MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

Oct. 27, 2014
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Chancellor Loftin, Mizzou Alumni Association dedicate Traditions Plaza

Friday, October 24, 2014 | 8:12 p.m. CDT; updated 10:38 a.m. CDT, Sunday, October 26, 2014

BY ELIZABETH THARAKAN

COLUMBIA — As the melody to "Eye of the Tiger" played, descendants of MU's founding families filed into the seats of the new Traditions Plaza.

Friday afternoon, the Mizzou Alumni Association and Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin officially dedicated the new outdoor amphitheater on Mel Carnahan Quadrangle. The latest addition to campus is estimated to have cost about $1.4 million.

At the dedication, Todd McCubbin, executive director of the Alumni Association, introduced Loftin and briefly spoke about what the plaza means to MU.
"Traditions Plaza represents our pride of place," McCubbin said. "'Extreme Home Makeover' has nothing on our campus."

There are 17 traditions etched into the bricks of the new plaza, honoring MU events such as Homecoming, Tiger Walk and Summer Welcome. McCubbin said the engravings serve three goals within MU: to connect Tigers, to support MU and to promote cherished traditions.

After being introduced by McCubbin, Loftin chanted "M-I-Z." "Z-O-U," the crowd responded, helping complete one of MU's traditions.

"Universities like Mizzou are enduring institutions," Loftin said to the crowd. "They're among the longest-living institutions humans have ever created."

In his remarks, Loftin recounted the story of Academic Hall, which burned to the ground and left MU's six columns standing in 1892.

"Folks, they're still standing," Loftin said.

During his speech, Loftin also celebrated the founding families of MU. According to the Mizzou Alumni Association website, 904 Boone County residents donated money to help form MU in 1839. These families are part of the university's Roll of Honor.

At Friday's event, Loftin also recognized the roughly 60 descendants of the families in attendance. This weekend, the descendants of the founding families will serve as grand marshals during MU's Homecoming festivities.

While MU traditions already fill the plaza, Loftin said there are open spots throughout the amphitheater for future traditions to be added.

"The actual plaza is really special itself because it really immortalizes our traditions," Loftin said.
COLUMBIA — **John Wiencek, a candidate for MU provost, will discuss how his background and experience fit the university's search criteria in a forum Wednesday morning.**

*Students, staff and faculty are welcome to attend and ask questions, according to an email from the provost search committee. The forum is scheduled for 8:30 to 10 a.m. Wednesday in Stotler 3 in Memorial Union North.*

It is the second of such events relating to MU's provost search. Candidate Michele Wheatly, former provost of West Virginia University, *met with mostly faculty and staff in a forum on Thursday.*

Wiencek, interim provost and vice president of academic affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University, has more than 25 years experience in higher education, according to his resume, included in the provost search committee email. Prior to becoming interim provost in May, he had been a senior vice provost and professor in the Department of Chemical and Life Science Engineering starting in August 2013.

From 2007 to 2013, Wiencek was dean of the College of Engineering at the University of South Florida.

He started his career in higher education at Rutgers University as an assistant professor in 1989. From Rutgers, he went to the University of Iowa, where he was an associate professor and graduate admissions chair from 1995 to 2000 and a professor, graduate director and department chair from 2000 to 2007.
Wiencek also worked in the industrial chemicals division at Procter & Gamble from 1981 to 1984 and was a NASA fellow at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland from 1984 to 1989, according to his resume.

Provost search committee chair Judy Wall said before Wheatly's visit that the provost decision is ultimately up to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. Brian Foster retired after eight years as MU provost in December 2013. Since then, the university hired a search firm, Isaacson, Miller, to help create a position profile for the provost. Deputy Provost Kenneth Dean has been serving as interim provost.

GRE Scores Now Acceptable for 85% of MBA Degree Programs

Business school applicants have more options when it comes to submitting test scores for Masters of Business Administration (MBA) programs. A new survey from Kaplan Test Prep of 204 schools found that 85% of MBA degree programs allow students to submit scores from the Graduate Record Examination, or GRE, in place of the more common standardized assessment for business applicants known as the Graduate Management Admission Test, or GMAT.

