MU names new journalism school dean

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 10:30 am

The University of Missouri named its new journalism school dean, who happens to share MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s “it’s all about the students” mentality.

David Kurpius, professor of mass communication and associate vice chancellor for enrollment management at Louisiana State University, will take the helm of the MU School of Journalism on July 1. MU Provost Garnett Stokes announced Kurpius as the new dean Thursday morning.

Stokes mentioned Kurpius’ “proven record” of increasing diversity in students and faculty members as an academic administrator — something he discussed during his visit to campus in February — as well as his experience in the industry as examples of why he is “uniquely qualified” to lead the journalism school and the Reynolds Journalism Institute.

“We’re excited to have him here as the School of Journalism is poised to enter a new era of innovation,” Stokes said in a written statement. “David’s scholarship as well as his academic and professional background will help elevate MU’s status as a top-tier, AAU (Association of American Universities), land-grant institution.”

During his campus visit, Kurpius told a forum of students and faculty members that he strongly believes the journalism school has a role to play in supporting campus efforts to boost MU’s status in the AAU through “strategic hiring” and interdisciplinary research.

But, “students first. Period,” Kurpius said when an alumnus asked him whether he would prioritize student education or boosting MU’s AAU ranking.

“I don’t really know what challenges I will face until I get there,” Kurpius said.

Kurpius is looking at the new position as a series of opportunities to tackle issues like the importance of teaching about the intersection of entrepreneurship and journalism, the need to increase enrollment and support systems for students of color, making sure social media are laced throughout the curriculum and continuing to strengthen the Missouri Method, or learning laboratories on campus through the school’s media outlets.

MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said Kurpius’ annual salary will be $240,000.
Kurpius has been with LSU’s mass communication school since 1997. He was the associate dean of undergraduate studies and administration from 2005 to 2010, and as a full professor, he taught advanced newsgathering classes, public affairs reporting and courses on minorities in journalism.

Kurpius has a bachelor’s degree from Indiana University-Bloomington and earned his master’s degree and doctorate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Kurpius has a background in broadcast journalism and spent time as a producer, editor and news director at an NBC affiliate in Macon, Ga.

The announcement comes about 14 months after Dean Mills, the school’s current dean, announced his retirement after 25 years of leading the journalism school. Mills initially planned to retire Aug. 31, 2014, but has stayed during the search for his replacement. In his pseudo-retirement, Mills is taking a part-time job as the director of the Reynolds Fellows program at the Reynolds Journalism Institute.

Kurpius said he is working out a departure date from his current job but hopes to move to Columbia by late June.

He has a wife, Allison, and two sons, Blake, 19, and John, 16. His family will move after John graduates from high school, so Kurpius said he will have to commute to see his family for a while. Kurpius said the temporary separation will allow him plenty of time to immerse himself in the campus, school and Columbia community. Kurpius said that, much to his delight, MU has landed on the list of potential colleges for his youngest son.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Kurpius sets sights on diversity, innovation at MU journalism school
Thursday, April 2, 2015 | 8:49 p.m. CDT; updated 9:56 p.m. CDT, Thursday, April 2, 2015
BY CODY MROCZKA, WILLIAM SCHMITT

COLUMBIA — When asked Thursday what he would do first as the new dean of MU's School of Journalism, David Kurpius talked about the need to improve racial, ethnic and gender diversity.

Second, he said, would be to foster entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership.

He said he couldn't delve into the details until he spent time on campus and interacted with faculty and students.
Kurpius is now the assistant vice chancellor for enrollment management at Louisiana State University as well as a professor in the Manship School of Mass Communications. He will replace Dean Mills as the ninth dean of the School of Journalism, with a start date of July 1.

His background in broadcast journalism includes work at television stations in Bloomington, Indiana, and Macon, Georgia. He's been a professor at LSU since 1997 teaching broadcast journalism, public affairs reporting, and the connections between journalism and democratic life.

"I'm over-the-moon excited," Kurpius said in an interview after his appointment was announced Thursday.

He will be in charge of 83 full-time faculty members and 71 full-time staff at the journalism school, the Reynolds Journalism Institute and the Columbia Missourian. The budget was $15.1 million for the 2014 fiscal year.

He said he sees opportunities to experiment with the school's existing foundation. Recent talks with Google employees, one a former student, have prompted Kurpius to look at what can be done to improve in the areas of entrepreneurship, leadership, collaboration and innovation.

"It's how you explore new technologies, how you play with them," he said.

Gary Myers, chairman of the dean search committee, said he was pleased with the process and how the committee was constructed.

Myers credited Interim Provost Ken Dean with choosing a strong range of committee members, calling it a "diverse and representative group." MU Provost Garnett Stokes was also crucial in the final decision making, adding her own personal research, Myers said.

Myers also said he was pleased by the final decision: "He struck all of us on the search as a great leader and experienced administrator — someone who could hit the ground running."

Journalism professor Clyde Bentley, a member of the search committee, cited Kurpius' presence and willingness to listen.
"From the moment he walked into the room you could feel that he had an aura or a presence that commanded your attention," Bentley said. "(Kurpius) will come up to you in a room and you feel like he's totally focused on you."

He compared Kurpius to Bill Clinton or Warren Buffett in his capacity to listen to and focus on a single person. Kurpius said he appreciated the compliment, but with a caveat: "I might have better ethics than Bill."

Retired MU journalism professor Steve Weinberg expressed a different reaction via Facebook. Weinberg said he had nothing against Kurpius and wasn't familiar with his work, but suggested the choice should have been Esther Thorson, one of the other finalists and a faculty member with the school.

"I wish him well; I want him to succeed because I care about the Journalism School. But what a blow to diversity and loyalty," Weinberg wrote.

Kurpius announced next journalism dean

The former LSU administrator will start at MU on July 1 with a base salary of $240,000.

Garnett Stokes, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, announced Thursday morning that David Kurpius will be the new Missouri School of Journalism dean. The school has been without a dean since former Dean Dean Mills retired in February 2014 after a 25-year term.

Kurpius will start his new position July 1 with a starting salary of $240,000, MU spokesman Christian Basi said in an email.

Kurpius comes from Louisiana State University, where he is currently associate vice chancellor for enrollment management and a tenured professor at the Manship School of Mass Communication. He got his start in education as a teaching assistant for radio news reporting at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in September 1991.

