COLUMBIA — Pre-tenure and non-tenure track faculty at MU are more satisfied with the university as a place to work than tenured faculty, according to a new survey.

The satisfaction rate is 78 percent for pre-tenure faculty, 68 percent for non-tenure track faculty and 64 percent for tenured faculty.

The results, released Wednesday, are from the first Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education survey conducted at MU in late 2012 and early 2013. It focused on full-time faculty, including both tenure-stream and non-tenure track members.

The survey showed that self-identified faculty of color are less satisfied working for MU than white faculty, 57 percent versus 70 percent. Sixty-one percent of faculty of color, the term used in the survey, would choose to work at MU again.

In terms of race, the survey results divided the faculty into two categories: white and faculty of color. The results also broke down the faculty by gender and ranking.

The survey also showed that 65 percent of tenured faculty would choose to work at MU again, 75 percent of pre-tenure faculty and 72 percent of non-tenure track faculty.

The survey had an overall 51 percent response rate among MU faculty, or 894 members.

Non-tenure track faculty had the lowest response rate at 44 percent, and pre-tenure faculty had the highest at 56 percent. The MU School of Law had the lowest response rate among schools and colleges at 39 percent, but the Sinclair School of Nursing had the highest at 82 percent.
Much of the survey results showed MU in comparison with the results of faculty surveys at five peer institutions: Indiana and Purdue universities and the universities of California, Kansas and North Carolina.

In that context, the survey also found:

- MU has strengths — the language used in the survey — in time spent on research and teaching, support for engaging undergraduates in research and tenure reasonableness.

- MU has weaknesses in the quality of graduate students, laboratory and research space, child care and mentoring of associate and pre-tenure faculty.

- Differences in mentoring, promotion and senior leadership across demographic groups varied more at the school and college levels compared with the overall university.

- Male and female faculty members were similarly satisfied with MU as a place to work (66 percent and 70 percent) and would choose to be employed at MU again (69 percent and 68 percent.) However, female faculty members are 7 percent less satisfied with their departments.

- Tenure clarity and policies were perceived differently among colleges, showing the need for more effective communication between deans and faculty leaders.

For all faculty, promotion, mentoring and professional development were identified as areas of special concern for the university.

**Committee recommendations**

_Results of the survey were reviewed by a faculty committee appointed by Interim Provost Ken Dean. The Faculty Satisfaction Committee made recommendations to the campus community to improve faculty satisfaction and engagement at a Faculty Council presentation on June 5._

The committee recommended that a dean’s report be made by each college containing comparison data showing how that college ranks with others at MU. It recommended that the report identify strengths and weaknesses.
The committee also recommended that a general report showing the variation among colleges be made and distributed on a broad spectrum through the MU Faculty Council. The committee also suggested that specific items from the survey be shown to individuals and committees responsible for those areas. All colleges will begin to work on these recommendations this school year.

**Survey background**

The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education survey, which was administered through Harvard Graduate School of Education, is a research initiative that gathers data to make the recruitment and management of faculty talent more effective.

The survey was founded in 2002 with aide from the Ford Foundation and Atlantic Philanthropies. The 2012 survey involved 81 participating institutions nationwide, and for the first time, an additional module for non-tenure track was available, which MU opted to do.

Comparisons with the peer schools occurred only for tenure-stream faculty because not all institutions elected to involve non-tenure faculty.

MU plans to administer the survey again in 2016 to determine the progress of its improvement efforts over the next two years.
Former MU chancellor to receive 'Missourian Award'

Saturday, August 2, 2014 at 12:00 am Updated: 12:01 am, Sat Aug 2, 2014.

Correction appended

Former University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton next month will receive the “Missourian Award,” created by Ralph Slavens and his late wife, Corrine, for his work with the university, community and state.

Nominees for the award must have been born in Missouri and made a contribution in civics, business, arts and/or politics.

“I am deeply honored to receive this award and to be recognized as someone who has lived up to the spirit of Missouri, its heritage and values,” Deaton said in a statement. “I feel a strong connection to the Thomas Jefferson philosophy on which the university was based and after working so hard with students, faculty, staff and alumni for the university for all of these years, this is an incredible recognition of what I tried to do. I have enjoyed meeting Missourians all across the state, and now I am proud to be one of them in this special way.”

Recent recipients of the award include former congressman Ike Skelton and newspaper publisher Gary Rust.

Other past recipients include Walter Cronkite, George Washington Carver and former President Harry Truman.

