Universities, colleges cancel classes

Several universities and colleges in Mid-Missouri have canceled Monday classes because of the weather. They include the University of Missouri-Columbia, Stephens College, Columbia College, Lincoln University and Westminster College.

Mid-Missouri got several inches of snow overnight, prompting these and institutions to close Monday.

Mizzou's cancellation notice stated that only staff members who are situationally critical should report to work today. Employees unsure whether they are situationally critical should contact their supervisor.

All MU Health Care hospitals and the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital will be open all day.

University of Missouri Closed

Watch story: http://mms.tveyses.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=95be86a3-a675-4f59-a7d1-fb20f10921a2

Lastest UM System salary report shows relatively few changes

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, February 15, 2015 at 12:00 am
Aside from a few major hires and an associate football coach’s decision to take an offer at another institution, there were not many noteworthy changes on the list of top earners in the University of Missouri System for the 2014-15 academic year.

The second-largest base salary in the UM System was paid to Dave Steckel, associate head football coach. Steckel announced in December that he would end his tenure at MU to take the head coaching job at Missouri State University.

But Coach “Stec,” who was making $600,000 — $50,000 more than last year, according to the annual salary database information provided from the UM System — has been replaced in the money rankings by a new dean.

Patrice “Patrick” Delafontaine joined MU as dean of the School of Medicine Dec. 1, with a starting salary of $600,000. He also received $50,000 in deferred compensation, similar to other administrators, including Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Additional top-earning hires include Frederick Fraunfelder ($517,120), MU ophthalmology professor, and Steven Kanter ($500,000), new dean for the University of Missouri-Kansas City medical school.

Like years past, head MU football Coach Gary Pinkel is not on the top 10 list even though he makes more than $3 million. Pinkel’s base salary is $350,000 a year, and the rest of his take home pay is from incentives.

Many of the top earners stayed the same, with most receiving raises of some sort.

The strategic planning process, implemented by UM System President Tim Wolfe in 2012-13, has made its way into annual employee evaluations and has become a factor in raises.

Administrators consider the strategic plan a living document that outlines goals. Each of the four campuses has its own strategic plan — as does the UM System — and leaders are responsible for keeping it up to date and reporting to the UM System how they are progressing.

At the UM System, the first year of the strategic process saw those who report directly to Wolfe — chancellors, vice presidents and the chief of staff — assessed on the progress to their goals during their reviews. Most of those goals directly align with the strategic plan, UM System spokesman John Fougere said in an email.

“There are mid-year formal reviews on progress against goals, and at the end of the year the president’s direct reports give progress updates and input to their annual appraisal/evaluation,” Fougere said. “The annual evaluation determines what merit increases direct reports will have earned, although there are other factors included in determining merit increases and not solely progress on goals.”
The strategic plan is similarly a factor in evaluations at all levels for MU employees.

“Everything that we do, no matter what job it is, should be designed to help accomplish the goals that are set forth in the strategic plan in some way, shape or form,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

But it’s more than a “check-the-box metric,” Basi said. Like the UM System, it’s a question about how much progress has been made toward accomplishing goals laid out in the strategic plan. It could include whether certain hires were made in a department or if fundraising responsibilities were met for those in the advancement department, Basi said.

Because the function and goals of every department on campus are so different, how the strategic plan comes into play on evaluations also differs, Basi said.

MU hires global firm for AD search

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The University of Missouri has hired Korn Ferry International, a global executive search firm, to assist Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin in hiring Mizzou's next athletics director, a university spokesperson confirmed Friday. The contract, obtained by the Post-Dispatch, was approved Wednesday.

Loftin is personally managing the search and hopes to have it complete as quickly as possible, Mary Jo Banken, executive director of the MU News Bureau, said in an email.

According to the terms of the contract, Korn Ferry's fees are non-contingent and nonrefundable and are equal to one-third of the total first year's estimated compensation for the AD position Missouri fills, which includes base salary, estimated or guaranteed incentive bonus, sign-on bonus and equity compensation. The parties agreed to an initial retainer fee of $75,000, to be billed in three installments. After the search, the parties will reconcile any outstanding fees. The firm is also reimbursed for all administrative support and research services, which are billed at 8 percent. The firm's final fee, including all fees,
will be capped at $200,000, according to the contract.

Also, the firm agrees not to solicit any candidate place with MU for the duration of that candidate's employment. For an additional year, the firm will not solicit or recruit anyone who reports directly to the new AD.

The firm's contract guarantees every placed candidate for 12 months. If the placed candidate is fired for performance-related issues during the first 12 months, Korn Ferry will conduct a new search for no additional retainer.

According to its website, Korn Ferry's Global Sports Practice has recently assisted several schools and professional teams in making high-profile hires, including head football coaches at Michigan (Jim Harbaugh) and Florida (Jim McElwain), head coach of the Atlanta Falcons (Dan Quinn), athletics director at Marquette (Bill Scholl) and the current search for the Southeastern Conference's next commissioner.

Korn Ferry's sports department is headed by Jed Hughes, a former football coach at the college and pro level.

