



**MU News Bureau**

*Daily Clips Packet*

December 15, 2017



## **More than 2,300 MU students receive degrees this weekend, traffic expected to increase**

By ALLY WALLENTA

Generated from News Bureau Press Release: [More than 2,300 graduates to receive degrees from Mizzou](#)

Watch video at: <http://www.komu.com/news/more-than-2-300-mu-students-receive-degrees-this-weekend-traffic-expected-to-increase>

**COLUMBIA – More than 2,300 students will receive degrees from The University of Missouri this weekend, which means heavy traffic will be filling up the city.**

Many of the students are graduating from the Hearnes Center. Columbia's Convention and Visitor Bureau said the Stadium Blvd is expected to get extremely busy, especially between the intersections of Providence and College.

“The area kind of over at Stadium and Providence can kind of see a little bit more backing up just because that's right at those major entry ways to campus so that's how most people know to find their way onto campus,” said The Bureau's Strategic Communications Manager Megan McConachie.

There are also many students graduating from Jesse Auditorium.

McConachie says she recommends that people going to Jesse park in the parking structures nearby or find street parking.

Along with campus, McConachie says she expects downtown to see a lot more traffic than usual as well.

“Because campus is adjacent to the district, the district really gets a lot busier on a graduation weekend, families want to go out for really nice dinner after graduation or a really nice brunch the day after graduation, so there will be a lot of traffic centered around the district and really all over Columbia where there are restaurants,” McConachie said.

Garages are free on Saturdays and Sundays in the district, but not every parking structure is available on campus.

MU Operations Communication Manager Karlan Seville said the Tiger Avenue Parking Structure and Parking Structure 7 are not available for parking because of MU Health Care staff usage.

On Friday, level 3 of Turner is available for visitors. On Saturday, Hitt, University, Virginia, Conley and Turner parking structures can be used for parking.

The University of Missouri Police Department also plays a big role in making sure the city is safe and traffic runs smoothly. To prepare for the weekend, MUPD looks at what colleges are graduating, class sizes and how close the colleges are to one another.

The police department will have most of its officers directing traffic near the Hearnes Center.

MUPD Public Information Officer Brian Weimer said he recommends that people prepare for long travel times. “The biggest thing is to allow yourself extra time because there are several people coming and going to the graduation venues,” Weimer said.

He also said to make sure you follow the traffic flow patterns, signs and police officers. “Traffic flow patterns are used to move large groups of people, but not individual people. The goal is to get many hundreds of people away from the area,” he said.

The graduation ceremonies are as followed:

Friday, Dec. 15:

- Office of Graduate Studies – 1 p.m. in the Hearnes Center
- School of Nursing - 2 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium
- Trulaske College of Business – 4:30 p.m. in the Hearnes Center
- School of Natural Resources – 6:30 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium
- College of Arts and Science – 7:30 p.m. in the Hearnes Center

Saturday, Dec. 16:

- Honors Convocation – 8:30 a.m. in Jesse Auditorium
- College of Engineering – Noon in the Hearnes Center
- College of Human Environmental Sciences/School of Social Work – 1 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium
- College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources – 4 p.m. in the Hearnes Center
- School of Health Professions – 5 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium

Sunday, Dec. 17:

- ROTC Commissioning of Officers – Location and time TBD
- School of Journalism – 1 p.m. in Jesse Auditorium

A Mizzou online commencement will also be held for students who earn their degrees online. Around 200 will graduate from the online program.

According to a MU news release, MU will give out 2,509 degrees this weekend. This includes 1,932 bachelor's degrees, 414 master's degrees, 147 doctorates, four law degrees, 11 education specialist degrees and one medical degree.

With the increase in visitors, McConachie said her biggest suggestion to local residents is to “just to be ready to be patient, and take your time and remember that having visitors here in Columbia is a really great opportunity for our community’s economy, so just a few extra minutes of patience can go along way.”

Shuttle services for the campus end on Friday at 6 p.m. and start back up on Jan. 10.



## Tuition Waivers for Graduate Students Likely to Remain Untaxed

By TYNAN STEWART & COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

### Graduate students at MU can breathe a little easier for now.

The newest version of the Republican tax bill appears to have had the provision that made [graduate tuition waivers taxable income removed](#). Republicans in the House and Senate met Wednesday to reconcile their two separate versions of the tax bill which resulted in the provision's removal.

Jeni Hart, MU's associate vice chancellor for graduate studies, said there was a lot of concern among graduate students over the plan to tax their waivers.

The original House bill “obviously has implications for graduate students in really meaningful and powerful ways,” she said.

There were 2,280 graduate students with a fellowship or assistantship that came with a tuition waiver this semester at MU, according to the Office of Graduate Studies. For students taking a

typical nine-hour course load, this means a waiver of \$3,240 per semester for in-state students and \$8,872 for out-of-state students.

“They would be taxing us on income we don’t actually earn,” said Rachel Owen, director of national affairs for MU’s Graduate Professional Council.