Deaton will receive the award at a ceremony Sept. 27 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.
Former MU chancellor Brady Deaton honored with Missourian Award

Friday, August 1, 2014 | 3:03 p.m. CDT; updated 8:15 p.m. CDT, Friday, August 1, 2014

BY MICHAEL ALVEY

COLUMBIA — Former MU Chancellor Brady Deaton will receive a 2014 Missourian Award in September.

The Missourian Award is given to Missouri citizens who have made contributions to their community and the state's vitality, according to an MU news release. Recipients must either have been born in Missouri or have become well known in the state. Deaton served as chancellor of MU from 2004 to 2013.

Past winners of the award include Walter Cronkite, George Washington Carver, Walt Disney, Mark Twain and Harry S. Truman.

Deaton is chancellor emeritus and executive director of the Anne and Brady Deaton Institute for University Leadership in International Development. He will receive the award Sept. 27 at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

*Supervising editor is Seth Klamann.*
MU medical school students take part in white coat ceremony

By Alex Schiffer

Saturday, August 2, 2014 at 12:00 am Updated: 12:02 am, Sat Aug 2, 2014.

Three years ago, when Rachel Waller took part in the University of Missouri School of Medicine’s white coat ceremony, which welcomes the incoming class of medical students, she was unsure what she wanted to do in medicine.

Yesterday, Waller stood on stage at the annual white coat ceremony at the Missouri Theatre and addressed the Class of 2018, which consists of 104 students. She told the students she decided to go into child psychiatry after an experience with a little boy during her first year of medical school.

Waller said the boy was very smart for his age and an avid reader and chess player but suffered from severe depression, which caused him to hallucinate. She said she spent every day with the boy and learned that what kept him going was his outlook on life, which he compared to a clock.

“Clocks have many parts,” Waller said. “These parts are very small and significant, but without each and every part, the clock will not run. This is what kept him going. The belief in having purpose in this world gave him hope and meaning in life.”

The first white coat ceremony was conducted in 1993 at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, according to a news release. The ceremony was created by pediatric neurologist Arnold Gold, who called the white coat his profession’s “cloak of compassion.”

It is estimated that today similar ceremonies are held at more than 90 percent of schools of medicine and osteopathy in the United States. The first white coat ceremony at MU was held in 1997.

This year’s incoming MU medical school class is eight more than last year’s enrollment. The class size will increase to 128 in 2017, with the completion of the Patient Centered Care Learning Center in Columbia and the opening of the clinical campus in Springfield, a joint effort between MU and CoxHealth and Mercy health systems in Springfield.
Linda Headrick, senior associate dean for medical education at the MU School of Medicine and professor of internal medicine, was master of ceremonies. She said the event has changed little over the years to display the values the school wants students to develop. “It’s one of those rituals that works really well when we do it similarly every time,” Headrick said. “It’s joyful, but it’s also solemn, and there are key elements that are so important that we repeat them every time.”

Marc Borenstein, the keynote speaker for the ceremony, echoed Waller’s words about how student interactions with their patients will affect and help shape the rest of their careers.

Borenstein, professor of clinical emergency medicine, spoke for 20 minutes, entertaining the crowd with stories from different parts of his career while simultaneously driving home the point that the students will have multiple teachers throughout their careers — their patients, their nurses and their professors, to name a few.

Borenstein also elaborated on the challenges of the profession.

“Things are not always easy and clean,” he said. “Sometimes I tell students if you want something to work out really clearly, then mathematics is the way to go. With the formulas, it all works out. When you put human beings into the equations, it just doesn’t go that way.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Incoming MU School of Medicine class dons first white coats
Friday, August 1, 2014 | 7:01 p.m. CDT

BY T.J. THOMSON

COLUMBIA — The MU School of Medicine's Class of 2018 received a symbol of the medical profession Friday, and its members gave their word to conduct themselves ethically and altruistically during a ceremony at the Missouri Theatre Friday afternoon.

Kimberly Hoffman, associate dean for learning strategies, helped more than 100 students wriggle into a short white coat, a symbol of their time in medical school. Upon completion of their degrees, the students will receive a full-length coat that matches those of the faculty they will have, by then, studied under for four or more years.
Although the white coat ceremony is a relatively recent invention — originating in Chicago within the past three decades — MU’s history of training physicians isn’t. The university has offered physician training for more than 160 years and celebrated its first white coat ceremony in 1997.

This year’s class of 104 is eight students larger than last year’s due to efforts by the School of Medicine to increase class sizes and create a clinical campus in Springfield.