On Jan. 29, MU athletics director Mike Alden announced he was stepping down from the position after nearly 17 years on the job.

Alden will officially leave his post on Aug. 31. Loftin initially said he hoped to hire Alden's replacement in "a reasonably fast way." When he was president at Texas A&M, Loftin took six weeks to hire Eric Hyman as the Aggies' athletics director in 2012.

Korn Ferry will assist Mizzou in search for new athletic director
COLUMBIA-- Missouri chancellor Dr. R. Bowen Loftin’s nationwide search for Mike Alden’s successor as athletic director is still in its infancy.

Loftin will have some help in the process from Korn Ferry, an international search firm that assisted in the hiring of head football coaches at Michigan and Florida as well as the NFL’s Falcons.

Korn Ferry also is leading the search for Mike Slive’s replacement as SEC Commissioner and worked with Major League Baseball in the search for its new commissioner.

Missouri has agreed to pay Korn Ferry an initial retainer of $75,000. The final fee be “equal to one-third of the total first year’s estimated compensation for each position we are seeking to fill,” according to a contract released Friday by MU.

Korn Ferry’s fee is capped at $200,000 plus out-of-pocket and travel expenses.

MU athletic department runs in the black for 2nd straight year

By David Morrison

Sunday, February 15, 2015 at 12:00 am

Missouri’s athletic department operated at a surplus for the second year in a row in 2013-14, running $3.5 million in the black.

The department produced $83.7 million and spent $80.2 million for the fiscal year that ended last June 30, according to a copy of the revenue and expense report the school prepared for the NCAA that the Tribune obtained through an open-records request.

That marked a 9.7 percent increase in revenue and a 14 percent increase in spending from 2012-13, when Missouri operated at a $6 million surplus. The department also received $1.52 million in institutional support and transferred $2.18 million back to the university.

Those two years of bounty came after the department ran at a $17.7 million deficit in 2011-12, when the Big 12 withheld nearly all of its conference-related distributions as part of the exit fee when Missouri switched to the Southeastern Conference.
Executive associate athletic director Tim Hickman said athletics still owes the university $14.1 million it borrowed that year, which it plans to start paying back during the 2015-16 fiscal year.

“The idea was we’ll move in, give the’’ SEC “Network some time to develop and mature and then start paying that back,” Hickman said.

Ticket sales made up the largest portion of the department’s revenue in 2013-14, rising nearly 8 percent to $24.2 million. Distributions from the NCAA and SEC ($21.8 million) and contributions ($20.1 million) also made up big slices of the pie.

Contributions went up 27 percent from 2012-13, a rise Hickman said could be contributed to a continued bump from joining the SEC and the football team’s run to the SEC East title, among other factors.

“All of those things combined just made it a great year,” Hickman said.

The department’s biggest expenses came from salaries, bonuses and benefits paid to the coaching and administrative staffs, coming in at a total of $31.3 million, a 9.1 percent jump from 2012-13. Student aid rose 6.9 percent to $9.1 million and the cost of facilities maintenance and rental rose nearly 60 percent to $11.4 million.

Hickman said those added facilities costs came largely from furnishing the school’s new SEC Network studio at Mizzou Arena as well as paying for furniture, fixtures and equipment for some of the department’s other projects.

The department’s outstanding debt on facilities rose 256 percent, from $22.8 million to $81.3 million. Hickman said the debt spike came from bonds the University of Missouri system sold to help finance $72 million in projects that included improvements to Memorial Stadium and to the school’s baseball, tennis and golf facilities.

Hickman said the plan is for the added revenue from the new premium seating at Faurot Field to help pay down that debt.

The football program operated at a $14.2 million surplus in 2013-14, taking in $35.6 million and spending $21.4 million. That marked an 11.8 percent increase in revenue and a 23.4 percent increase in spending.

Ticket revenue rose 17.2 percent to $17.6 million, despite Memorial Stadium’s capacity being about 3,000 seats below normal that season during the east-side renovation. Team travel expenses rose 114 percent to $2.45 million — due in large part to trips to the SEC Championship Game and the Cotton Bowl — and equipment, uniforms and supplies for the team rose 93 percent to $2.19 million.

The school paid Coach Gary Pinkel $3.73 million in salary, benefits and bonuses in 2013-14, and his staff of nine assistants earned $4.17 million.
The men’s basketball team operated at a surplus of $6.3 million, taking in $12.6 million and spending $6.3 million. Those numbers barely budged from 2012-13, with revenue rising 0.25 percent and expenses decreasing 1.1 percent.

The rest of the department operated at a $17.1 million deficit.

Hickman said the department did not plan for any SEC Network revenue in its 2014-15 budget but he expects that number to be “in the millions.”

This year’s budget, obtained by the Tribune in September, called for $81.4 million in revenue and expenses.

“We’ll expect a surplus this year solely related to that,” Hickman said.

Missouri athletic department continues its run in the black

The University of Missouri - Columbia athletic department had another year of successes on the field and in the ledger in 2013-2014. Its football team reached the SEC Championship game and the athletic department finished the year with a $3.5 million operating surplus.