A Growing Trend

In the past, the GMAT was viewed as the superior test for MBA candidates. As recently as 2009, only 24% of programs accepted the GRE in place of GMAT, according to Kaplan's survey. Now, 78% say they view both tests as acceptable.

Despite this change from MBA programs, many students are sticking with the GMAT, Kaplan explains. The majority of admissions officers surveyed by Kaplan said that less than 10% of applicants submitted GRE scores with their application in the place of the GMAT. Some schools do see more value in the GMAT, as 18% of programs surveyed said they give an advantage to GMAT scores over those from the GRE.

Over the past five years, the GRE has increasingly become more acceptable for MBA programs, Brian Carlidge, Kaplan Test Prep executive director of pre-business and pre-graduate programs,
says in a press release. Despite this, he advises applicants to contact the program before sending their scores.

"Our advice to prospective MBAs is if all the business schools they plan to apply to accept the GRE in addition to the GMAT, then contact those schools and find out if they have a preference for one exam over the other," Carlidge explains. "We also advise students to take the GMAT if some of the schools to which they intend on applying do not accept the GRE. While the GRE is widely accepted, the only exam that is universally accepted is the GMAT."

Nontraditional Students Aren't Represented by GRE Scores

A recent study from the University of Missouri found that typical measures of future success, like the GRE and an undergraduate grade point average are not as helpful for predicting nontraditional students' success as with other students, according to the University Herald. Nontraditional students include those who spend several years working between undergraduate and graduate school.

For example, if an applicant has spent years in the workforce, he or she may not be practiced at writing and do poorly on that section of the GRE. The study looked at Master of Public Administration students both straight out of undergraduate programs and the workforce, finding that the GRE and GPA were only predictive for those going directly to graduate school.

MU police investigate report of burglary at student apartments

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Sunday, October 26, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (1)

University of Missouri Police received a report of a burglary at the Tiger Diggs student housing development at Campus View Apartments on Saturday.

Women reported that around 6 a.m. an unknown black man entered their apartment and demanded money, according to a Clery release from MU police. The man took various items and left the apartment, the women reported. The apartment complex is at 301 Campus View Drive.

The man is described as between 5 feet 6 inches to 5 feet 9 inches tall and 19 to 20 years old, and he was reportedly last seen wearing a black hoodie, black pants and at least one black glove.
This is the fifth Clery Release of this academic year, according to MU Police records. Campus police nationwide are required to disclose information about crimes on or near school property as a result of the federal Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Police and Campus Crime Statistics Act of 1998.

Round up: Homecoming edition

Happy Homecoming week, Columbia.

The video attached is the last few minutes of a student's upset of Columbia College President Scott Dalrymple in the president's video game tournament. That student is now getting free pizza and textbooks for the year.

Inside the system:

- Forbes ran a really interesting article this week on SEC football coaches, contracts and incentives.

- University of Missouri-St. Louis Chancellor Tom George has a blog up this week with some more insight from Ferguson and the university’s role.

- **MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin was named to a five-person committee charged to find the next SEC commissioner.**

- An article from St. Louis Business Journal this week outlines contract details between MU and companies related to athletic clothing and footwear.

- I've written a few times about the protests MU students have led over Ferguson and Michael Brown, and how at every event students have performed poetry. Particularly, slam poetry, which I personally have always enjoyed. I wanted to share a recording of one student, Naomi Daugherty, who has recited this at several "MU 4 Mike Brown" events. Warning: There is strong language in the recording.

- If you’re into those Buzzfeed quizzes, someone put together a “what kind of Mizzou tiger are you?” quiz.

- *In case you missed it...*
The UM System launched a new program last week focused on entrepreneurial endeavors.