"The goal of the expansion is to improve health care and the economy in Missouri," said Linda Headrick, senior associate dean for medical education, who was quoted in an MU School of Medicine press release. "By increasing class size and creating a clinical campus in Springfield, the School of Medicine will be able to help answer a need for more physicians in both rural and urban areas of the state."

The school’s class size is expected to grow to 128 by 2017. By then, Columbia's Patient Centered Learning Center and Springfield's clinical campus are scheduled to be opened.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Curators will commission an independent review of UMKC business school rankings

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

THE KANSAS CITY STAR

08/01/2014 4:52 PM

NO MU MENTION

The University of Missouri Board of Curators said Friday it will commission an independent review of the issues raised in a Kansas City Star article about how top rankings were attained at the University of Missouri-Kansas City business school.
The curators’ decision was made during a closed meeting Friday afternoon. Following the meeting, the curators released a statement saying the PricewaterhouseCoopers auditing firm will conduct the review.

Results of the independent inquiry “will be reviewed by an appropriate academic expert not affiliated with the University of Missouri System or any of its campuses,” according to the curators’ statement.

In a statement Friday, Leo Morton, the UMKC chancellor, said the university can only be helped by a thorough and unbiased review.

“As long as such an investigation is performed by people who both understand academic processes and have no stake in the outcome, we have no fear of what it may reveal,” Morton said.

The university pledged cooperation with PricewaterhouseCoopers in a later statement.

Gov. Jay Nixon had called this week for the curators to conduct an independent investigation into how top rankings were attained at the Henry W. Bloch School of Management in 2011 and subsequent years.

Nixon’s call came after a report in The Star on Sunday showing a trail of exaggerations and misstatements by the business school that raised questions among faculty and students about the validity of the rankings.

The governor sent a letter to Morton, current Bloch School dean David P. Donnelly and university system president Tim Wolfe saying the newspaper article raised “serious questions about the integrity of the scholarship and strategies that have been employed to raise the profile of the institution.”

In a statement Thursday, UMKC said it was confident in the validity of the rankings and took issue with The Star’s report, saying, “We have not violated the public trust.”

The Star’s story addressed the Bloch School’s desire to be included among the nation’s top-ranked business schools and how the school in 2011 received top rankings and the
largest single gift in the university’s history — $32 million — from Henry Bloch to build a state-of-the-art facility for the school.

At question are two rankings highlighted by The Star.

One came in a 2011 Journal of Product Innovation Management study that placed UMKC’s Bloch School first in the world in innovation management research. That study was done by visiting Chinese scholars working on the UMKC campus and sharing an office number with Michael Song, the UMKC business school professor that the JPIM study named No. 1 researcher.

The second were top 25 rankings that year and others in The Princeton Review for the business school’s Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In that instance, The Star’s investigation found several questions about the university’s use of data it submitted.

UMKC maintains that the relationships with the authors of the JPIM study do not negate its findings and that it did not exaggerate or take shortcuts to gain the Princeton Review rankings.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article856375.html#storylink=cpy

Gov. Nixon calls for review of UMKC rankings

August 01, 2014 10:56 am

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Gov. Jay Nixon is calling for a review of how the University of Missouri-Kansas City's business school achieved top rankings in surveys, one national and the other international.
The governor announced his request Thursday during a meeting of the Kansas City Star Editorial Board. He said he wrote a letter to Don Downing, chairman of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, asking for an independent review.

Nixon's request was in reaction to The Kansas City Star's recent investigation of the validity of claims made by the Henry W. Bloch School of Management that may have led to the rankings, the newspaper (http://bit.ly/1ljmwwa ) reported.

"When I picked up the paper Sunday morning, it was the first time I knew that anybody was even looking at that stuff," Nixon said. "So that's the first time I had any knowledge of it. So we kind of looked at it ourselves."

In his letter, he said the Star's findings raised some troubling questions about the university's integrity, reputation and academic programs.

A 2011 study by the Journal of Product Innovation Management said the Henry W. Bloch School of Management was first in the world, above MIT and Stanford. The school also received a top-25 ranking in Princeton Review for its Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

The Star determined there were conflicts of interest among the Journal of Product Innovation Management study's authors. It also found distorted data in UMKC's application for the Princeton Review rankings.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City denied the allegations made by the Star's investigation. It responded Thursday with a statement saying UMKC welcomes the review.