Prior to his academic career, Kurpius worked in a wide range of broadcast positions, from master control switcher for WTIU-TV, the PBS station for Bloomington, Indiana, in 1982 to news director at WMGT-TV, the NBC affiliate for Macon, Georgia, in 1990.
“With more than 10 years of professional television news and production experience and a proven record of increasing diversity in student and faculty populations as an academic administrator, David is uniquely qualified to lead the School of Journalism and the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute,” Stokes said in a Missouri School of Journalism news release. “We’re excited to have him here as the School of Journalism is poised to enter a new era of innovation. David’s scholarship as well as his academic and professional background will help elevate MU’s status as a top-tier, AAU (Association of American Universities), land-grant institution.”

More than a month before his appointment, Kurpius visited MU for an open forum on Feb. 17. He declared that students should always come first at a school, and that student leadership is critical for student development.

“When I became a news director (at WMGT-TV), I found that I have a knack for building journalists,” he said at the forum. “You can build a lot more journalists at a university than you can in the newsroom.”

Members of the search committee cited Kurpius’ previous administrative and professional experiences as an important quality that put him on the list of four finalists.

“We have a professional school, so we want to have people with professional experience,” Clyde Bentley, associate professor of journalism who was a member of the search committee, told The Maneater in February. “We’re also a star academic school, so we want to have someone who has the knowledge of research.

Kurpius emphasized three key points during his forum: collaboration, diversity and change.

He said he believed student feedback to be just as crucial as faculty input, and that increased student interaction and participation in events like the journalism forums would improve collaboration.

Kurpius also emphasized the need for students to become more exposed to diversity before reporting on controversial subjects like the events in Ferguson.

Given the changing nature of journalism, Kurpius deeply believes convergence journalism will help future journalists interact on varying platforms, he said.

“I think what he was saying was: ‘Look at your strengths,’” Bentley told The Maneater in February. “It’s not just the technology … Look at what you can do for journalism and that’s where it’ll probably be going.”

Meanwhile, Kurpius self-proclaimed he is no expert in strategic communications, but said he plans to consult with those in this field as he leads the journalism school.

Kurpius was chosen by Stokes from four candidates — Sonya Forte Duhé, Esther Thorson and Thor Wasbotten — with the advice of the search committee.
MU surprises four of five Kemper fellows

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Nicole Monnier’s students gave her a standing ovation after University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin interrupted her class Wednesday to name her as a 2015 William T. Kemper fellow.

The chancellor surprised three of the five winners of the Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence on Wednesday afternoon. A fourth recipient was announced Thursday morning, and the final awardee will be announced Friday morning.

“I wouldn’t be here if not for the students,” Monnier, associate teaching professor of Russian, said after pausing a video of a symphony she was showing her class. Monnier, like the other recipients, fought back tears when presented with the honor — and $10,000.

Commerce Bank Chairman Jim Schatz joined the chancellor to present letters to each of the recipients about options to claim the money.

“Monnier seems to possess an almost innate ability not merely to teach the subject under study but also to educate the student — to help him or her gain interest in the topic and in the culture that suffuses it,” Gennady Barabtarlo, professor of Russian at MU, said in a statement.

Monnier serves on the Faculty Council as chairwoman of the council’s academic affairs committee.

For one recipient, Elisa Glick, the Kemper award was not her only honor this week. Loftin said he presented Glick, MU’s first openly gay faculty member, with a diversity award Tuesday night for her efforts to make the university more inclusive.

Glick is on medical leave but was tricked by friends and colleagues into coming to a meeting Wednesday just to surprise her.

“Beyond compassion and time spent nurturing individual students, Glick’s teaching strategy requires personal bravery,” David Read, chairman of the MU English department, said in a statement. “She teaches students to value personal experience as a form of knowledge that they
can understand in a historical, social and theoretical context. Sometimes this means putting her own personal experiences on the line.”

The third recipient of the day was journalism Associate Professor Berkley Hudson. After Loftin and Schatz told Hudson about the award, he quickly thanked them and said, “I have something for you, too.”

Hudson gave the administrators flowers, picked from his garden. Hudson said he brought the flowers to class for his students, but the timing was fortuitous.

“One of” Hudson’s “mentors described him as a hothouse orchid — an apt image for a professor who constantly shows his students how beautiful journalism can be,” journalism Associate Professor John Fennell said. “His goal is to inspire confidence in students, to get into their minds and souls, where real, lasting learning happens. He wants to place his indelible mark on students who pass through our corridors so when they leave here they remember what inspired them to be here in the first place: to tell stories that matter and to bring meaning to our world.”

Trista Strauch, an assistant teaching professor of animal sciences in the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, was the fourth recipient and was surprised with the award and money Thursday morning.

Strauch was hired almost 10 years ago to lead the campus’ new captive wild animal management minor, and though her role, responsibilities and undertakings have changed since then, she has always emphasized and prioritized her role as a teacher, according to a news release.

“Dr. Strauch is not only a gifted teacher but also has the compassion to help students become self-learners and problem-solvers in any field they choose,” Rodney Geisert, professor of reproductive biology, said in a written statement.

The fellowships were established in 1991 with a $500,000 gift from the William T. Kemper Foundation. Kemper was a 1962 MU alumnus who died in 1989. His trust fund is managed by Commerce Bank.

The final recipient will be announced at about 10:30 a.m. Friday.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Trista Strauch awarded Kemper fellowship for teaching excellence

Thursday, April 2, 2015 | 8:35 p.m. CDT; updated 11:19 p.m. CDT, Thursday, April 2, 2015

BY ANNALIESE NURNBERG
COLUMBIA — The beam of light from a projector transformed into a spotlight in Trista Strauch’s class as a group of friends and colleagues filed in to witness her receive a 2015 William T. Kemper Fellowship.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and Commerce Bank Chairman Jim Schatz surprised Strauch with the fellowship and accompanying $10,000 check while she was lecturing Thursday morning in the Anheuser-Busch Natural Resources Building. The fellowship is awarded to five outstanding teachers each year.

Holding back tears, but smiling, the fisheries and wildlife sciences professor addressed her students as they applauded. “I don’t know what to say,” she said. “You’re the reason I come to work every day.”

Strauch has been an MU faculty member since 2006. In addition to teaching, she also advises nearly 200 students and serves on several committees and boards.

Strauch excels at working with students on a one-on-one basis, said Bill Lamberson, associate director of the animal sciences department and a former professor of Strauch’s. “She’s good in class, but when a student comes up to ask a question, she just lights up,” he said. “It’s great.”

MU professor of reproductive biology Rodney Geisert said in a university-prepared biography that Strauch is not only a gifted teacher, but also cares passionately about helping her students become “self-learners and problem solvers in any field they choose.”

