poverty. Social mobility in the United States limps behind its democratized peers. America hasn’t been this economically stratified since the pre-Depression era. Economic inequality is a problem acknowledged and being approached by both sides of the political aisle.

This hints at our moral obligation. We are not a country that leaves people behind. The Show-Me State is one in which success is to be earned, but right now it’s much more likely to find those born in the right zip codes. As technology demands a more educated workforce, our state and nation’s poor are significantly less likely to get the skills necessary to succeed in tomorrow’s economy.

It’s not that our state hasn’t noticed. New accreditation requirements significantly ramp up “Career and College Readiness” standards. What I can tell you from working in a high school, though, is that educators are being squeezed by mandates that raise standards without increasing support. Advisers play an important role in supporting schools’ push toward these state requirements and serve in partnership to provide equity and opportunity for the young people who represent our state’s future.

With persistently sluggish economic growth, it’s crucial the public is aware of innovative programs that successfully serve our schools and students. Both anecdotal and empirical evidence shows that college advisers are doing this. Investing in one’s own education produces a higher return on investment than any other seed, and the Missouri College Advising Corps is working with schools to increase the number of willing and able Missouri students who make that investment.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/06/5006932/jared-launius-writes-helping-underserved.html#storylink=cpy
Task force recommends pediatricians treat baby teeth with fluoride

Pediatricians and other primary care doctors should apply fluoride varnish to infants’ teeth soon after they erupt, according to new cavity-fighting guidelines.

The recommendations come from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), a government-backed panel.

“Only one in four preschool children is seeing a dentist, but most see a primary care clinician,” Dr. Michael LeFevre told Reuters Health. “Primary care clinicians can play an important complementary role in helping dentists keep children’s teeth healthy.”

A family physician from the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia, LeFevre chairs the USPSTF.

The panel declined to state how often doctors should apply fluoride varnish to infants’ teeth, saying research is inconclusive.

Pediatric dentist Dr. Mary Hayes welcomed the help from pediatricians, family doctors and nurse practitioners.

“It’s a good thing that dentistry and medicine are working hand in hand trying to attack decay in kids’ mouths,” she told Reuters Health. Hayes is an American Dental Association spokeswoman and was not involved with the new recommendations.

In addition to applying fluoride varnish to all baby teeth, the task force continues to urge doctors to prescribe oral fluoride supplements to infants who have not had fluoride added to their drinking water. Supplements come in daily doses of drops, tablets or lozenges.

In an effort to prevent tooth decay, fluoride was first added to the water supply in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1945. Since then, communities throughout the U.S. have debated whether to add the naturally occurring mineral to public water systems.
About two-thirds of Americans currently drink water from fluoridated community systems, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The task force last updated its recommendations on prevention of tooth decay in preschool-aged children 10 years ago.

In 2004, it said primary care doctors should prescribe oral fluoride to babies whose water had not been fluoridated starting at six months old.

Evidence at the time showed the benefit of reducing the risk of dental cavities with fluoride outweighed possible harms, including fluorosis, a condition that discolors teeth and can pit the enamel.

LeFevre and Hayes both said the task force thoroughly examined fluoride risks in formulating the new recommendations. But Dr. Philippe Grandjean, from the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, told Reuters Health in an email that the panel appears not to have considered brain-related risks from fluoride exposure.

In 2012, Grandjean found that 26 of 27 studies on intelligence tests in fluoride-exposed children showed an IQ deficit linked to increased fluoride. All but two of the studies were conducted in China, where water fluoride levels were sometimes much higher than is typical in the U.S.

LeFevre added in an email, “The Task Force recommendation for supplements when the water supply is deficient in fluoride is based on the benefits and harms found in trials of supplementation in those selected circumstances. The Task Force did not examine the epidemiologic studies related to fluoridation of water.”

“Dental varnish is not expected to have much systemic absorption,” he wrote.

Grandjean, who was not involved in the new recommendations, said he could not assess possible risks of water fluoridation in the U.S. and called for research to clarify fluoride’s role in potential adverse effects on brain development.

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services lowered recommended fluoride limits in water, saying too large a dose of the mineral, which is also found in toothpaste and mouth rinses, may have damaged some children’s teeth (see Reuters story of January 7, 2011 here: reut.rs/1nhv6k0).

The new task force report, published in Pediatrics, points out that about 42 percent of children between two and 11 years old get cavities in their baby teeth. That percentage decreased from the early 1970s until the mid-1990s, when tooth decay began increasing again, particularly in preschool-aged children.

Hayes said she regularly sees children with mouths full of unhealthy teeth in her Chicago pediatric dental practice. Just this week she said she treated a four-year-old girl with two front
teeth that needed to be extracted, six molars that needed crowns, two molars that needed fillings and four that needed partial root canals.

The child had been drinking four cups of soda per day, Hayes said. Now, at Hayes’ insistence, she drinks just milk and water.

Renee Sharp, research director for the Environmental Working Group, a research and advocacy group, said she was more comfortable with the new recommendation on professionally applied fluoride varnish than she was with the recommendation on parent-administered fluoride drops for infants.

She is based in Oakland, California, and was not involved with the guidelines.