"We have not violated the public trust; we say this with confidence, based on multiple reviews of these issues conducted in academic circles long before the Kansas City Star became involved — reviews that found these criticisms to be without merit," the university said in its statement.

The New York Times

Missouri Weighs Unusual Addition to Its Constitution: Right to Farm

KINGDOM CITY, Mo. — Missourians already have the constitutional right to religion, speech and guns. On Tuesday, they could make a novel addition to the State Constitution: the right to farm.
A proposal known as Amendment 1 will be taken up in a statewide vote on Tuesday, leaving Missouri poised to change its Constitution to guarantee the rights of its people to “engage in farming and ranching practices.”

The right to farm hardly seems threatened in Missouri, one of the leading agricultural states, with nearly 100,000 farms producing crops including soybeans, corn and wheat.

But a coalition of state farming groups and major agriculture corporations have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to take aim at the Humane Society, which led a successful fight in 2010 to regulate inhumane dog-breeding practices in Missouri.

Backers of the amendment are wary of laws that have passed in other states, like California, where voters in 2008 approved roomier living conditions for hens, and Oregon, where a rural county’s ban on genetically modified crops was overwhelmingly passed in May.

While the amendment would not affect federal laws governing agriculture, its possible effect on local and state laws is unclear.

“There is a lot of uncertainty with respect to how the amendment would actually work in practice,” said Erin Morrow Hawley, an associate law professor at the University of Missouri who specializes in agricultural issues. “You could see a state law challenged based on this constitutional amendment. But the biggest aim is to prevent new state laws coming in from outside the state. The idea is to create another legal tool to stop that.”

The debate over the proposed amendment has roiled Missouri for more than a year, with supporters saying it would end what they see as meddling by outsiders in its business practices.

Opponents have protested that the amendment would be a boon for large industrial farms that would like to avoid potential laws controlling their treatment of animals or the environment, allowing them to pollute the land, extend the use of genetically modified crops and freely experiment with the use of antibiotics in livestock, a trend that has concerned scientists.

“It’s put family against family and neighbor against neighbor,” Jeff Jones, a cattle farmer from Callaway County, in central Missouri, said of the amendment at an emotional public forum on Thursday evening that attracted close to 200 people.

If passed, the amendment could be a model for other states trying to ward off new laws regulating farming. Only North Dakota, a state far less populous, where farming and ranching are not as central to the economy and culture as they are in Missouri, has passed a similar constitutional amendment.

The Missouri amendment was sponsored by a Republican legislator and has wide support in the Republican-controlled legislature. The referendum is part of the primary on Tuesday in Missouri, where voters will also decide on a measure that would declare the right to keep and bear arms “unalienable.”
Since the beginning of July, advocacy groups have spent more than $1 million on the fight over Amendment 1: Missouri Farmers Care, an umbrella group of supporters, has spent more than $650,000, while Missouri’s Food for America, a group formed last year, has poured more than $400,000 into efforts for the opposition. Much of that money has come from the Humane Society of the United States.

Several days before the vote, an aggressive campaign to woo the undecided was well underway. Television commercials seemed to be running nonstop, imploring voters to help family farmers by opposing the amendment. Cherry-red yard signs proclaiming, “Keep Missouri Farming! Yes on 1,” dotted the landscape of rural southwest Missouri, a place where residents like to say there are more cows than people.

The Missouri Cattlemen’s Association sent an email to members on Thursday urging them to call friends, post on Facebook and Twitter in support of the amendment, and get to the polls on Tuesday.

Many farmers said they were fed up with scrutiny over farming practices from groups like the Humane Society, a widely loathed organization among farmers here, which supported the 2010 measure approving strict regulations on “puppy mills.”

“I personally don’t know anybody that’s against this,” said Richard Le Jeune, who raises 200 cattle on his 573-acre property in the tiny hamlet of Halfway, Mo., 30 miles north of Springfield. “Some of these city people don’t have a clue what goes on in the country and how food is produced. We need this to keep the outsiders from trying to run things.”

While watching Fox News from his living room on Wednesday, Mr. Le Jeune interrupted himself to nod at the television when a commercial advising viewers to vote against the amendment came on. “This is the second time in two days I’ve seen this one,” he said.

Other farmers said the amendment, which is brief and vaguely worded, would permanently enshrine a special status for ranchers and farmers in the Constitution. Darvin Bentlage, who raises cattle and grows soybeans, corn and wheat in Golden City, Mo., said the people who were pushing the amendment “don’t know what kind of can of worms is going to open up.”