“Dr. Strauch is willing to help every student, but she expects nothing short of their full commitment and willingness to go beyond average,” he said. “For that, many have moved into careers which were previously only dreams.”

Strauch’s award was the fourth of five. Three other professors received awards Wednesday, and the final award will be given out Friday morning.
MU releases separation agreements for Alden, Fuller

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Missouri will pay outgoing athletics director Mike Alden and former basketball assistant coach Tim Fuller more than $500,000 combined as part of their separation agreements, according to documents obtained through open records requests.

Alden, who announced in January he’s stepping down after 17 years as Mizzou’s AD, will be paid at his current salary through Aug. 31, according to a March 9 letter from Missouri chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. Alden will also receive three payments from the university totaling $432,163.75.

The letter states that Alden has agreed to move his effective date of resignation from Aug. 31 to April 27, when new AD Mack Rhoades will officially take office. At that time, Alden will be employed by MU’s College of Education with an annual salary of $125,000 plus benefits. That contract is through April 26, 2018 and can be extended through June 3, 2019.

As part of his agreement, Alden will receive three one-time payments as spelled out in his AD contract that was originally signed in 2009 and good through June 30, 2019. On or before June 1, he’ll receive a $50,000 payment that he earned every year he was in the AD position. He’ll receive $232,163.75 in retention and incentive bonuses on or before June 30, plus $150,000 from an annuity fund on or before Aug. 30.

The letter states that Alden is expected to “assist in the successful transition and assimilation of the successor Director of Athletics” from March 9 to April 27, after which, Loftin wrote, “I expect that you will be reasonably available, upon request, to help with that process as well.”

Fuller, who will not be back next season after spending the last four years on the Mizzou basketball staff, will receive one lump sum payment of $54,166.68 and another payment for 272 hours of accrued work based on his salary of $325,000 — approximately $42,500. Fuller will also be paid for unused vacation time.

His employment will officially end April 8, according to his separation agreement signed Monday approved by the university system Board of Curators.

Missouri agreed to reimburse Fuller’s travel expenses to this weekend’s Final Four in Indianapolis. The school also agreed to give Fuller access and permission to use video interviews Fuller conducted with MU players and agreed to make reasonable effort to transfer his university phone number for his personal use.

Fuller agreed to not file any internal grievances against the university with respect to his employment and the ending of his employment.

Fuller joined the coaching staff in 2011 under former head coach Frank Haith.
Ful ler to be paid more than $96,000 for his departure

By Steve Walentik

Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 3:20 pm

Missouri will pay former associate head basketball coach Tim Fuller more than $96,000 under the terms of the separation agreement he reached with the school.

The agreement between Fuller and the University of Missouri Board of Curators, obtained through a public records request, was signed on Monday.

It calls for Fuller to remain employed by the university through April 8, though the school announced his pending departure last week after four seasons on the basketball staff, the last three as associate head coach.

The agreement states that Fuller to be paid a lump sum of $54,166.68, as well as a payment equal to 272 hours of accrued and unused vacation time — estimated to be about $42,500 based on Fuller’s $325,000 salary under the contract he signed to remain as the Tigers’ associate head coach last spring.

Missouri also will reimburse Fuller for travel expenses to attend this weekend’s Final Four in Indianapolis and has agreed to provide him with “access to and permission to use video footage of Fuller’s interviews with student-athletes,” as well as make “reasonable efforts” to transfer his university cell phone number for personal use.

The agreement gives Fuller permission to pursue other jobs now even though he will remain an employee of the university until April 8.

In return, Fuller agreed not to “file any internal grievances with respect to his employment by the University or the ending of said employment.”

The Tribune requested the separation agreements the school made with football assistant coaches Dave Steckel and Alex Grinch this offseason when they chose to leave their posts — Steckel to become the head coach at Missouri State and Grinch to become the defensive coordinator at Washington State. The university’s custodian of records stated that there were “no documents responsive to your request.”
Mack Rhoades pledges support for Kim Anderson

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Mack Rhoades, the next athletics director at Missouri, did some radio interviews on Thursday, including a visit with KTGR 1580 AM in Columbia. Here are a few notes from his conversation with the show’s hosts:

• Rhoades confirmed that his first official day on the job will be April 27.

• Rhoades has been meeting with Missouri coaches and administration for the past few weeks and will be in Indianapolis this weekend for the Final Four.

• Rhoades again mentioned Houston’s Hunter Yurachek as a possible deputy AD — if he’s not named Rhoades’ successor at Houston.

• On Gary Pinkel’s pet project, the football facility planned for the south side of Memorial Stadium, Rhoades said, “The timeline is immediate” and described it as a “top priority.”

“We’ve got to do something to really enhance football facilities and make sure they’re competitive and comparable with everyone else in the SEC,” he said, mentioning meeting rooms, coaches’ offices and strength and conditioning facilities as needing upgrades. He’s already had several discussions with Pinkel about the project.

“We’ll be all hands on deck trying to get that done,” Rhoades said.

• Other projects on his radar include the Hearnes Center. The 45-year-old building is costly and inefficient. “Is that a facility that still serves our student-athletes and coaches like it should?” he said.

He also mentioned baseball’s Taylor Stadium as needing some work. “What’s the next steps?” Rhoades said. “Baseball in the SEC is so unbelievably competitive. For us to be a player on a consistent basis we’re going to have to do something with the baseball stadium.”

Rhoades said he’d also like to do something about the athletics administration’s offices, which are currently located on the south side of Mizzou Arena. He said he’d like the offices to be less removed from the athletes.

• Rhoades addressed the men’s basketball situation after the Tigers’ 9-23 season in Kim Anderson’s debut year as head coach. He was asked how he’ll evaluate the direction of the program. “Ultimately, it’s wins and losses,” he said. “That’s how our fans measure it. That’s how we’ll measure it.

“What is the process that leads up to those wins and losses and is the program progressing? I think Coach Anderson started in a hole and certainly it’s been a tough season. He’s not happy with the season. Now what about that are we going to do to give him all the support he needs? He’s got a coaching position open. That’s certainly going to be key in terms for the future of the program. He’s grinding it out. He’s doing a great job in terms of on the road recruiting. We need to support him and make sure we give him every chance and every opportunity to be successful and that we see this program progress and get better each and every year and build a program that consistently wins.
“I think you can build a program. It can be a quick fix, but sometimes I think that’s fools’ gold. All of a sudden you can have one or two great teams, then all of a sudden, boom, it’s a roller coaster and you’re heading downhill 60 mph and everyone’s looking around, (saying), ‘What happened?’ We want to build a program where once it gets there it says there.”