“We certainly have concerns with the drops because it’s so imprecise, and it would be so easy to overexpose a child to fluoride,” Sharp said.

The task force recommendations do not address educating parents about optimal dietary and other health practices for their children’s oral hygiene. The guidelines do call for more research on the question.

The panel members also conclude there is not enough evidence to recommend that primary care doctors routinely examine the mouths of their preschool-aged patients.

No gains for 12th-graders on national exam

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING

NO MU MENTION

WASHINGTON (AP) — Handing out dismal grades, the Nation's Report Card says America's high school seniors lack critical math and reading skills for an increasingly competitive global economy.
Only about one-quarter are performing proficiently or better in math and just 4 in 10 in reading. And they're not improving, the report says, reinforcing concerns that large numbers of today's students are unprepared for either college or the workplace.

Scores on the 2013 exam in both subjects were little changed from 2009, when the National Assessment of Educational Progress was last given to 12th-graders. The new results, released Wednesday, come from a representative sample of 92,000 public and private school students.

The report follows the just-released and seemingly more encouraging research that U.S. high school graduation rates in 2012 reached 80 percent, a record.

One possible explanation is that lower-performing students who in the past would have dropped out of school are now remaining in the sampling of students who take the exam, said John Easton, acting commissioner of the Education's Department's National Center for Education Statistics.

Wednesday's results are likely to embolden supporters of the Common Core standards that are being rolled out in 44 states and the District of Columbia. Designed to develop critical thinking skills, they spell out what math and English skills students should master at each grade.

There have been political storms in many states over the standards, which were pushed by governors who were concerned about the skill levels of their high school graduates. Opponents say the standards have a federalist bent and are untested.

Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and a former governor of West Virginia, said the new national results speak to a "desperate need for the aggressive implementation" of the standards.

In reading, the 38 percent share of students performing at or above the proficient level was lower than when the assessment was first given in 1992, when it was 40 percent. Scores have remained similar since 1994.

Past comparisons in math date only to 2005. Scores had increased from 2005 to 2009.

Student participants' responses to a survey about their educational experiences offered some clues about their performance.

Among the findings:

—Students who reported rarely or never discussing reading interpretations in class averaged lower scores than those who had such discussions daily or almost daily.

—An overwhelming majority reported that reading was enjoyable. Students who strongly disagreed with that idea had scores much lower than those who strongly agreed.
Math scores were higher, on average, for students who took calculus and lowest for students who had not taken a math course beyond Algebra I.

Math scores were higher for students who reported math was their favorite subject, believed it would help them in the future or thought their class was engaging.

Even as 12th-grade scores have stagnated, fourth- and eighth-grade students have made slow but steady progress on the exam since the early 1990s; most progress has come in math.

Michael Petrilli, executive vice president at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, said it's unclear why younger students are doing better while high school seniors are not.

"This is one of the great mysteries of education today is why are we not seeing the same improvements at the 12th-grade level as the fourth- and eighth-grade level," Petrilli said.

One speculation is that high school seniors simply aren't motivated when they take this exam. More ominously, another thought is that students are taking watered-down classes and "all we've done is put them in courses with bigger titles," said Mark Schneider, the vice president at the American Institutes for Research. He is the former commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics.

At all levels, there continue to be racial disparities.

Among high school seniors, white and Asian students scored higher on average in the recent results in both reading and math than black, Hispanic and American Indian students. Asian students scored higher than white students in math but did not do significantly better in reading. As in past years, male students did better than female students in math, but females outperformed males in reading.

The new results did not include global comparisons, but U.S. students historically do poorly on international assessments compared to many foreign peers.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan noted that despite the good news related to graduation rates and scores in younger grades, high school achievement has been flat in recent years.

"We must reject educational stagnation in our high schools, and as a nation we must do better for all students, especially for African-American and Latino students," Duncan said in a statement.

Community colleges and four-year institutions have been trying to improve their remedial education programs, given that only about one-quarter of students who take remedial classes end up graduating.
It's estimated that more than one-third of all college students, and more than one-half in community colleges, need some remedial help, according to research from the Community College Research Center at Teachers College, Columbia University.

In addition to the national scores released Wednesday, 13 states voluntarily participated at a greater level and had scores reported.

Follow Kimberly Hefling on Twitter at http://twitter.com/khefling

Is this the drone you're looking for? Police find crashed craft on St. Louis office building

BY JOEL CURRIER JCURRIER@POST-DISPATCH.COM 314-340-8256

**ST. LOUIS** • If you’re missing a drone, it might be the one that crashed Monday afternoon into St. Louis’ tallest office building. And police would like to speak to you.

The DJI Phantom 2 Quadcopter was found damaged after apparently striking the building and crash-landing on a 30th-floor balcony of the Metropolitan Square building at 211 North Broadway, police say. The drone was discovered about 4 p.m. Monday.

The drones sell online for anywhere from about $600 to more than $1,350. The drone found Monday is controlled remotely, via wi-fi, and features a high-definition video camera.

St. Louis police have seized the drone and are looking for its owner. The Federal Aviation Administration said it is investigating the discovery but would not give additional details.