Two years ago the department worked with an operating surplus of $6 million.

Department revenue came in at $83.7 million and the operating budget was $80.2 million, according to the Columbia Tribune which obtained the information through an open-records request. Revenue increased 9.7 percent while expenses rose 14.2 percent from the 2012-2013 school year.

Mizzou's athletic department is still feeling the effects of the school's move from the Big 12 to the SEC, which occurred before the 2011-2012 school year. That year, it worked at a $17.7 million deficit.
Journalism school kicks off dean candidate forums

By Ashley Jost

Friday, February 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm

More than 100 students, faculty, staff and alumni from the University of Missouri School of Journalism heard Thursday from the first of four candidates vying to be the school’s next dean.

Sonya Forte Duhé, director of the School of Mass Communications at Loyola University-New Orleans, touted her experience and stressed her belief that the future of journalism education is finding innovative ways to meet the needs of the communication industry.

“We need to innovate, experiment and figure out what we can do for the industry,” Duhé told the crowd gathered in Busch Auditorium in Cornell Hall. She stressed the importance of being proactive in finding answers to industry problems through partnerships and research efforts.

Duhé said she believes in faculty governance, and, if selected as the new journalism school dean, she said she would work with professors to find out what programs they want and what resources they need. From there, it is the dean’s job to figure out how to fund those programs and help make them work, she said.

Fostering priorities established by those in the college was a theme in Duhé’s messaging during her open forum.

Duhé completed her undergraduate studies at Louisiana State University and has a master’s degree from Northwestern University and a doctorate in journalism from MU. Her industry experience includes time as an instructor, editor and anchor at KOMU in Columbia from 1990 to 1993, and several stints as a television anchor in Baton Rouge, La.

She is the first of four candidates scheduled to visit MU during the next few weeks. Each candidate goes through interviews with administrators, a forum with alumni and an open forum for students, faculty and staff.
Three of the four candidates have extensive backgrounds in broadcast journalism. Gary Myers, MU law school dean and chair of the journalism school dean search committee, said that is not intentional.

“It turned out that the four candidates who emerged as the strongest have extensive experience in broadcast, although they also have all done other things including strategic communication.” Myers said. “And they have all had roles as academic leaders involving print publications in the schools they’ve been associated with, so there is experience on the print side.”

Myers said there is no deadline for choosing the next dean.

The next candidate, David Kurpius, Louisiana State University mass communication professor and associate vice chancellor for enrollment management, will be on campus for an open forum at 4 p.m. Monday in Room 7 of Hulston Hall.

**Journalism dean candidate Duhé discusses changing landscape, fundraising**

The MU School of Journalism invited Dr. Sonya Forte Duhé, one of four finalists for the position of dean at the school, for an open forum Thursday.

Duhé, currently director and professor at Loyola University’s School of Mass Communication, was introduced by School of Law Dean Gary Meyers, who is leading the search committee, before she began a short presentation on the future of journalism education.

She started by discussing the changing landscapes of the media industry and its shifting goal of responding to various demands of diverse audiences.

“We’ve all seen dramatic changes in the mass communication industry, from the move to digital, to the proliferation of social media,” Duhé said. “Consumers want information on demand, anywhere, at any time.”

Duhé shared her observation on the rise of new media, particularly social media. She said digital trends like the ability to share news instantaneously and the use of “robust analytics to determine the best way to engage with the audience” also applied to strategic communication as much as the news media.

Duhé went on to envision the future of journalism education, citing the successful transformation of The Maroon, a student newspaper at Loyola University, as an example of development.

“We must be innovative,” she said. “Students must be able to practice their profession — yes, I believe in the Missouri Method — and they must do that for multiple platforms.”
Despite the changing landscape of media, Duhé said, ethics should always remain a central part of journalism education.

“Walter Williams got it right — we must have solid ethics,” she said. “No matter what the platform is, today or tomorrow.”

Duhé said the curriculum for journalism education should be “nimble” and “flexible” in order to meet the requirement of the ever-changing industry.

“This, in my opinion, is probably one of the most exciting times to be in journalism education,” she said. “When we look down the road a few years from now, we may even say this is the new golden age of mass communication.”

When asked about her future plans if hired as dean, Duhé said her goal is faculty-oriented, and that the first thing she would do is host a retreat with faculty. She said she would also examine programs and resources available at the school and plan three years ahead.

“I’m the real believer in faculty governance,” Duhé said. “The dean should not come in and decide, ‘This is the way things are going to be.’ It’s got to be what the faculty want, and it’s the dean’s job to get the resources to make it work.”

Duhé addressed the issue of raising funds for journalism programs and said she had much experience with fundraising. Duhé said she obtained a certificate on fundraising management while a fellow of the American Council on Education in 2000 and raised funds for the University of Carolina and Loyola University.

Duhé said if she were to helm the School of Journalism, she would focus on the school’s research and MU’s membership in the Association of American Universities.

“It’s not just any journalism school, it’s an AAU university,” she said. “Research is critical. To me, great research is going to help inform what we teach in class and what we do in industry.”