• Rhoades said MU is close to signing off on renovations for the men’s locker room at Mizzou Arena. He also mentioned giving Anderson more help with his recruiting budget.
• As far as football goes, Missouri chancellor R. Bowen Loftin mentioned recently that Mizzou should be selling out more of its home games. Rhoades agreed. “We don’t currently sell out every home football game,” he said. “That really should be our goal. It shouldn’t matter who we play.”

Rhoades made it clear that he wants a more aggressive ticket sales effort from MU’s ticket office. “We’ve got to be an outbound company,” he said. “We cannot be an inbound company.”

Here's the full audio of Rhoades’ interview.

St. Louis prosecutor defends his handling of Ferguson grand jury

St. Louis County prosecutor Robert McCulloch defended his handling of the Ferguson grand jury during a law school talk that drew controversy because it was closed to the public.

"You hear that nonsense about how, of course, a prosecutor can indict a ham sandwich."
McCulloch told a packed audience of law students, professors and staff at a law school event at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Mo., the state's flagship public university. "But at some point the prosecutor's got to stand up in front a jury and prove that ham sandwich actually committed a crime."

Before the event, a university spokesman told the Los Angeles Times that limited seating for the event was prioritized for the law school and that the event would not be recorded to encourage a free exchange of ideas.

However, the event organizers later decided to record the remarks, which were released to The Times. In addition, The Times obtained an unofficial recording taped by an attendee.

The event was also tweeted by some students in attendance and drew a demonstration outside the campus venue. A recently retired state legislator who represented the district also criticized that McCulloch's speech was closed to the public.

A similar McCulloch talk at the St. Louis University law school had been public.

The topic of McCulloch's presentation was grand juries — as a general instrument of justice and specifically the grand jury that investigated the Ferguson shooting.

McCulloch's remarks, according to the recordings, largely tracked his previous descriptions of the investigation into the Aug. 9 shooting of unarmed, black 18-year-old Michael Brown by Ferguson police Officer Darren Wilson after a struggle.

For several months, a grand jury directed by McCulloch's office pored over copious amounts of evidence and witness testimony before ultimately deciding on Nov. 24 there was no probable cause to charge Wilson with a crime.

A simultaneous Justice Department investigation reached a similar conclusion this year and cast doubt on some witnesses' claims that Brown had his hands up.

The mood at Tuesday's event was often light, with McCulloch joking with the audience and drawing laughs. But speakers sometimes raised challenging questions during a question-and-answer session.

"What are you personally doing?" one questioner asked McCulloch regarding the Justice Department report that said Ferguson's Police Department was unconstitutionally racially profiling its residents and heavily ticketing poor drivers.

"For years, we have tried to eliminate some of the municipalities, at least the municipal police departments, because they're terrible police departments, they're lousy," McCulloch said. "Ferguson wouldn't necessarily have been among that group, because there are so many more — if you're from Ferguson, you can probably name half of them that are far worse than Ferguson in terms of the ability to provide effective law enforcement to the people of St. Louis County."

The final questioner asked McCulloch what he would have done differently about the Nov. 24 grand jury announcement.

"I would not change what I decided to do" in terms having evidence presented to the grand jury and letting the grand jury investigate the case, McCulloch said.

He added, "I certainly wouldn't change releasing the information [to the public] -- maybe the manner in which it was done. I would have been more thorough about it. We apparently missed a stack of statements in our rush" to release the documents immediately to the public.

"It's something we'll be picking apart for years to see what we can do better and how we can do better," McCulloch said.
McCulloch went on to say, "The cops have got to get out in the street more, they’ve got to get more involved with the community," but added that the changes that need to be made were a "two-way street."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Missouri House approves initiative to recognize Lucile Bluford

Thursday, April 2, 2015 | 9:00 p.m. CDT; updated 12:47 a.m. CDT, Friday, April 3, 2015

July 1 is now one step closer to becoming an occasion to celebrate Lucile Bluford, one of Missouri’s most prominent African-American journalists.

Representatives on Thursday unanimously approved House Concurrent Resolution 18 to name the day after Bluford, who worked as a reporter, editor and publisher of the Kansas City Call, a black newspaper in Kansas City, for about 70 years. The resolution now moves to the Senate for possible action.

Rep. Gail McCann Beatty, D-Kansas City, filed the legislation. The representative is also gathering signatures to include Bluford, who died in 2003, in the Hall of Famous Missourians.

"A dozen years after her passing, Lucile Bluford remains a legendary figure in Kansas City," Beatty said in a news release. "She achieved greatness both as a journalist and champion for civil rights and earned an honored place in state history for her substantial efforts to eliminate segregation at the University of Missouri."

**Bluford, who was born July 1, 1911, actively fought Missouri's segregation policies. For six consecutive semesters, starting in the spring of 1939, Bluford applied to MU's graduate journalism program.**

She was admitted based on transcripts sent by mail, but was denied enrollment when the university found out she was African American. Bluford waged a legal battle against the university and lost. She never attended the university.
Decades later, MU recognized her role in attempting to break down the state's Jim Crows laws by granting her an honorary doctorate degree in 1989. In 1984, the MU School of Journalism awarded her with an Honor Medal, its highest award for service in journalism.

Bluford joined the Call as a full-time reporter in 1932. During her tenure, she advocated for a myriad of issues affecting the black community. Her editorials supported boycotts of local department stores that refused black patrons, according to a news release from McCann Beatty's office.

Bluford covered the March on Washington in 1963 and supported the election of African-American politicians such as Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, D-Missouri. Bluford earned the title of "the consciousness of the community."

"You could watch her work and tell she was a force to be reckoned with," McCann Beatty said, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Despite her prominence, Bluford was not a fan of recognition. Although many journalists tried to write her story, she refused multiple times.

"She never saw herself as the story," said Brian Burnes, who has worked as a reporter for the Kansas City Star since 1978. For Bluford, "the story that was worth paying attention to was the civil rights story."

The Huffington Post

Colleges Begin Distributing Survey On Campus Sexual Assault, Despite Concerns About Timing And Ethics

Several universities on Wednesday began distributing a survey to measure rates of sexual violence on college and university campuses, developed by the Association of American Universities.
Dartmouth College, Yale University, Princeton University, the University of Southern California and Michigan State University on Wednesday became the first of the 28 participating universities to begin distributing the elite higher education group's survey. The participating schools have until the beginning of May to complete the study.