Les Hall, interim dean of the MU School of Medicine, accepted a job as the new dean of the University of South Carolina medical school.

I really, truly enjoyed writing this Ovation feature on MU professor emeritus Duane Dailey and his photojournalism exhibit that’s on display in Lee Hills Hall on the Missouri Mule. Check out the gallery exhibit, if you haven’t already.

Outside the system:

- Missouri State University students held protests this week related to Ferguson and Brown's death, similar to those that have occurred at MU. Unlike MU, however, apparently these students were met with racial slurs and other negative, offensive commentary.

- A Truman State University student, 19, died Saturday after being struck by a car. According to the Kirksville Daily Express, the student was transported to Northeast Regional Medical Center where the victim later died.

- The Association of American Universities has a new chairwoman for its board of directors. Amy Gutmann, University of Pennsylvania president, started her one-year term on Tuesday.

- Washington University St. Louis is launching a new business minor focused on sports.

In case you missed it...

- David Russell, commissioner of the Missouri Department of Higher Education, was elected to a national higher ed. committee

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Art professor's trademarked paisley design features MU icons

Friday, October 24, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT; updated 1:07 p.m. CDT, Friday, October 24, 2014

BY BRIANNA ARPS

COLUMBIA — Curator's professor of art Deborah Huelsbergen has more than made her mark on MU's 175th anniversary.
Her licensed official paisley design isn't just on T-shirts. Mugs, water bottles, stickers, desk caddies and notepads are among the products being sold with the print.

"They're doing cool stuff with it that I never imagined," Huelsbergen said. The paisley idea was adopted from the University of Tennessee.

Both versions of Huelsbergen's paisley — one predominately black and the other gold — incorporate iconic MU images.

"If you look closely, you'll notice things that everybody thinks of when they see MU like the Jesse Hall dome and the Columns," Huelsbergen said. "I wanted it to be sort of like a hide and seek."

The Memorial Student Union archway, a university logo from the 1920s and a 19th-century flower drawing that was used in a commencement program are also embedded in the design.

When the MU Office of Licensing and Trademarks contacted the Art Department to recruit a designer, Huelsbergen went to work.

"I really love patterns, and the thought of making a pattern for the university was too good to pass up," Huelsbergen said.

When designing the print, she encountered a few creative challenges including simplifying her original plan because the details blended too closely together, making sure the pattern repeated itself perfectly in an 8-by-8-inch square and deciding where exactly to place each of its colors.

Her daughters, Lili and Rianna, played a significant role as well.

"The girls really helped me," Huelsbergen said. "They quality-controlled the whole process."

Furthermore, Huelsbergen explained that she started working on designing the print every day from the middle of May up until the first couple weeks in August.

"It was very tedious, but I love doing things like that," Huelsbergen said. "It was really fun. If they asked me to do anything else, I would do it again."
Laura Roloff, director of marketing at MU, said the paisley merchandise is proving popular.

"People like it because it's truly ours," she said.

The paisley design joins the Mizzou plaid that was introduced in 2006.

Maddie Reter, a senior in high school planning to attend MU next fall, didn't buy any products with paisley while shopping recently at The Mizzou Store but said she would if the design came in sweatpants.

"I like it a lot — I think it looks really good," Reter said.

"Sales are definitely picking up since we've put out the merchandise," said Michelle Froese, spokeswoman for The Mizzou Store. "The most popular items have been a long-sleeved T-shirt and the crew neck sweatshirt, although the ceramic coffee mugs and notecards are doing really well," she said.

The MU paisley has sparked an interest among off-campus residents as well, Huelsbergen said.

"I've had a lot of people email me around the city about the print," Huelsbergen said. "I've gotten so many messages about the possibility of fabric."

More paisley print gear and goods are coming, Froese said.

"We've got some new things slated for holiday 2014 including scarves and ties."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU professor shares research, experience as mother who adopted children across racial lines

Monday, October 27, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY KAITLYNN MARTIN
COLUMBIA — With a gentle spin of a finger, Colleen Colaner shaped a tight, black curl on top of her daughter's head.