In her final remarks, Duhé said strategic planning is key to maintaining the school’s national prestige and its excellence across programs.

Frank Russell, a doctoral student representing graduate students on the search committee, said working closely with faculty and industry professionals is a good quality to look for in a prospective dean.

“She intends to interact with both faculty and the industry to determine the future of the J-school; I think that’s a good approach,” Russell said. “I’m also interested in hearing what the other three candidates have to say about that.”

Associate Dean Lynda Kraxberger, another member of the search committee, said she was impressed by Duhé’s focus on planning and fundraising, and looks forward to hearing from the other three candidates as well.

“I think (Duhé) identified that we need a strategic plan as a school,” Kraxberger said. “Not just a strategic plan that’s put in a drawer, but a strategic plan that we use to follow in terms of where our faculty put their energy, where we encourage students to put their energy, and also where we put our resources.

“I was very impressed that she spoke a lot about resources, and that her job as dean is to create a framework by doing fundraising for us. I was quite pleased to hear that.”
MU adds transgender housing option on campus

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia is testing out a new gender-neutral housing option starting this fall.

The 16-bed space in College Avenue Hall will be open to students of any gender, The Columbia Daily Tribune reports. The goal is to create a safe, secure housing option for those students who are transgender or gender nonconforming.

Frankie Minor, director of Residential Life at MU, and his team heard from students that there is interest and need for such a space. He said creating it was made easier when the Board of Curators added gender expression and gender identity to the UM System's nondiscrimination policy last year.

"When we say that this is important to our institutions, it's great, but it makes it clear when we're following through with programs and resources that promote inclusiveness and a welcoming environment," Minor said.

Minor said about 150 universities nationwide have incorporated similar plans, including Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville. One thing that sets MU apart is allowing incoming freshmen the option to select the space.
Minor said when student government passed resolutions in support of gender-neutral housing, they wanted it for all students. Unlike 20 years ago when on-campus housing was 60 to 65 percent freshmen, they now make up closer to 90 percent of the almost 7,000 students in residence halls, he said, so limiting that population would be significant.

"In the past, those students who are gender nonconforming are really starting to explore that in college because they have more freedoms being away from home for the first time," Minor said. "But it's happening younger and younger, as our country is understanding it and as these students are seeing more support networks."

Asian carp could be on menu at University of Missouri
February 14, 2015 9:45 pm • Associated Press

COLUMBIA, MO. • The University of Missouri is testing recipes and gathering reactions as it considers adding the invasive Asian carp to the menu in its dining halls.

About 40 students tried different recipes using the fish during recent taste tests at the Sabai Culinary Development Kitchen on the Missouri campus, and their reactions will help the culinary staff decide whether to serve the fish.

Executive Chef Eric Cartwright led preparation of experimental dishes such as Italian fish stew, pasta puttanesca with seafood, bacon and jalapeno chowder, The Columbia Missourian reported.

“It’s a very versatile product,” said Cartwright, who added he heard almost no negative comment from the taste-testers. “It’s economical,
and it has potential.”

Junior Abigail Auner ate a plate of carp in pasta sauce and said the fish tasted like ground beef. “I’m very impressed,” Auner said. “I wouldn’t assume it’s fish.”

Professor Mark Morgan, who works in the state Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, has been trying to find a market for the nuisance fish, which has invaded rivers across the state. He believes Missouri would be the first university in the nation to serve Asian carp to students.

If approved, food vendors in the Student Center would be the first to offer the fish, with the possibility of expanding to other dining locations on campus.

Moser’s Discount Foods last year became the first store in Missouri to sell Asian carp dishes to retail customers, offering boneless ground, fillets with some bones and fish heads. Meat manager Ron Baucom said sales have been above average.

Morgan said he is working to persuade Mexican and Chinese restaurants in Columbia to use Asian carp.

Serving Asian carp in the dining halls is primarily designed to make students aware of the negative impact the fish is having on rivers from New Orleans to the Great Lakes.

“It’s a culinary solution to an environmental problem,” Cartwright said.

Although a small effort on campus won’t make have a significant impact, “doing something is better than doing nothing,” Morgan said.
Friends, family and educators gather to remember Kui Zou

By Katelyn Lunders
February 13, 2015 | 10:41 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Kui Zou must have been an angel.

That's the only way Qingshan Yang, her former professor, could make sense of her tragic death so soon after she moved to Columbia.

"... I thought she was the angel of the Eastern country sprang on the Earth. Because the heaven is also jealous of her beauty and talent, and they hurried to take her home to the paradise," Yang said through a translator Friday at a memorial service for Zou, an MU visiting scholar from China who was struck by a car and killed Jan. 22 on Providence Road. She was 24.

More than 100 people gathered Friday afternoon at the Reynolds Alumni Center for the service, filling the seats and lining the back wall of the Columns Ballroom. Yang, Zou's brother Pengjie Zou, and her father and cousin traveled from China to be there. Her mother was unable to attend for health reasons.