With the potential to reach hundreds of thousands of students, AAU's study is one of the largest campus climate surveys on sexual assault to date. But it is being deployed in the wake of criticism from a group of professors who have raised concerns that the trade group's survey is being rushed through and may not adhere to proper ethical standards.

The survey was developed following a push by the White House last year to have every college issue a questionnaire to examine sexual assault on campus, so that schools can better understand where they need to focus their anti-rape efforts.

In recent months, the professors have expressed concern that the AAU survey, which was crafted over the course of roughly three months, was being rushed, not allowing enough time to conduct a pilot survey or to allow feedback from stakeholders.

Sarah Cook, a researcher who has criticized the AAU survey and associate dean of the honors college at Georgia State University, said the study was being deployed "awfully fast."

"Given what [AAU President] Hunter Rawlings said in terms of using this opportunity to get ahead of federal mandates, it doesn't seem that the survey is being conducted for the purpose of understanding, but in terms of checking the box off in terms of compliance," she said, referring to Rawlings' statement that he wanted the AAU to conduct its survey before a "one size fits all" version was federally mandated.

The professors also worried that schools are not required to get approval for the survey by their Institutional Review Boards, which enforce the ethical and legal standards colleges follow when conducting research involving human subjects. Colleges use IRBs to ensure they are not causing psychological or physical trauma for human research subjects. The White House Task Force on Sexual Assault said that schools should get IRB approval prior to distributing campus climate surveys.

Each of the 28 schools participating in the AAU survey has its own IRB that could approve its conduct of the study. However, AAU said the schools could defer to the IRB for Westat, the firm creating the survey.

"It is very hard to go to each individual IRB, which could all make requests for changes, so it does make sense for them to go through one IRB," Cook said. "One thing that may seem a little odd, though: How can a research firm go through its own IRB? Don't they have a conflict of interest? It should be independent."

A private entity like Westat is not required to disclose the members of its IRB, but the company said in a statement to HuffPost that the board is "well-prepared" and includes experts in several fields, sometimes bringing in outside consultants when needed.
The Huffington Post reached out to all 28 schools deploying the AAU survey to find out whether they would use their own IRBs or Westat's. Michigan State University, the University of Missouri and Ohio State University all said they would defer to Westat's IRB for approval on the survey.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison, Case Western, Purdue, Washington University in St. Louis, Cornell University, Iowa State University, the University of Arizona, the University of Minnesota and UNC-Chapel Hill said they were seeking approval from their own IRBs. The rest of the campuses did not respond.

The University of Missouri said in a statement that while it "is relying on Westat’s IRB approval, which is common practice for multi-site projects, MU's IRB is also reviewing the independent IRB approvals to ensure that they have done due diligence to protect participants."

Cook said the makeup of the Westat IRB would determine whether or not it was a cause for concern.

AAU spokesman Barry Toiv defended the quick pace on Thursday. His group, he said, was intent on getting the survey in the field this academic year so schools could use results to start work on sexual violence programs sooner. April was the last month before students would start leaving campuses, he pointed out.

"A number of our presidents asked us a year ago to put this survey together to help them get a better sense of the challenges facing their students — any relevant experiences they had and how they felt about security issues, in particular," Toiv said.

Campus climate surveys are a key priority for advocates for sexual assault survivors and experts on the issue, who say these studies can not only show the extent of the problem in each community, but also highlight gaps in policy and implementation and potentially increase reporting rates. In addition to the White House's push, a bipartisan group of senators has also introduced legislation making it mandatory for each school to distribute a campus climate survey.

According to documents obtained by The Huffington Post, AAU instructed the schools who deployed the survey on Wednesday to send email and social media blasts to advertise the survey.

AAU said it will release the individual survey results to each institution, and it would be up to each university to decide whether it wants to distribute that data to the public.
MU Title IX Office Releases Data to Prevent Future Reports

The University of Missouri Title IX office has released data it collected from the 2014 fall semester.

Of the 144 reports that were released, 135 fell under one or more of the five categories the office uses to classify violations.

The five categories used to classify offenses are sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, dating or intimate partner violence, stalking on the basis of sex and sex discrimination.

Of the 135 reports that were classified as an offense, sexual misconduct had the most violators at 55. This includes nonconsensual sexual intercourse or sexual contact.

Title IX Investigator Salama Gallimore said she also does investigations into sexual orientation discrimination as well as the rest of the categories.

She described what the office considers the most general category of the five.

“The broad category of behavior that’s prohibited at the university is sex discrimination and that’s any sort of adverse action taken against a person on the basis of their sex.”

Linda Bennett, Title IX Coordinator, said the goal of collecting this data is to have annual reports the office can start providing by summer 2016.

She said the information will be helpful in determining trends and patterns that will help the office in the future.

“We look at the information and determine what trends, like individuals, or places, or events that have occurred throughout the year, and those trends and patterns help us keep our students and faculty and staff safe here on campus,” Bennett said.
Old drug finds new way to fight cancer

A drug used for decades to treat leukemia may not only kill cancer cells, but also change how cells function, weakening them so they can be killed by other drugs.

Previously, doctors used 6-Thioguanine, or 6-TG, as a chemotherapy treatment to kill cancer cells in patients with leukemia, but in recent years, many doctors have shelved 6-TG in exchange for newer drugs that are more effective.

Every cell in the body has certain genetic characteristics called epigenetic markers that give cells instructions on how to act, when to multiply, and when to die. Cancer cells often have epigenetic markers that cause genes to be either turned off or out of control, which causes them to grow rapidly, become difficult to kill, and ultimately damage the body.

Easier way to kill cancer

When testing the drug on cells from dogs with cancer, researchers found that 6-TG can affect these epigenetic markers in cancer cells through a chemical process called demethylation. The process works to turn off damaging epigenetic markers and turn on markers that make the cells act in a healthy manner.

The discovery, reported in *BMC Veterinary Research*, could lead to future cancer treatments using multiple drugs to fight the disease from different sides, says Jeffrey Bryan, associate professor of oncology at University of Missouri.

“While 6-TG is no longer one of the more powerful cancer-killing drugs doctors have at their disposal, we found that it could still be useful to fight cancer in conjunction with other drugs. If we can use 6-TG to turn off dangerous markers in cancer cells so that those cells become easier to kill, we then can use more powerful cancer-killing drugs to eliminate the cells for good.”

The research could potentially open doors for future research on other old cancer drugs that are no longer used by doctors, says Bryan, who also is the director of the Comparative Oncology and
Epigenetics Laboratory. By re-examining other potential uses for these old drugs, more effective treatments could be found.