Camille Colaner, 11 months old, let out a playful squeal and reached for her mother.

"Her hair has been a big thing," said Colleen Colaner, a professor of interpersonal communication at MU.

"We just took her to a salon recommended for black hair, because as the hair gets bigger and curlier, I wasn't really sure what to do with it."

Camille was adopted by Colleen Colaner and her husband, Seth Colaner, nearly a year ago. Both of her birth parents are African-American.

The Colaners have a second adopted daughter, Essie Colaner, now 4. Her birth parents are white.

Caring for two adopted daughters has presented obvious challenges to Colleen Colaner and her husband, but they have been augmented by matters of race and background.

How to talk about the children's birth families is an obvious issue, but there are others: How to respond to a stranger's questions about Camille and how to manage an open adoption where both adoptive and birth parents are involved.

As an MU professor in communication, Colleen Colaner is in the unusual position of both experiencing an open, transracial adoption and studying it.

Now, through research that she and fellow scholars have done at MU, she hopes to launch the Family Diversity Institute to shed more light on adoptive, interfaith, transracial and other family arrangements that don't follow a traditional path.

The institute's website, expected to be up and running by the end of the year, is a platform to disseminate research from MU, encourage additional studies and offer information to families.
"The family form is changing so much," Colleen Colaner said. "In order to support families in this brand new environment, we need to produce more research to understand how these families are functioning."

**Open adoptions**
The "nuclear family" — husband, wife, two biological kids and maybe a dog — was historically the standard image of American families. But for many, that does not represent their own family portrait.

Diversity, which includes a wide range of cultural, racial and religious combinations, reflects many families today. According to the United States Census Bureau, the number of interracial marriages has jumped from 310,000 couples in 1970 to more than 2 million in 2008.

Family diversity often occurs through adoption — the principal subject of Colleen Colaner's research. In an open adoption, the adoptive parents hold all legal parental rights but may freely contact and share information with the biological parents. Contact may be handled throughout the adoption process, and afterward, with letters, photos or even personal meetings.

According to a 2012 Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute study, 55 percent of the 14,000 to 18,000 infant adoptions each year are fully open.

Until the 1970s, open adoption was not offered through most American adoption agencies. A wave of research linking psychological strains among adoptive children and their birth and adoptive families because of the effects of closed adoptions, encouraged an expansion into open adoption.

Navigating an open adoption, however, especially one that encompasses diversity, often comes with uncertainty. Backgrounds may be different, expectations about behavior may be unclear and child-rearing practices may vary.

"If one of us were black, I one-hundred-percent guarantee that Camille would have a better understanding of being black in America," Seth Colaner said.

Society's racial tensions contribute to the apprehension a family faces when adopting a child from a different background.

"With the tensions that average white people are blind to, you have to find sources for things you don't have answers for," he said.
"The trickiest thing is that there is no script for any of this."

**Blended families**
One of Colleen Colaner’s research projects, "Blending Cultures," considers the negotiation of differences between two ethnicities within adoptive, transracial families. For example, a Christian family that adopts a child from an African country may want to incorporate elements of Kwanza into their Christmas festivities.

"I think just sharing the information helps people know what has worked for other people," Colleen Colaner said.

Haley Horstman, another interpersonal communication professor at MU and co-founder of the Family Diversity Institute, examines the ways adoptive and birth families communicate.

"We have found that some people are texting but not visiting," Horstman said.

Others studies have looked at how relationships in open adoptions are defined by decisions about naming members of a birth family. If the birth mother is called by her first name, for instance, that can significantly shape how the adopted child views her.

Colleen Colaner said research about how adoptive families communicate can be applied to other family situations and across interdisciplinary departments at MU.

"I’m talking to someone over in Human Development and Family Studies (at MU) who is doing step-family research," Colleen Colaner said. "A lot of research about adoption translates over, so there’s a good, collective energy that happens as we start to look at diversity in the family."