“One thing’s for sure — it’s going to put ag culture above everybody else,” he said. “We’re going to be a different class of people. You won’t be able to complain about anything that we do. That should never be the case.”

Agricultural groups representing cattle, soybean and corn farmers have lined up in favor of the amendment, while the editorial boards of nearly every major newspaper across the state have sounded off against it. The Kansas City Star editorial board called it an “unnecessary and potentially harmful proposal” and “a concerted effort to shield factory farms and concentrated agricultural feeding operations from regulations to protect livestock, consumers and the environment.”
“It’s the agricultural establishment trying to build a firewall against growing consumer concerns,” said John E. Ikerd, professor emeritus of agricultural economics at the University of Missouri in Columbia, likening it to early regulation of tobacco. “If we’d had a ‘right to smoke’ amendment at that time, we’d still have smoke-filled offices and airplanes.”

While the Republican-controlled legislature introduced the ballot measure, support for it has not fallen along strict partisan lines. The state attorney general, Chris Koster, a Democrat, supports Amendment 1; the governor, Jay Nixon, also a Democrat, said in an email last week that he did not.

Channing Ansley, a spokeswoman for Mr. Nixon, said that while the governor had championed Missouri farmers, “he also believes that changing the Constitution of our state should be done sparingly, thoughtfully and only when there is a demonstrated need to do so.”

She continued: “In the governor’s view, that need has not been demonstrated in this case.”

Joe Maxwell, a farmer and former lieutenant governor who works for the Humane Society, said the amendment could set off lawsuits arguing that local laws regulating agriculture were unconstitutional.

“There are now two kinds of agriculture in America — we have seen over the last 30 years the advancement of the industrialized ag model,” Mr. Maxwell said. “The group of farmers who are aligned with industrialized ag believe big is better and they should be able to do whatever they want to the land and to the animals. Then there are a group of farmers who believe we are the caretakers of the land. I stand with many family farmers who are in opposition to this.”

But Blake Hurst, the president of the Missouri Farm Bureau, which represents 117,000 farmers, said many laws regulating farming had overstepped, leaving farmers with no choice but to amend the Constitution to protect their industry.

“When you look across the country, you see a lot of ballot initiatives that are making decisions about how farmers can farm,” Mr. Hurst said. The proposed amendment “doesn’t change regulations we have now, and it can’t possibly change federal law. We’re trying to stop ballot initiatives that limit farmers’ ability to use technology.”

The effects of the similar amendment in North Dakota, where it passed in 2012 with 67 percent of the vote, have so far been indiscernible, said Rusty Rumley, a senior staff attorney for the National Agricultural Law Center at the University of Arkansas. He added, however, that it was still too soon to expect major repercussions.

Should the Missouri amendment pass, the possible ramifications are difficult to predict, he said.

“Really and truly, I don’t think anybody knows,” Mr. Rumley said. “The thing with constitutional amendments is, they’re written to be broad. It could take quite a while to know what it’s all going to mean.”
At the forum in Callaway County on Thursday, Debbie Brunette, 58, of Fulton, Mo., said she supported the farmers’ efforts but feared the measure was too permanent. “We don’t know the future of agriculture,” she said. “Why do we have to change the Constitution?”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Jewish community gathers to support Israel

Sunday, August 3, 2014 | 10:15 p.m. CDT; updated 7:10 a.m. CDT, Monday, August 4, 2014

BY CAMERON DODD

COLUMBIA — Members of Columbia’s Jewish community gathered Sunday evening to express their support for Israel in its current conflict in the Gaza Strip.

"We felt it was important to come together to show support as a community," said Jeanne Snodgrass, director of Mizzou Hillel and an organizer of the event.

In the large prayer room at Congregation Beth Shalom synagogue, at least 60 people listened to local Jewish and Christian community leaders and others express their support for Israel and for each other. The most recent flare of hostilities in the region started nearly a month ago, according to Israeli paper Haaretz.

Speakers included Snodgrass; Rabbi Avraham Lapine, of Chabad of MU and Mid-Missouri; and Rabbi Yossi Feintuch and Joel Shenker, both of Congregation Beth Shalom.

Gail Bank, 89, attended the event because he thinks it is important to show support for Israel. He is member of the Congregation Beth Shalom and visited Israel in 2012.

"They need all the help they can get," Bank said before the event started.

Many of the speakers emphasized the complexity of the relationship that many American Jews have with the nation of Israel.
"The people of Israel are part of our family," Shenker said to the crowd. He is the president of the congregation. "And like any family, it's complex. ... But when family is in crisis, you pull together."