At the front of the room, white flowers were arranged around a picture of Zou with her famous "sunshine smile" on her face. A slideshow played showing pictures of Zou, alone and with family and friends, always smiling and surrounded by beautiful scenery. Quotes such as “Let’s remember her most beautiful smile” and “In the next life, we are still family” filled the screen.

Members of Zou's family and others who knew her took turns sharing their memories of her positive energy, intelligence and hard work, and lamenting a life cut short.

“I still cannot believe such a lovely and smart young lady has already left this beautiful world,” said Chairman of MU Friendship Association of Chinese Students...
and Scholars Xiaoyu Guo. Choking up in his speech, he stopped many times to wipe his eyes with a handkerchief.

Zou was born in Hunan, China. Despite being from a low-income family, her parents worked hard to give her and her brother a good life and education, Pengjie Zou said.

“Although my sister’s life is so short, it has always been my family’s proud pride and honor,” her brother said through a translator. “Although she left us so quickly, I will continue her dream to return my parents (hard work).”

After receiving her Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Beijing Jiaotong University, in 2011, she went on to receive her Ph.D. in solid mechanics. Yang, chair of the department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at Beijing Jiaotong University, met Zou during her junior year in one of his civil engineering classes. The two went on to develop a close relationship.

Zou traveled to Columbia in December to begin a year of research at MU.

"Kui traveled halfway around the world to fulfill not only her dreams, but also those of her family," said Robert Schwartz, interim dean of the College of Engineering.

Guoliang Huang, her host professor, spoke of how excited she was the first time they met to discuss her research. He concluded his speech with emotional thanks for her contribution to his research lab and vowed to continue her work.

"Thank you Kui, for a lifetime of memories," he said. "Kui, I will miss you."

Jim Scott, director of the International Center and associate vice provost for international initiatives, spoke of how many people were there to support Zou’s family, even though they only knew her for a short time.

“You love her and will always remember her,” Scott said. “Please know at Missouri we will always remember her, too. We will remember her warmth, and her promise and we will remember you. May she rest in peace.”

*Supervising editor is Joe Guszkowski.*
A new campaign to raise Missouri's tobacco tax would fund early childhood programs

February 14, 2015 12:15 am • By Nancy Cambria

For some 15 years Missouri has harbored the lowest tobacco tax in the nation while other states have consented to tripling and sometimes more than quadrupling their surcharges on cigarettes and other tobacco products.

Anti-smoking groups have long argued Missouri’s 17-cent-a-pack tax has done little to deter teens or adults from buying cigarettes or stem future public health expenses.

But in three elections since 2002, Missouri voters have turned back ballot measures to raise tobacco taxes, mirroring the anti-tax sentiment of the state’s Republican-led Legislature.

Now, a new group promoting early childhood programs and school readiness believes the timing is right for an increase specifically to help the state’s youngest residents.

The Raise Your Hand For Kids initiative is in the midst of a campaign to increase the tax by 50 cents to bring in an additional $250 million a year for various existing and new screening programs, home visits and child care for children from birth through age 5.

The 50-cent increase organizers are seeking would be the smallest increase proposed in the four attempts. In 2012 voters were asked to raise tobacco taxes by 73 cents a pack. Nearly 51 percent of voters rejected the plan to raise $283 million for smoking cessation
programs, K-12 education and higher education.

Organizer Erin Brower said the revenue from the new plan would provide steady funding to existing early childhood initiatives that have consistently seen cuts and withholds by the governor and state Legislature. It would also allow for the creation and expansion of programs to get children ready to succeed in school.

“We now have very quantifiable research that says you need to invest in young children. Ninety five percent of the brain is developed by age 5 and that’s where we need to be putting our efforts and money,” said Stephen Zwolak, CEO of Lume Institute, an early childhood resource center in University City.

‘TOO BIG’

Yet the move to increase the tax to benefit youngsters may be competing with efforts to use such revenue for higher education and other state programs. Most view the potential tax increase as one of the last untapped springs of revenue in a state that is increasingly pinching pennies from public support programs.

Earlier this month, University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe told the Post-Dispatch editorial board that Missouri is in a “race to the bottom” because of a Republican Legislature focused solely on reducing taxes and a Democratic governor unable to set clear goals regarding education, child poverty and other issues. He cited the tobacco tax, as a quick fix to stabilize funding for higher education and other causes.

Brower said other efforts to raise the tobacco tax have failed because the proposed increases were too high, and the revenue was going to be used for too many differing programs.

She said the Raise Your Hand For Kids campaign remains solely focused on young children and is buoyed by growing bipartisan support of quality early childhood programs including Parents as Teachers.

She said it is becoming common knowledge that early childhood
programs reduce the need for remedial courses in high school and college, and better prepare a future workforce.

“The time is right,” Brower said of the tax and its funding mission. “I think the attitudes have shifted against smoking and protecting that industry, and 50 cents is reasonable.”

But the initiative is going to face the same opposition as the three previous attempts from various entities, including state lawmakers like the House Ways and Means chairman, Rep. Andrew Koenig, R-Manchester. “I don’t desire to put any effort in going against the will of the people on increasing taxes,” he said.