**Inside the institute**
Colleen Colaner, Horstman and five doctoral communication students, as well as faculty from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, contribute research to the Family Diversity Institute, which originated in the summer of 2013.

"We decided that there's all this different, cool research happening here in our department, and it would be really useful to create some sort of structure that would advance the research forward," Horstman said.
Although many studies to be reported on the site cover open adoption issues, research about other topics — foster care and children on an autism spectrum, for example — is being added.

A blog about clearing up myths and misinformation about diverse families is also on the list, and there are plans to expand and include other individuals around campus as the institute grows.

The common thread is communication, especially when situations are complicated.

"Just like how we have to explain that Camille is our daughter, families who have a child with an autism diagnosis have to maybe explain that their child doesn't like to be touched as much as other kids," Colleen Colaner said.

Horstman agreed: "We see communication as the pathway of creating and sustaining relationships and identity."

**A personal story**

Colleen Colaner learned it would be difficult for her to have children when she was 18.

"For people who find out about infertility later in life, it really makes it difficult for them to pursue their goal of being a parent," she said. "I saw that adoption was very much just built into the fabric of our family from the very beginning."

She and her husband, Seth Colaner, began dating during their senior year of high school, just around the time she received the diagnosis.

"He was a huge support, and I think that without him I would have had more anxiety," Colaner said. "But anytime I was like, 'Are we going to have a family?' he would say, 'Of course we are.'"

Their first adoption was completed in 2009, the second in 2013. Both were open adoptions.

In November, Essie will turn 5 and Camille will turn 1. They will share a joint party — their birthdays are one day apart.
Their household dynamics are what you would expect, the girls keep them busy by refusing to put their shoes on in the morning and smiling with peanut butter grins after pre-bedtime snacks.

The Colaners say they care most about being the best parents they can through love and support of their daughters.

"This is what family is," Colleen Colaner said, with Camille bouncing on her lap and Essie running around the living room with a red balloon.

"It doesn't matter that they're adopted. They're all family, and families need to be supported because they are one of the foundations of society."

*Supervising editor is Jeanne Abbott.*

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Strong supply, but low prices, for corn, soybeans

October 25, 2014 11:04 am

CAPE GIRARDEAU, Mo. (AP) — Corn and soybean farmers are seeing record yields, thanks to a cool, mild spring. But the downside of the strong supply is a dip in prices.

The Southeast Missourian (http://bit.ly/1t75s3Z ) reports that record-setting yields are being recorded. Agriculture experts say the result is more grain going to market — and lower return for farmers.

Storing grain is especially important this year. Some farmers want to sit on part of their yields, hoping prices rebound in the winter.

"Coming into the harvest, there were higher speculated yields, combined with yields that were confirmed to be high," said Anthony Ohmes, agronomy specialist at the University of Missouri Extension. "We really have seen some incredible ones. In some non-irrigated dry land fields near river bottoms, there have been some of the best yields ever had. Because of that, the price for corn has continued to be low."

The price per bushel of corn is down by more than half from a year ago, to roughly $4 from about $8.
Missouri's corn crop may reach 599 million bushels. Soybeans may reach 258 million bushels. Both would be records.

The USDA also reports corn and soybean harvesting in Missouri is behind schedule when compared with a five-year average. But the southeastern part of the state is mostly finished with corn, Ohmes said, and soybeans should be out soon if good weather holds through next week.

A later harvest this year presents a stark difference to 2012, when some area farmers began taking corn and other crops in mid-August after the weather caused plants to mature weeks ahead of schedule.

As of Oct. 20, the state's corn harvest was 58 percent complete — 17 percent behind schedule compared to the five-year average, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports. Harvesting of soybeans was 25 percent complete, 21 percent below the five-year average.

One expert said the delay isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Nationwide corn and soybean harvest is behind because of the past rain, and it has led to a bump in prices," said David Reinbott, an agriculture business specialist at the extension office.