**Dogs to humans**

While the research has been done on dogs with cancer, the findings could translate well to human diseases.

“Epigenetic markers work similarly in dogs and humans, so we expect to see similar results with these drugs in humans as we do in dogs,” he says. “This is ‘a one step back, two steps forward’ approach to cancer research. Gaining approval from the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to use new drugs to treat human diseases is a difficult, time-intensive process.

“By examining alternate uses of old drugs in dogs, we hope to be able to expedite that process down the road when we introduce these novel combination treatments in humans.”

The early-stage results of the research are promising. If additional studies, including animal studies, are successful within the next few years, the researchers will request permission from the federal government to begin human drug testing. After this status has been granted, Bryan and his colleagues may conduct human clinical trials in conjunction with oncologists at the MU Ellis Fischel Cancer Center with the hope of developing new treatments.

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**Among collegiate millennials, racism a lingering problem**

BY KIMBERLY HEFLING AND JESSE J. HOLLAND

04/03/2015 5:02 AM

COLLEGE PARK, MD. - Kayla Tarrant loves the University of Maryland. But the campus tour guide says a racist email and photo attributed to her schoolmates makes her reluctant to encourage other black students to enroll "in a place where you feel unsafe and no one cares about you."
"We're literally begging people to care about our issues," Tarrant said with tears in her eyes to applause from about 100 students — blacks, Hispanics, Asians and a few whites — gathered to discuss the racial climate at the predominantly white, 27,000-student campus.

Conversations like the one at Maryland's Nyumburu Cultural Center are taking place nationwide as racist incidents continue to pop up at colleges and universities, even though students are becoming increasingly vocal in protesting racism and administrators are taking swift, zero-tolerance action against it.

This week alone, Bucknell University expelled three students for making racist comments during a March 20 campus radio broadcast. At Duke University, a noose was found hanging from a tree.

"To whomever committed this hateful and stupid act," said Larry Moneta, vice president for student affairs at Duke, "I just want to say that if your intent was to create fear, it will have the opposite effect." Officials have since accused a student in the incident but have declined to release the student’s name or race.

This is happening against a backdrop of promise when it comes to race relations, with campuses enrolling record numbers of black and Hispanic millennials. The current college generation — young people who came of age under the nation's first black president — is said to have more accepting racial attitudes, but putting an end to racism among them has proved elusive.

The Bucknell and Duke incidents came days after spray-painted swastikas and nooses were found at dorms on the State University of New York's Purchase campus. A former University of Mississippi student was indicted on federal civil rights charges last week, accused of tying a noose on the statue of the university's first black student and draping it with an old Georgia state flag that includes a Confederate battle emblem.

Social media have stoked the issue, with top administrators at Kansas State, the University of Northern Iowa and the University of Missouri urging students to stop posting anonymous racist speech on apps.
The wide usage of sharable video has also been a factor. In February, students at the University of Oklahoma were caught on video singing a chant that included references to lynching and used a racial slur to describe how the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity would never accept black members.

"We had an epidemic of racism all across our country," said University of Oklahoma President David Boren, who banned the fraternity from campus. "Ferguson, Missouri, might be the best known case, but it's all across our country every day, every week."

Even before the Oklahoma incident, a little more than half — 51 percent — of college and university presidents in an Inside Higher Ed poll conducted this year by Gallup rated race relations on college campuses as "fair."

Tasia Harris, a senior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, said racially charged events in society are "blatant reminders that this is something that continues to affect our lives." She is among students who are trying to get a plaque placed next to a Confederate soldier statue on her campus, explaining its history.

"White supremacy isn't just in Ferguson or isn't just in New York or isn't just Cleveland or where have you. It's also in these very privileged sites," said Omololu Babatunde, a North Carolina senior.

The Pew Research Center work has found that millennials are more likely than older generations to say society should make every possible effort to improve the position of blacks and other minorities. They are also more likely to support interracial marriage and have friends of other races. Such data also shows divides. Little more than half of white and black millennials in one Pew survey said all, most or some of their friends are black or white, respectively.

And among millennials age 18-24, a 2012 Public Religion Research Institute/Georgetown University poll found 56 percent of white millennials said the government has paid too much attention to the problems of minorities over the past few decades. About a quarter of black respondents and 37 percent of Hispanics agreed.
In 1976, nearly 10 percent of students were African-American and 4 percent were Hispanic. In 2013, nearly 15 percent were black and nearly 16 percent Hispanic. The National Center for Education Statistics projects such growth will continue.

Benjamin Reese, president of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, said efforts to put appropriate focus on the issue of diversity has unintentionally "diluted the focus on the unfinished business regarding race."

At the University of Maryland, a student resigned from Kappa Sigma fraternity this year after being suspended after a 2014 email containing racially and sexually suggestive language about black, Indian and Asian women was made public. This followed an Instagram photo of a University of Maryland sorority member late last year with a birthday cake containing racially explicit text.

University administrators say they are addressing students' concerns and point to holding open forums, creating a multicultural student advisory group to advise the college president and educating Greek members about topics such as "multicultural competency."

Kumea Shorter-Gooden, the chief diversity officer at the University of Maryland, hopes the dialogue "will help us all to get to a better place, but we've got to stick with it."

"There's no quick fix," she said.

Follow rule of law in deciding King v. Burwell

By Joshua D. Hawley and Erin Morrow Hawley

Joshua D. Hawley and Erin Morrow Hawley are associate professors of law at the University of Missouri-Columbia. They are former law clerks to Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. of the U.S. Supreme Court.

NO MU MENTION
The Post-Dispatch ran an editorial taking issue with the challengers’ arguments in King v. Burwell, the new Supreme Court case about the Affordable Care Act’s health care exchanges (“Have dog, won’t hunt,” March 6). The editorial also criticized us for a brief we filed in that case about Missouri voters’ decision not to set up a health care exchange.

The Post-Dispatch did not read our brief very carefully. It misstated which Missouri referendum our brief is all about, not a small error.

But perhaps more tellingly, the Post-Dispatch suggested the case ought to be determined by what it characterized as the “fair” outcome. The Post-Dispatch was wrong about that, too. This case, like all cases, ought to be decided by what the law says. That’s the essence of the rule of law.

King v. Burwell is about whether the Internal Revenue Service can override the plain language of the Affordable Care Act, which provides that federal subsidies are available to individuals to purchase health insurance only on exchanges established by states — not on exchanges established by the federal government.