A lobbyist with the Missouri Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association said, “We think 50 cents is just too big.”

Executive Director Ron Leone said the new tax rate of 67 cents a pack would put state retailers at a competitive disadvantage with most of Missouri’s eight neighboring states. Under the new rate, Missouri would exceed tobacco tax rates in Kentucky, Tennessee and Nebraska.

“I don’t really care what New York City or Connecticut or the state of Washington puts on taxes, I care about our eight border states, because we draw a lot of consumers from those states,” he said. He also wondered if the initiative was shortsighted, alluding to the fact that tobacco users are decreasing nationwide.

“Does it make sense to try and fund early childhood education on a declining revenue source?” he asked.

**NEW REVENUE**

Carol Scott, CEO of Child Care Aware of Missouri, said the tobacco-tax would help stabilize an unreliable funding stream for services to the state’s youngest children.

“It gives us an opportunity to bring in some new revenue at a time that is crucially needed,” she said. “If we use it right, it will lead to a lot of strong long-term outcomes that will lead to more sustainable revenue.”
According to data collected by the Tax Policy Center of the Urban Institute and Brookings Institution, Missouri taxes its cigarettes at a rate 43 percent lower than the next lowest state, Virginia which charges 30 cents extra per pack. By comparison, New York State lodges the highest tax in the nation at $4.35 a pack. Closer to home, Illinois adds an additional $1.98 and Kansas taxes at 79 cents a pack.

Missouri’s take from its 17-cent tax is a little under $120 million a year, a fraction of the revenue generated in most other states. In less than 15 years, tobacco tax revenue increased by $10 billion nationally, amounting to nearly $200 million more a year per state, while Missouri’s revenue has dropped in the same period.

By month’s end, Raise Your Hand for Kids expects to formally announce a petition drive to place the tax on the November 2016 ballot.

Brower said the revenue would be distributed to counties as block grants based on the population of children birth to age 5. Counties would create unpaid oversight boards, which could choose to contract with a local administrative agency to distribute the funding to various early childhood development programs.

Programs likely to receive the money would include early parent education initiatives, expansion of preschool and early childhood programs, and child health and developmental screenings. The plan also sets aside money for smoking cessation programs for expectant mothers to deter premature births and low-birth-weight babies. Studies indicate one out of six pregnant women in Missouri smoke, Brower said.

Under the plan, St. Louis County, with the highest population of young children in the state, would gain about $37.5 million in funding. St. Louis city would gain nearly $14 million. St. Charles and Jefferson counties would gain $15.7 million and $9.5 million respectively.
Governor wants to expand STEM education program to more elementary schools

By Roger McKinney

Friday, February 13, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Gov. Jay Nixon visited Columbia on Friday to announce his plan to expand a program focusing on science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM, education to 350 elementary schools within a year, a priority laid out in his State of the State address last month.

The governor spoke at Battle High School to an audience of science, math and technology teachers, and others from around the state, at the Project Lead the Way state conference, which organizers said was the largest such conference in the nation.

Ben Yates, affiliate program director with Project Lead the Way at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, said the organization is an education not-for-profit based in Indianapolis that works in 7,000 schools nationwide.

The project trains teachers and offers a professional development and support system, Yates said. Project Lead the Way is a rigorous program that teaches students using hands-on projects that emphasize problem solving.

“We’ve got to give every child an education that prepares them to compete worldwide,” Nixon said.

Project Lead the Way is in 34 Missouri elementary schools now. Nixon said his budget includes money to provide matching grants to expand the program to 350 elementary schools.

“I’m not a mathematician, but that’s like 10 times as much,” Nixon joked.

Nixon said teachers remain the heart and soul of education. “What moves the needle most on student achievement is excellent teaching,” he said.

Nixon said when he enters Project Lead the Way classrooms, students often do not look up from their projects, because they are so focused.
The project also encourages women and girls to be interested in STEM fields, Nixon said. Many science and mathematics fields are dominated by men.

Project Lead the Way has been in the Columbia school system since the 2013-2014 school year.

Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Peter Stiepleman said Project Lead the Way is in place at all grade levels at CPS. He said Benton Elementary School focuses on STEM education and Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School focuses on the arts. He said he can foresee a future middle school that he called a “STEAM” school focusing on STEM education and the arts.

Vince Bertram, president and chief executive officer of Project Lead the Way, said the crisis in STEM education imperils state and national economies. He said students must be reached early and be inspired.

“We can’t have faith in our future unless we believe in those who are going to create it,” he said.

Michael Hosokawa, professor in the department of family and community medicine in the University of Missouri School of Medicine, received applause when he said students were being evaluated too much.

“What we need is just-in-time learning, rather than just-in-case learning,” Hosokawa said.

Raasch: The fall of Brian Williams began with a story

WASHINGTON • Long before NBC anchor Brian Williams was suspended for six months for falsely claiming he was on a helicopter hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq 12 years ago, journalism faced a trust deficit.

The reaction to the Williams saga explains why.

Driven by social media, much of the reporting has been focused on
Williams and the fate of his top-rated network news show. Would he survive? Who would be next in line to anchor the news for NBC? What did he say, and when did he say it?