Snodgrass echoed Shenker as she took the podium.

"We talk about Israel as a family," Snodgrass said. She most recently visited Israel six months ago. "Families are complex and complicated, and you don't always agree with everything they do, but you still love them."

**Hannah Alexander, an Israeli-born professor of biological sciences at MU, shared her emotional tales of growing up in Israel and serving in the Israeli Defense Force during the Six-Day War. She recalled evacuating her village near the Gaza border with her mother during another conflict, the Arab-Israeli War of 1948.**

Although Alexander often feels that Israel can do more for peace, her views on Hamas have always been strong.

"Hamas is a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel," she said. "This isn't going to happen."

Several non-Jewish community members offered their support for the Jewish community and the Middle Eastern country as well. Lawrence Okamura, an MU professor of history, shared with the crowd stories that spoke to the resilience of the Jewish people throughout their often tragic history.

He believed the struggle against Hamas to be a just cause, and he said the people of the world are better off with a peaceful Israel, rather than a nation surrounded by Islamist extremist groups challenging its existence.

Rev. Tom Leuther of the Family Worship Center also shared his enthusiastic support for Israel and its military, the Israel Defense Forces.

"When someone takes a stand against Israel, they are taking a stand against God's will," Leuther said.

As of Sunday evening, more than 1,700 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip, according to Israeli paper Haaretz. At least 68 percent of Palestinian
casualties are civilians, including over 330 children, according to the most recent report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Sixty-four Israeli Defense Force soldiers and three Israeli civilians have also been killed.

What’s bugging Missouri and Kansas? Scientists on the watch for invasive pests

BY ALLIE HINGA
THE KANSAS CITY STAR
08/03/2014 8:20 PM

Run a Google Images search on the brown marmorated stink bug. Or Asian longhorned beetle.

On second thought, don’t do that. Just hope they don’t show up in force in our area anytime soon.

Those two are among a handful of pests Kansas and Missouri entomologists and officials are keeping an eye on because of the potential harm they could cause.

The Kansas City area is no stranger to invasive pests. You’ve already heard about the emerald ash borer, which made its way into the area a couple of years ago.

Across Kansas and Missouri, scientists and agencies are keeping an eye open for other pests that have damaging potential.
The Kansas Department of Agriculture, for example, has a few insects — most of them from other countries — on its priority list. It’s now focusing on periodic surveys and risk assessments for those that haven’t established themselves in the state yet.

“Ideally, we’d like to prevent infestation all together and never have to deal with it in the first place,” said plant protection and weed control manager Jeff Vogel of the Kansas Department of Agriculture.

On Vogel’s watch list:

Asian longhorned beetle, which can damage a wide range of trees.

Gypsy moth, which defoliates trees.

Walnut twig beetle, which carries the thousand cankers disease that could threaten eastern black walnuts.

None of those have established themselves in Kansas so far, Vogel said, though occasional detections of gypsy moths have occurred.

Missouri is watching for those same insects, as well as the khapra beetle, which can damage stored grain.

Aside from some low numbers of gypsy moths that have been found — no reproducing populations yet — those haven’t been detected in Missouri, said Mike Brown, Missouri’s state plant health director for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

In addition to all those insects, state experts are watching out for a number of other pests.

Both states also have had some isolated incidents of red imported fire ants, but those have been or are being eradicated.

Then there’s that brown marmorated stink bug. Both the immature and adult stink bugs chew up a wide variety of fruit, leaving them unsaleable, said Kansas State University Entomology Professor Raymond Cloyd.
“It just makes the fruit unmarketable, which is an economic loss for the producer,” Cloyd said.

Ben Puttler, an assistant professor emeritus of entomology at the University of Missouri, called the stink bug “the scourge of the east,” but neither he nor Brown were aware of any permanent establishments in Missouri.

There’s also the spotted wing drosophila, which Cloyd said could cause substantial problems for fruit-tree and berry growers. The fruit fly was detected in Kansas last year.

“It’s in Kansas for good,” Cloyd said.

How extensively the pest is in Kansas isn’t known, Cloyd said, and he noted most growers probably aren’t aware of it.

“I don’t think anyone’s suffered any damage, as far as we can tell, but people probably don’t know what this fruit fly is,” he said.