Missouri citizens voted in 2012 not to establish a state exchange. According to the ACA’s text, that means federal insurance subsidies should not be spent in Missouri. More importantly, it means no Missourian who qualifies for a federal subsidy should be required to purchase ACA-mandated insurance, on an exchange or anywhere else.

The Post-Dispatch accused us of overreading Missouri voters’ intentions. It said we misconstrued a 2010 referendum about the individual mandate to have some bearing on the debate over state exchanges.

But our argument has nothing to do with the 2010 referendum. Our brief is about the statewide vote two years later on the specific question whether to establish a state exchange. Over 60 percent of those voting said no. And they did so amid news reports that declining to set up an exchange would mean federal subsidies might be unavailable in Missouri.

In light of these facts, our argument is simple. The ACA invited Missouri voters to create a state exchange. They voted no. The Obama administration’s attempt to rewrite the rules — spending federal subsidies and enforcing the mandates in Missouri anyway — would effectively nullify the choice of Missouri voters.

The Post-Dispatch’s real complaint, however, is with the political philosophy it believes motivates our argument: conservatism. And it is true that we believe in limited government. But the reference to political philosophy misses the point. Political preferences should have nothing to do with this case, or any case, for that matter.

To quote perhaps the most famous decision in American constitutional law, Marbury v. Madison, “It is emphatically the province and duty of the judicial department to say what the law is” — not what judges want it to be. The judge’s duty is to apply the law as it is written.

In this case, even the Obama administration admits that the plain language of the law limits federal subsidies to exchanges established by states. The real question is whether the Supreme Court should overlook that plain language in favor of congressional intent or the law’s broader purpose — or perhaps because the Obama administration warns that without the IRS rule, the states’ insurance markets will enter a “death spiral.”

The answer is no. For one thing, there is ample evidence in the legislative record that Congress intended subsidies to be available only on state-run exchanges. As to death spirals, the Supreme Court could easily stay its judgment until the end of the year, giving Congress, the president and the states time to address the possible effects on the insurance industry.
But ultimately, the point is this: The Constitution does not permit the executive branch to change the text of a law any time the president does not like the way the law works in practice.

The ACA makes federal subsidies available only when states choose to establish exchanges. Missouri did not. That choice should be respected. That’s the rule of law.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

2015 dietary guidelines report is sour on sugar
Friday, April 3, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY ALYSSA SALELA

COLUMBIA — Stop eating so much sugar.


Although the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans have not yet been published, the report from the advisory committee, which was appointed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was published in February and will be the foundation of the 2015 guidelines.

The report recommends that 10 percent or less of a person's daily diet comes from added sugars. For a person who consumes 2,000 calories per day that means intake of added sugars should be limited to less than 30 grams or two tablespoons. The vast majority of all age and sex groups of the U.S. population exceed the recommended intake, according to the report.

Catherine Peterson, an associate professor of nutrition at MU, said that added sugars are what goes into or on food during processing, cooking, baking or at the table. Natural sugar is different because it occurs naturally a specific food, for example a fruit. Although the sugars are metabolized in the same way, added sugars are what people should be worried about.

"We don't eat a lot of fruits and vegetables throughout the day, so we aren't really worried about natural sugar," Peterson said. "You would need to eat a lot of fruit to get the same amount of sugar you would get from something like a soft drink."
The report states that the majority of added sugars in people's diets come from sugar-sweetened beverages. Almost half of the added sugar in people's diets come from sugar-sweetened beverages, according to the report.

"It is so easy to add up on added sugars by soft drinks," Peterson said. "You don't feel full from it, but it is riddled with sugars."

The report warns against switching to drinks that contain low-calorie sweeteners instead of added sugars. Instead, the guidelines recommend switching to water. The overconsumption of added sugars doesn't just contribute to obesity. The report cites strong evidence of a link between added sugars and cardiovascular disease, Type 2 diabetes and obesity. There also is moderate evidence of a link to stroke, tooth decay, heart disease, breast cancer, colon cancer, rectal cancer and hypertension.

Recent research also links Type 2 diabetes among older adults and a higher risk of developing dementia.

The report notes that it's hard to measure the precise amount of added sugars in foods and beverages because they’re not separated from natural sugars on nutrition labels. One of the report's goals is to distinguish added and natural sugars on nutrition labels. "To a consumer, they may think something has a lot of sugar in it, but they don't know it contains sugar that is natural to the food," Peterson said. "This is not the kind we are worried about."

The new guidelines will be published sometime in the fall.

THE TIMES

Lessons from America: surviving tonight’s leaders’ debate

David Taylor
No audible sighing, do not lose your temper, and never, ever take a sly look at your watch.
As David Cameron prepares for a televised debate where he is likely to face a host of candidates ganging up on him, the Conservative leader has been studying past American political debates.

Mr Cameron is being prepped for tonight’s seven-way debate by former Barack Obama aides Anita Dunn and Bill Knapp who have looked at how Mitt Romney in 2011 and Hillary Clinton in 2007 coped under coordinated attacks from rivals in their own parties.
Whilst live TV election debates are still a novelty in the UK, the US has decades of experience to draw upon - and a litany of examples where candidates have come a cropper - from George HW Bush sneaking a look at his watch as Bill Clinton dominated, to Al Gore confirming his elitist image when he repeatedly sighed into the microphone as George W Bush did his folksy routine.

Mr Cameron faces risks and opportunities in the format which the Americans call a cage match - a sort of wrestling free for all.
He could be knocked out of his stride by something unexpected, or come across as thin-skinned under pressure - but if he keeps his humour, he could win public sympathy.
Will Marshall, president of the Progressive Policy Institute Washington DC think tank said:
“I think the cage match format will help him. Some of the more fringe opponents can end up looking highly parochial.
“Cameron has to be unflappable, not get too defensive or frustrated. He needs to strike a good-natured attitude, but you have to be careful not to be too condescending. Al Gore managed to allow himself to be exasperated by George Bush’s inanities.”

In 2007, Hillary Clinton, with a 20-point lead over Barack Obama and the rest of the Democratic field was lambasted for voting for the Iraq war.

University of Missouri professor Dr Mitchell McKinney said: “There was some ganging up, but Hillary fell into the trap of going on the attack. Candidates have to respond through humour or simply ignoring the attacks and sticking to the message - when a frontrunner goes on the attack it invites the perception that they must be weak or feel in danger.”
The seven-against-one events cut into the Clinton lead, but many Democrats rallied to at a later debate when she showed a more human side and joked she had come prepared: “This pants-suit, it’s asbestos tonight.”