Left largely unexplored has been the damage to a profession that has taken big hits in the 34 years since the Washington Post’s Janet Cooke was forced to give up a Pulitzer Prize for concocting a story about an 8-year-old heroin addict.

Lee Wilkins, a professor and communications department chair at Wayne State University in Detroit, and a faculty emeritus and curator’s teaching professor at the University of Missouri, has literally written the book on journalism ethics. Co-authored by Philip Patterson, “Media Ethics: Issues and Cases,” is in its eighth edition.

Wilkins says a change in journalism from an “objective process” to an emphasis on “storytelling” is at the root of the Williams story.

As she has analyzed it, this new emphasis on story over reporting came to American newsrooms in the 1980s, predating the Internet and its ability to make everyone an instant publisher.

Add in a concurrent journalistic trend of first-person storytelling, where the reporter seeks to become part of the story; mix that with the ego in all humans; and spice it with the ability for anyone to challenge a story in real time on the Internet, and the recipe for Williams’ downfall after an accomplished career was complete.

Journalists “are not storytellers, we are reporters,” insists Wilkins, a local government reporter before she began teaching. “The stories that we tell are messy because they are fact-based. And facts don’t fit neatly into a narrative. ...When we started thinking of ourselves as storytellers was when we ran into a problem.”

Add the economic challenges facing media companies trying to build a business model for the Internet age, Wilkins says, and another relatively new credo that “good journalism should be a brand associated with a certain individual,” and the pressures to tell a story, even a fabricated one under the rubric of truth, mount.
“Mr. Williams became caught up in telling a good story,” Wilkins said. She says he did much good, turning NBC back to substance and sweep, pushing for news broadcasts that tell viewers the important things happening in the world, not just what they want to know.

“There is a distinguished career here,” Wilkins said. “Like every other journalist I know, he made a mistake.”

But, she added, “Mr. Williams doesn’t have anybody to blame but himself for this” as the “manager of his own exaggerations, his own departure from the truth.”

The most recent polling by Gallup shows that about one in four Americans believe journalists have high “honesty or ethical standards.” Journalists scored better than the lawyers, politicians and lobbyists they cover in this town. The question is whether Williams has further damaged the profession that made him rich and famous.

If anything, his case has been a lesson in the velocity of change in media.

The helicopter ride happened in 2003 during the Iraq War. Facebook was not even invented until a year later, and Twitter did not come along until 2006.

But it was a Facebook post by a flight engineer on the helicopter that was actually hit — with Williams not on it — that sparked the unraveling of Williams’ story over the last week.

Traditional media chased the facts while social media flamed in opinion. Some commentary was spirited and enlightened. Some was, in Wilkins’ view, “vindictive, scurrilous, not fact-based.” There was commentary on the commentary, laments about how low people could go and the glee some took in another’s failure.

“It was a chance for anybody who didn’t like Brian Williams’ right eyebrow on some report he did three years ago, to jump on board and say, ‘I told you so,’” Wilkins said.
It all led to a moment of truth for NBC executives: Williams had to go, at least for six months.

But what does it all say about the rest of us?

“We have lost,” Wilkins said, “the capacity to have civil discourse.”

Arts for Autism program has art showcase for participants

February 13, 2015 5:31 pm • By JACK WITTHAUS

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Inside a narrow hall in the back of the PS Gallery, 14-year-old Sara Liebig pointed to a rectangular painting with a pink border hanging in the middle of the exhibit.

A faint, penciled-in peacock was covered with splotches of pink, yellow, blue and green paint. A card tucked into the corner of the piece, called "Untitled," revealed a $55 price tag.

Liebig smiled as she pointed at the vibrant painting. This one was her own creation.

About 35 pieces of artwork were displayed and up for sale at the Arts for Autism reception. Liebig, along with dozens of classmates, created the art through the Arts for Autism program at the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. The program runs for three weeks each spring and fall, and participants can either keep their work or put them up for donation to support the center.

According to the Columbia Daily Tribune paintings at the gallery ranged from $35 to $65 in price. Within an hour, several paintings had been sold.
Six other pieces — including two photos, three prints of paintings and an original painting donated by local artists Sarah Leituala, Teriko, David Spear and Katie Barnes — were offered as part of a silent auction during the event.

"We're just happy people in the community came out to support the kids," said Adrienne Cornwall, spokeswoman for the Thompson Center.

Liebig's mother, Laquita, said she was impressed with the Arts for Autism program. Laquita took part in a class and helped Sara create a ceramic bowl, which she said is on display in her daughter's room. The Liebig family, who are residents of Centralia, heard about the program through the Thompson Center, where Sara is a patient.

Connie Brooks, a psychologist at the Thompson Center, said exercising creative talent helps kids with communication problems express themselves. Unlike talking, art needs no words or gestures. Brooks strolled with scores of people who clinked cocktail glasses and observed the gallery's pieces.

"I'm blown away with the turnout," Brooks said.