Moneen Jones, a research entomologist for MU at the Fisher Delta Research Center in Missouri’s Bootheel, also has her eye on the sugarcane aphid, which can kill young plants if the infestation is bad enough, and which has been recently attacking sorghum. The pest leaves a sticky substance on plants that can lead to the growth of a sooty mold fungus that harms the plant, she said.

The pest hasn’t reached Missouri yet, but it’s moving north quickly from the southern United States, so she is monitoring for it.

She’s also on the lookout for the kudzu bug, which can cause huge crop yield losses in soybeans if left untreated. Jones’ team will be scouting for it next year, but she thinks the bug could have already arrived.

“The sugarcane aphid can decimate the crops, and so can the kudzu bug,” she said.
The Kansas City area has also been dealing with the Japanese beetle in recent years, Brown said, and it’s established in pockets throughout Missouri. Adults can feed on a variety of garden plants, and the grubs feed on turf.

Though people like Jones and Vogel have an eye on the potential danger of different pests, public awareness is key — if someone reports a suspicious bug, that may be the first alert.

“The earlier we know about it, the better potentially the response could be,” Vogel said.

That includes being neither overly concerned nor complacent, but also avoiding things that could cause pests to spread, such as moving firewood a great distance or shipping fresh fruit out of the state, Brown said.

Back to the emerald ash borer: While trees treated by the city seem to be in good shape, the pest population is building and untreated trees are starting to die, said Alice Hannon, a forester with Kansas City Parks and Recreation.

“We’re at that cusp right now,” Hannon said.

As a result, the city is hoping to plant 500 trees this fall to replace some of the ash — a number of trees that already weren’t in good shape needed to be cut down. In their place will be a mix of native species, Hannon said. In this case, diversity is key.

“It helps prevent pests like this from coming in and decimating the whole area,” she said.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article984145.html#storylink=cpy
Billboard project redefines relationship between text messages and driving

By Amy Wilder

Sunday, August 3, 2014 at 12:00 am

Missouri is fertile ground. Which is to say, between the cows and the politics, we produce a lot of fertilizer — and use it, too: We grow a lot of crops and crops of ideas. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, our top grossing products include soybeans, cattle, corn, hogs — you’re welcome, America, for the bacon — and dairy. But perhaps our most visible cash crop is billboards, to the chagrin of many of the state’s denizens who see it largely as blight.

Anyone who has driven down the I-70 corridor between St. Louis and Kansas City has noticed the wild-growth forests of signs built to create, in the span of a glance, lust for things we largely don’t need. The original pop-up ads — perhaps the original memes — billboards compete for drivers’ attentions, playing on pop-culture conditioning programmed into our psyches through a constant salvo of ads, whether on the Internet or interstate.

It was only a matter of time before artists joined the conversation. Drivers headed west from St. Louis since April may have noticed a couple of signs that quietly stand out, a humorous aside mocking the usual family drama: “Blah Blah Blah,” says one by Mel Bochner, in black and white. A new project, the I-70 Sign Show, helmed by University of Missouri professor, artist and writer Anne Thompson, seeks to add a bit of critical insight in a playful and provocative way.

TEXT MESSAGES

We know not to text and drive, but Missouri has a particularly laissez-faire stance on businesses texting and telegraphing their morphemes through our windshields. Eat here! Sleep here! No, here — we have food and Internet. How about a sex toy? Or a sexy car? Don’t get an abortion, we’ll take your baby. Maybe the Bible will save you from this advertising hell. Just call this convenient 800-number to get your copy today. Or maybe you’d like a gun instead?

The succession of clamoring messages and their sometimes hilariously conflicting proximity is a rich visual-culture context for conceptual exploration.
The first installment in the serial exhibition is a colorful, one-word piece by Kay Rosen, an artist who teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and whose work is in various collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Rosen’s “BLURRED” fills the space on the surface of the billboard. The first three of these massive letters, “B-L-U,” are blue; the first “R” is purple and “R-E-D” are, you guessed it, red. Purple, as many a preschooler can tell you, results when blue and red are mixed, so the color of the letters lends further meaning to the word as a built-in, visual definition. The power of the piece is that its surface stands alone — but deeper readings are possible, even invited.

In Missouri, a swing, bellwether state — neither red nor blue consistently — the conversation about political issues can be heated, and it seems logical to connect Rosen’s work to that. Billboards often reflect this climate in the form of campaign or issue ads, and the politics of the signs themselves is peculiar in the state. Several rounds of legislation aimed at limiting the plague of signs backfired in the past decade as panicky outdoor advertising companies threw up hundreds of blank canvases to be grandfathered in; the legislation ultimately failed, narrowly.