Former Mitt Romney adviser Kevin Madden - who played the role of ex-New York mayor Rudy Giuliani during rehearsals for the 2011 Republican debates - said: “We just tried to remind Mitt all the time, they are all trying to tackle the guy who has the ball, we are controlling the tone, tempo and trajectory of this race, and we have to use that to our advantage.

“The mantra was, ‘take the high road and speak directly to the voters and appeal to them personally’. If the rest of panel were making it about Mitt Romney and Mitt Romney was making it about the voters, we came out of that as the victor.

“The worst thing you can do is show anger - if you get flustered with a couple of minor league candidates taking shots at you, how can you make the case that you are the best person for the job?”

Republican strategist Rich Galen, said good research on opponents’ past remarks is important. “Nothing shuts down a feisty-but-minor candidate faster than catching them in what we call a flip-flop.”

Candidates must also go into the debate with links in mind to their strong points - so, a modest side-step means a tricky question about the EU can be quickly moved to an answer about fighting Isis. “There is an old rule in US politics: You can ask me any question you want. I can answer any question I want,” Mr Galen said.

Finally there is only one rule for media spin teams: “No matter what happens, the staff of every candidate must dive into the press area after the debate and claim, ‘We won! What a glorious day for the good guys’,” Mr Galen said. “Even if your candidate throws up on his shoes, you claim it as a victory for everyone with a stomach disorder.”

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

Despite years of job growth in Columbia, REDI strives for more

Friday, April 3, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY LIYING QIAN
COLUMBIA — Jobs and economic development are among several issues that candidates for the Columbia City Council have been talking about over the past few weeks of the campaign season.

Their ideas for how to bring jobs to town and promote development that benefits a range of workers in the city vary.

The past five years have seen steady growth in Columbia’s job market. Its annual average unemployment rate dropped from 6.1 percent in 2009 to 3.9 percent in 2014, which is well below the state’s annual average unemployment rate, according to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Bernie Andrews, executive vice president of Regional Economic Development Inc., said many biotechnology companies that came to Columbia last year are major mid- and high-wage job creators.

Nanova Biomaterials, an early stage biotechnology company in Columbia, announced in November that it would expand its operation. The high-tech startup is expected to make a $1.5 million capital investment and create 50 new jobs within the first five years.

BioPharma Services Inc., a Toronto-based clinical research company that does early-stage drug testing and bioequivalence studies, began operations at its Columbia clinic last summer, employing more than 40 people at its local facility.

Northwest Medical Isotopes, a Corvallis, Oregon-based tech startup, announced plans last May to build a $50 million radioisotope production facility at MU’s Discovery Ridge Research Park. It has created 68 jobs. The company expects to break ground on the project this year and begin operations in 2016.

IBM, which opened a new technology service delivery center in Columbia in 2010, had created 606 jobs by the end of 2013. Although it laid off workers in January, Andrews doesn’t anticipate any serious problems.

“I think it’s just a readjustment of their work force, and they will continue to be committed to Columbia. ... It’s just like any other companies,” Andrews said. “They are not in a business to create jobs. They are in a business to make profits. Sometimes they need to cut back a little bit to move forward and grow.”
Manufacturing also plays an essential role in job creation. Savage River Inc., a Los Angeles-based vegan food company, opened a food production plant for its Beyond Meat brand in Columbia in 2012. It expects to invest $5 million in the local economy and employ 60 full-time workers within five years.

REDI President Stacey Button said the group’s main strategies for creating jobs include attracting and relocating companies to the region; working with existing businesses and helping them expand locally; and establishing entrepreneurship programs to help business startups.

"The three strategies should really complement one another," Button said. “It's critical that we grow our own and focus on existing businesses and student entrepreneurs that come from our educational institutions, but it's also necessary to balance that with existing business expansion and new business attraction as well."

**Two business incubators have been established to support local entrepreneurship.** The MU Life Sciences Incubator, a technology business resource center owned by MU and operated by the Missouri Innovation Center, has helped more than 50 entrepreneurs translate their innovations into business entities and created more than 40 jobs since 2009. In September 2012, REDI launched the Downtown Business Incubator, which provides local fledgling businesses with resources and space they need to grow.

"We want to provide a strong network to the folks involved in the incubator," Button said. “The hope is that the entrepreneurs and startups that emerge from the incubator programs will stay and grow in the community and continue to create jobs."

Columbia also has three state-certified “shovel-ready” sites: one on the MU campus (Discovery Ridge Research Park) and two in northeast Columbia (the Sutter and Ewing industrial sites). “Shovel-ready” sites are properties that are fully equipped with infrastructure and utilities so that a company can build its operations in an expedited manner.

The Discovery Ridge Research Park houses ABC Labs and IDEXX RADIL. Andrews said REDI is marketing the other two sites, and he hopes to bring in data centers.
“We actually are marketing both the Sutter site and the Ewing site that have the infrastructure and place to handle a data center,” Andrews said. “A couple of data center projects have been looking at Columbia. It’s part of our plan to continue to market, but this won’t be the only type of industry we focus on.”

A data center is a secure warehouse containing computers and servers for companies that don’t have the storage space to keep such a large amount of information on site. Andrews said Columbia, which has access to talented engineers and information technology scientists, along with a low risk of natural disasters such as tornadoes and earthquakes, is a good place for data centers.

“Data centers don’t hire lots of people, but once they do employ, they are typically well paid,” Andrews said. “From a community standpoint, they are expensive to build and have a lot of expensive equipment, so they generate a lot of tax revenues for the city, county and school district.”

Mayor Bob McDavid also is a fan of extending infrastructure to areas on the fringes of the city to attract and retain jobs and to bring established development into the city. Although it didn’t happen without a fight, the Columbia City Council voted unanimously on March 2 to authorize the sale of $19.42 million in bonds to finance sewer projects. One of those projects will extend the Henderson Branch sanitary sewer line to the Midway area west of Columbia, which includes the firearm and outdoor equipment supplier MidwayUSA, an employer of 405 people. As part of the agreement, MidwayUSA will be annexed into the city.

Midway founder and CEO Larry Potterfield said the project will allow the company to remain at its current location and to continue to grow by 25 to 50 employees per year.

Button said it’s important to “look across the spectrum of the community” and ensure that “the type of work force that’s needed matches the type of companies we are pursuing.”

“It’s a very diverse community. We have different education levels, skill levels and interests. We try to create a variety of jobs for all the residents.”