Grain storage companies are scrambling for ways to handle the influx from this year's bumper crops, including using temporary locations such as ground piles as well as bins.

Moving the record crops this year by road has prompted the Missouri Department of Transportation to allow grain haulers and other farm commodity carriers to carry up to 10 percent more than their normally allowed weight until Dec. 14.

**How to pick a college? Data crunchers hope to help**

October 25, 2014 11:40 am  •  By ANNE FLAHERTY

WASHINGTON (AP) — For many high school seniors, fall means deciding where to apply for college and maybe visiting a guidance counselor. Data crunchers hope to help.
The popularity of social media sites and advancements in the ability to analyze the vast amounts of data we put online give members of the class of 2015 more tools than ever to help chart their next step, even if finding the right college is an inexact science.

The professional networking site LinkedIn has just come out with its "University Finder," which identifies which colleges are popular with which companies. Parchment.com pools student data to predict an individual's college admission prospects. There's even a dating service-like site for higher education: Admitted.ly pairs students with colleges based on such as factors as body piercings and whether applicants go to church.

These sites are joining the game of college rankings, which has some education experts excited and other rolling their eyes.

"For many families and students, the admissions process is very opaque," said Matthew Pittinsky, co-founder of the education technology giant Blackboard and chief executive officer of Parchment. "And what's happing now is that they (students) are beginning to share data with each other ... to bring transparency" to the process.

Lloyd Thacker, head of the Education Conservancy and a critic of college rankings, has another take: These sites are one more way to profit from senior-year angst and encourage group-think.

"Technology has no inner logic," he said. "Just because it's there, doesn't mean we should use it."

Picking a college is nothing like it once was. In 1980, there were 3,150 colleges and universities, according to the Department of Education, and a primary factor for many students was location.

Now, there are close to 4,700 schools, many of which go out of their way to attract out-of-state students because of the money they bring. Many schools might seem more selective than they really are, and students worried about getting turned down apply to lots of schools as a way to hedge their bets.

Halle Lukasiewicz, 18, said she remembers the day Northwestern University, a private research university in Illinois and her top choice, began emailing acceptance letters. A chatroom devoted to Northwestern hopefuls on a site called "College Confidential" was buzzing. Kids were posting their grades and test scores and whether they had gotten in.

Lukasiewicz, an occasional lurker on the site, found she could not look away even though her mom begged her to stop.

"My heart was racing," she said.

Finally, an email slid across her phone: accepted. Now a Northwestern freshman studying radio, television and film, Lukasiewicz said she's not sure the site added much value other than to stress her out. She credits her parents, a good guidance counselor and a company called "AcceptU" with helping her find the appropriate school and prepare an attractive application.
"You can't assess whether someone's going to get in based on numbers," she said. "It's not just luck, but everyone's different. There are very, very capable students who don't get into top colleges, and no one really knows why. It just happens ... But I think it's extremely important for students not to get fazed by other people on the Internet telling them they're not going to get in."

Among the new sites is LinkedIn's "University Finder," which pulls data from its 313 million profiles to find out which schools and degrees translate into jobs at certain companies. For example, if you want to study computer science and work at a company like IBM someday, LinkedIn says the majority of its members who fit that criteria went to North Carolina State or the University of Texas at Austin, Both are near IBM research facilities.

Parchment, a company that handles electronic student transcripts, uses a technique called "crowdsourcing." Students finalizing the college selection process agree to share with the site such information as their grades, which schools accepted them and where they chose to go. That information helps to predict another student's chances of getting in to a certain school. The site can suggest other schools and say whether most students preferred one college over another.

Other sites, such as StatFuse, predict admission chances based entirely on data released by 1,200 popular universities. Factors include average grades and test scores of student accepted.

The College Board, the same outfit that runs the SAT exam, says it runs nearly 2 million unique searches a month on its site, which takes into account grades and test scores but also can consider desired location, size, diversity and financial aid needs.