**The Art for Autism auction is the first fundraiser for the Thompson Center in 2015. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the center's founding at the University of Missouri.**

The gallery runs until March 15, with paintings available for purchase until the exhibit closes.
Mid-Missouri reacts to 'Fifty Shades of Grey'


JEFFERSON CITY, MO -- It's opening day for the hotly anticipated, but also controversial "Fifty Shades of Grey." After the record-selling book series by E.L. James, the movie is now expected to break box office records.

Fans were at Capital 8 Theatres in Jefferson City today, anxious to be one of the first to see it.

"I'm excited, I read the books. I'm nervous how it's gonna come out," one fan explained.

"I haven't read it, but i'm super curious," another said.

The story is about Anastasia, and her physical romance with Christian Grey.

Some say the plot and graphic scenes of bondage and sado-masochism glorify abuse and unhealthy relationships.

Ashley Pearson read the book and she was waiting to watch the movie, "At first it was a little risqué ...If you're just in the first book and judge it too much, then you won't actually see the love story behind it."

**Melissa Click is a communication researcher at the University of Missouri. She found that female readers were mostly interested in the romance aspect of the story.**

"The women I spoke to really talked about how they saw themselves as Ana in the books. Overwhelmingly I heard women say they would never let a man do that to them."

Some girls who watched the movie today had mixed thoughts of "Fifty Shades of Grey."

"I mean, totally could have went farther with it."

"It's a cliffhanger."

Click says many women have previously remained very private about their sexual lives, "I think it's positive that women felt like reading the books. It gave them a way to talk more freely with people that they're close to."

The film is expected to gross 60 million dollars in the first four days.
Bill seeks to bar 'lawfully present' students from scholarship program

By Ashley Jost

Saturday, February 14, 2015 at 12:00 am

NO MENTION

The House Higher Education Committee this week gave initial approval to a bill that would prevent high school students who came to America illegally before their 16th birthday access to a scholarship program that could give them two free years at a community college.

Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob, pre-filed a bill in December that rewrites the ordinance creating the A+ scholarship program to make students who came to the United States illegally before they were 16 ineligible for state funds.

The A+ program gives students in high school the chance to be reimbursed for two years of classes at a community college.

The Missouri Department of Higher Education approved changes to the A+ program in September, allowing students granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, status from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and now considered “lawfully present” in the United States access to the program.

The department found that the program has a rule that says eligible students must make “a good faith effort to first secure all available federal sources of funding.” Lawfully present students are ineligible for federal aid, so the coordinating board changed the rules to eliminate that conflict, which Fitzpatrick takes issue with.

He said because the program is not fully funded this semester — with enrolled students paying for one credit hour of courses each semester, according to previous Tribune reports — this is not the right time for this decision.

“My concern was they were potentially going to give an undocumented immigrant, or someone who is here illegally, a low-rated tuition option,” Fitzpatrick said about an unnamed community college that he said was “seeking guidance” on navigating the new rules.

Fitzpatrick said government departments and agencies classify DACA students differently at the federal level. The Department of Homeland Security classifies the students as lawfully present, but the IRS does not.

“If my bill passes, nothing will change,” Fitzpatrick said. “The way things are being handled by the department, by higher education institutions, it will continue to be status quo. If the bill is not passed, then
by entirely administrative means, the state of Missouri will begin doing this. There’s a misconception that we’re taking away benefits, but we aren’t.”

The bill was pushed out of the House Higher Education Committee this week and now will move on to the broader education committee. If passed, it will go to the House floor for a vote.

Liz Coleman, Department of Higher Education spokeswoman, would not say whether there are any hard feelings with a legislator taking issue with the department’s decision to alter the statute.

“Our responsibility is to administer programs according to state statute,” Coleman said. “State statute says students lawfully present in the United States “can receive assistance from the scholarship. If that’s changed legislatively, then we will abide by it, of course.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UMKC business professor resigns amid ranking scandal

NO MU Mention

By The Associated Press
February 13, 2015 | 10:00 p.m. CST

KANSAS CITY, Missouri — A University of Missouri-Kansas City professor resigned Friday after an audit found that he told a subordinate to submit inflated data in applying for rankings for the business school.

Michael Song, former director of the Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at UMKC, said in a written statement that his presence had become "an unnecessary distraction."

"For the best interests of the students and programs, I have reluctantly decided to resign from UMKC so that everyone can focus on doing the important thing — training the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovators," Song said.

Earlier this month, the Princeton Review announced it was pulling the school's 2011 through 2014 top 25 rankings for graduate and undergraduate entrepreneurship programs. The university was stripped of its rankings after Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon requested an audit of the school's data because of a Kansas City Star article that
called the Henry W. Bloch School of Management's pursuit of higher rankings for its Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation into question. The audit found the business school knowingly submitted false data when applying for rankings and awards from national organizations.

In a statement announcing Song's resignation, UMKC Chancellor Leo E. Morton called him "a talented researcher and teacher who strived relentlessly to lead the development of outstanding entrepreneurship programs at UMKC."

"Students get a first-rate education in entrepreneurship through the programs developed during his time here," Morton said.