The result is hundreds of billboards, many empty, some in a state of decay; it could be argued that the industry itself is in decay.

Don’t start cheering yet. A current “art” billboard project, Art Everywhere, seeks to unapologetically use American artists’ work to save their proverbial bacon.

“Museum directors hope the project … will draw more visitors to their galleries, while the Outdoor Advertising Association of America, devoting about $500,000 to the effort, is betting that great artworks will make looking up fashionable again,” Carol Vogel wrote in the New York Times in April.

This decay of industry and individual signs was discussed by Thompson with a bit more thoughtfulness, in a May talk at Ragtag Cinema. She illustrated the second part of the project — documenting existing billboards along I-70 and categorizing them in a digital archive, with the help of students. This in turn reflects the New Topographics of the mid-1970s in its clinicality and banality.

The billboards are part of the physical, as well as political, landscape of the state, she pointed out; she made a rather convincing argument that this connects her project to the Land Art movement, in which artists used existing land features to create their work. She showed examples of Robert Smithson’s work dealing with the idea of change and decay, and the talk included a screening of his 32-minute 1970 film, “Spiral Jetty.”

‘BLURRED’ LINES

Rosen created “BLURRED” in 2004, a landmark presidential election year in which incumbent George W. Bush narrowly won the popular vote against rival John Kerry.
However, “‘BLURRED’ wasn’t intentionally conceived as a political statement,” Rosen said in an email. “But it is possible that the political tensions during the 2004 presidential election and the designations of states as blue or red … subconsciously inspired the piece, leading me to recognize and discover the two colors in the word. However I have always thought of ‘BLURRED’ less specifically as a political work and more generally as two sides of any situation who meet at a point of accommodation.”

The piece has been shown on gallery walls and has been painted as a mural in Berlin; Charlottesville, Va.; Honolulu; Chicago; Detroit; California and Italy.

“The change of location … to a more public, exterior one, like a billboard, makes it accessible to a larger and more varied audience,” Rosen said. “… It might open it up to a broader range of interpretations. There is no right or wrong way to read it. I never thought of it as part of the blur of highway signage, but that is certainly one way to read it.”

After a two-month showing on the main project billboard, about 10 miles east of Columbia, Rosen’s piece was moved to a satellite billboard closer to St. Louis, provided by the advertising company Thompson is working with through MU.

“What DDI Media is doing for me,” Thompson said, “is selecting a board somewhere else on the interstate that doesn’t have advertising on it,” as each of the six artists finishes a two-month stint; they’ll go on to a second two-month life in another spot. It was DDI’s idea to add a satellite board, and each time a project moves from the main board, the company will select a new location at their discretion. The move from one location to the other changes the context of the piece and its audience as well.

DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

The main billboard has shifted from “BLURRED” and color to a high-contrast “Blah, Blah, Blah,” in which Bochner inserts a decidedly wry voice into the shouting match. He’s created many incarnations with this title, in various colors and compositions. Bochner plays with message and meaning, and he is no stranger to adding his voice to established commentary in a slyly subversive manner, or in using an advertising landscape to produce work.

In addition to earning recognition by curating one of the first shows in the Conceptual art movement, 1966’s Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art, at the School of Visual Arts in New York, Bochner also collaborated that same year with Smithson in a magazine-intervention piece in Art Voices magazine, “The Domain of the Great Bear.”

This appropriation of various media as a means of expression for art is further reflected in Thompson’s commitment to give the I-70 Sign Show a digital home as well. In addition to the project website, Thompson has set up a Flickr account, an Instagram feed and Facebook site to give a social-media presence. “This is a humanities project and crosses a lot of lines,” she said. “It’s art. It’s media. It’s going to be digital technology once we start making a database.”
ON THE HORIZON

The artists up next on the main billboard will be Mickalene Thomas and Kim Beck. Their work is included in many prestigious public collections, including the Whitney, the National Portrait Gallery and MoMA; and the Philbrook Museum of Art, Carnegie Museum of Art and the Denver Art Museum, respectively. Thomas, who went to school with Thompson at Yale, explores conceptions of female beauty from the perspective of a woman and through the lens of contemporary culture as it relates to art history, feminism and black identity. One photograph arranges three women in poses that recall Manet’s “Luncheon on the Grass.”

The project, slated to continue until next April, successfully adds a voice to a public conversation dominated by media. To quote Marshall McLuhan, “The medium is the message.”