While popular, these online search tools have their limitations.

LinkedIn's University Finder is limited to professionals who bother to set up an account with the networking site and who complete a profile. It also works on the honor system because LinkedIn doesn't verify a person's credentials.

Parchment, StatFuse and other predictor sites can't take into account a great application essay or interview, which can matter more at some schools than others. Parchment includes a confidence rating with its predictions to indicate schools that more heavily weigh these factors in the application process.

Sean Logan, director of college counseling at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, says he understands the attraction of a search engine or online chat room, especially at high schools where there might be one guidance counselor for as many as 1,000 students. But in the end, he said, getting into college can be a frustrating process that isn't always predictable, even for the best students.

"It's part science," he said. "And part art."
Burton looks to free up officers by eliminating some duties

By Andrew Denney

Sunday, October 26, 2014 at 12:00 am Comments (16)

Regardless of whether Columbia voters approve the public safety property tax increase proposal on the Nov. 4 ballot, the Columbia Police Department has plans to make better use of officers’ time by eliminating some time-consuming duties.

The proposal, called Proposition 1, would increase the city’s property tax rate to 71 cents per $100 of assessed valuation by 2020, bringing the total property tax bill for a Columbia resident who lives in the Columbia Library District to $7.05 per $100 of assessed valuation. Money from the increase would pay for 40 additional police officers and 15 firefighters.

With more police officers, city leaders say the department will be able to give officers more time for “community policing,” in which they are meeting with residents and community leaders rather than just responding to 911 calls or taking care of administrative tasks such as filling out reports and submitting evidence.

Police Chief Ken Burton said even before the Columbia City Council voted to put Proposition 1 on the ballot, his department had plans in the works to reduce or eliminate the amount of time officers spent on certain types of calls. He said the department plans to stop sending officers to stores for minor shoplifting reports and to gas stations that do not allow customers to pay at the pump if there is a report of stolen fuel.

He said the department would make online forms for businesses to report such incidents. “We’re not going to come out here and be your collection agency,” Burton said.

Burton said he also would like to implement a system to penalize businesses or residents that have a recurring problem with false burglar alarms, potentially by not send officers to an alarm after a property has had a certain number of false alarms. He said false alarms often are caused by deferred maintenance, and property owners might have an incentive to keep their systems in good repair if cops stop showing up.

“You have to put some kind of penalty on it if they don’t take care of their system,” Burton said.
According to the city’s Human Resources Department, the police department is budgeted for a total of 197 employees — 165 sworn officers and 32 civilian employees. Human Resources Director Margrace Buckler said there are 11 vacancies for uniformed officers and one civilian vacancy.

The national average for police staffing is roughly 2 officers per 1,000 residents. Considering its budgeted staffing, the department’s number fell from 1.52 in 2009 to 1.39 in 2013. **However, that does not take into account the University of Missouri Police Department — whose officers have statewide jurisdiction — or the Boone County Sheriff's Department, which often works inside the Columbia city limits.**

Burton has said that, if Proposition 1 is passed, he would like to form a community policing unit in the short-term, and, as a long-term goal, he would like to have enough officers on staff so that each patrol officer would be able to split their working hours into thirds and devote equal time to responding to calls for service, handling administrative duties and conducting community policing.

Mayor Bob McDavid, who has been working for the past few months to promote Proposition 1, said because the city continues to grow in population and physical dimensions, there is a possibility that the department won’t be able to realize its goal for all patrol officers to spend a third of their time on community policing, even if the department is able to hire 40 additional officers.

“This will not give us a median-sized police department,” McDavid said. “We will still be below average. But at least we’ll stop the decline.”

In the meantime, the department already has taken steps to better budget officers’ time, which City Manager Mike Matthes said he sees as the department “working smarter.” A few years ago, the department took the less-than-popular step of no longer requiring police officers to fill out accident reports for noninjury vehicle accidents, and it stopped sending officers to some minor accidents.