Anyone with information about the drone is asked to call St. Louis police.

Civilian drone operators are required to remain within sight of their drones and fly no higher than 400 feet above ground, according to FAA regulations.

The FAA bars commercial use of drones no matter how seemingly benign. The agency has certified more than 600 public-sector entities to fly drones, mostly law enforcement
agencies and universities. It announced last month that the first of six national sites for commercial drone testing was ready in North Dakota.

St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson has said he wants the police department to have drones to be able to watch for terrorists or follow criminals during police chases.

This spring, the University of Missouri-Columbia’s journalism school grounded its outdoor use of news-gathering drones after receiving a cease and desist letter from the FAA last summer. The FAA has said it expects to issue revised rules on commercial drone use by next year.

Last year, the Missouri House passed a bill to make the state a “no drone zone,” but it failed in the Senate. The law would have banned warrantless surveillance using manned or unmanned aircraft and would have required journalists to seek permission from property owners before using drones.

A similar House bill was introduced last August but it has no scheduled hearings.

The Associated Press contributed information to this report.

Family Impact Center celebrates opening with community event

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Jessica Heflin held two snow cones as her daughters, ages 4 and 7, were immersed in the games and attractions Tuesday at the grand opening of the Family Impact Center at 105 E. Ash St.

Truman the Tiger mingled with the crowd, and volunteers offered face-painting and carnival-style games.

Heflin was eager to learn more about the center's programs and was already convinced that the downtown location was ideal. "I hope it can create more of a village-like community so that we connect and support each other more," she said.
That observation resonated with Jo Britt-Rankin, a University of Missouri Extension professor who helped launch the center on the 10,000-square-foot second floor of the former Williams-Keepers building.

"It does create community," Britt-Rankin said. "That's what we want."

Sara Placke, an MU Extension nutrition program assistant, said the new center will help her have "more accessibility to the people I already work with — and they would have accessibility to me."

The Family Impact Center will share the building with the Heart of Missouri United Way, the MedZou free primary health clinic, and possibly other social service agencies that might lease space to make the building a hub for local social services and community education.

The center has been in operation since February with the MedZou clinic and a free volunteer income tax preparation service. The center will have educational programs for all ages and income levels. Some programs might have participation fees, but local businesses are being solicited to help offset those fees with donations for scholarships.

"We're always welcome to new program ideas," said Britt-Rankin, adding that after yesterday's ribbon-cutting event with the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, several community members approached her and asked how they could get involved with the center.

Some of the programs that will start between now and this fall include Tigers on Track, an extension of the child obesity clinic at Women's and Children's Hospital; Stay Strong Stay Healthy, a 10-week strength-training program for senior adults; CoMo Financial Awareness, a financial counseling service for families and first-time homebuyers; and Eating From the Garden, a program this summer that will teach gardening skills and offer tastes of different fruits and vegetables for elementary- and middle school-age youths.

Columbia Public Schools will move its English Language Learner program to the center in July. Starting in the fall, graduate students in the MU School of Social Work will provide one-on-one counseling and group therapy sessions.

"I really hope to see us in full swing by fall," Britt-Rankin said.

Heflin said she was especially interested in programs that "empower" and help people "increasingly become more self-sufficient."

Director Ashley Guillemette said the center will use MU students and some MU Extension faculty to provide services.
MU students let stress go on 'Frozen' rink

Wednesday, May 7, 2014 | 7:19 p.m. CDT; updated 6:52 a.m. CDT, Thursday, May 8, 2014
BY TAYLOR FOX

COLUMBIA — Students' grades might not be frozen yet, but a part of Lowry Mall was under ice Wednesday afternoon.

To help relieve students' stress before finals week, the Missouri Students Association and the Department of Student Life brought an ice rink to the MU walkway, despite the 90 degree weather.

Bringing an ice rink to campus has been on Student Life's list of things to do for a while, Assistant Director of Student Life Kathy Murray said, and hype around The Walt Disney Co.'s "Frozen" created the perfect theme.

The more than $5,000 it cost to rent the synthetic ice rink was around the same price as most of Student Life's end-of-year events and even cheaper than some, Murray said.

"Every programmer has a list of things they want to bring to campus," Murray said. "The 'Frozen' sing-a-long just came out, so this seemed like a great opportunity to do so."

The heat didn't seem to bother MU students — more than 100 participants came out to skate in the 90-degree weather.

Because one of the movie's main characters, Elsa, wasn't there to create ice with her magic powers, the rink was made of plastic sheets that were occasionally sprayed with a mixture of water and silicone to maintain the slick surface.

MU senior Alex Sanchez said skating on the synthetic surface was like skating on ice that has been freshly resurfaced by a Zamboni.

"It's like fresh ice; it's good if you're used to it," Sanchez said.

Graduate student Anna Clausen, who was among the first skaters, was drawn by her connection to her favorite "Frozen" character, Anna.
"Disney finally got it right; they picked the best name," she said. "I love 'Frozen.' Saying I could ice skate in the middle of the mall, I just had to check it out."

After the rink was taken down at 7 p.m., Student Life provided snow cones and other snacks to students before the movie's scheduled screening at 9 p.m.