Owen said graduate students said they wouldn’t be able to finish their programs because they would have been unaffordable under the provision.

Drew Amidei, president of the English Graduate Student Association, said he’s still concerned, even though it looks like the taxation of tuition waivers won’t happen this time. He cited what he sees as the wider context of “a long and sustained assault” on public higher education.

“They might not be taking our tuition waivers right now, but it doesn’t mean they won’t be coming with something else,” Amidei said.

# MISSOURIAN

## Sheila Grant, an MU professor, awarded fellowship for impactful work in bioengineering

By JIM FINNEGAN

### **Generated from News Bureau Direct Pitch**

Last week, Dr. Sheila Grant received news that the work she has been doing for most of her adult life was going to be recognized nationally.

“I found out last week by email and oh my gosh, I was so excited,” she said.

**Grant — an associate dean of research in the College of Engineering and a professor of bioengineering in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources at MU — was named in the 2017 class of fellows for the National Academy of Inventors. Dr. Grant was recognized for her work on optical biosensors and biomaterials.**

Grant says she specializes in medical devices, tissue engineering and regenerative medicine.

“In the biomedical field we do research to try to improve the quality of life for people,” she said. “We want to be having a specific application for our research, whether it’s to improve hernia mesh material or whether it’s to help people who suffer from osteoarthritis.”

The National Academy of Inventors, or NAI, is a non-profit organization founded in 2010 “to recognize and encourage inventors with patents issued from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office,” according to its [website](#).

The fellowship is awarded only to academic researchers and inventors who “made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society.”

The 2017 class brings the total number of NAI fellows to 912. Collectively, those fellows hold more than 32,000 issued U.S. patents.

Dr. Grant holds seven U.S. patents and is applying for six more, with two applications in the submission process. Dr. Grant has published over 100 research articles in scientific journals and is the founder of three start-up companies.

The NAI has a “Mizzou Chapter” which comprises eight current or former MU faculty members who have also received the fellowship, including Dr. Grant and MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright.

In a career full of achievements, Grant said that being named an NAI fellow is chief among them.

“It’s always a nice moment when you finally get that Ph.D., but as far as recognition for the work that you do, I would say becoming a National Academy of Inventors fellow is probably the proudest moment of my career,” she said. “Because it’s really about your colleagues and so forth that recognize what you have done in translational work.”

Grant was adamant that being named an NAI fellow is more than just a personal recognition.

“This is not just me-me-me-me,” she said. “All this work that I do is with all my collaborators. It’s not just me on these patents, it’s a collaborative effort by groups of people.”

In particular, Grant mentioned [Shubhra Gangopadhyay](#), an electrical engineering and computer science professor at MU, as someone who was instrumental to her work.

Sherri Helms, the program coordinator at MU’s Office of Economic Development, said that Dr. Grant’s recognition is important both on a personal level and for the university.

“It enhances the visibility of the University in the academic innovation area,” she said. “And it encourages the disclosure of intellectual property.”

There is a possibility that Grant’s fellowship will boost MU’s ranking in the Association of American Universities, comprised of 62 public and private universities with major research institutions.

AAU member universities are assessed by their success in researching, such as securing federal funds, citations in journals, and recognitions like the fellowship Grant just received. Although publicly available data is scarce, MU currently ranks near the bottom of member AAU schools, according to previous Missourian reporting.

“Any time we can help the university and really showcase the wonderful faculty that we have here is great,” Grant said.

Dr. Grant and the rest of the 2017 class of fellows will be inducted during the Seventh Annual NAI Conference on Apr. 5 in Washington D.C. However, Grant is not planning to take a break from her work to soak in the recognition.

“I’m sure I’ll be writing a proposal or something where I’ll go out there, do the ceremony and come right back to work.”

## **T** COLUMBIA DAILY **TRIBUNE**

### **University of Missouri student given summons after bomb scare**

By THE TRIBUNE’S STAFF

**A University of Missouri student was issued a summons in connection with a reported bomb threat Wednesday on a campus bus.**

The University of Missouri Police Department received a call at about 3:20 p.m. from a woman concerned because a man made comments to her about the bus they were on exploding, according to a news release. Police found the bus at a stop south of the Hearnes Center, evacuated it and sent a message through the MU Alert system warning people to stay away from the area. Officers also rerouted traffic around the area, which is just off Stadium Boulevard, MUPD said.

Dante Hopkins, a 20-year-old MU student, called MUPD and said he thought the incident might have been prompted by his comments, which were misunderstood, police said. Officers interviewed Hopkins and released him on a summons for misdemeanor peace disturbance.

MUPD did not specify what Hopkins reportedly said on the bus, and the department said no other details would be released in order to protect the ongoing investigation.



## UPDATE: MUPD reports no explosive device found after bomb threat

By ELIZABETH DUSENBERG

Watch video at: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/update-mupd-reports-no-explosive-device-found-after-bomb-threat/672439270>

**COLUMBIA, Mo. - UPDATE 12/14: MUPD said they got reports of a possible bomb threat when a person contacted the department saying that someone had made comments about a bus they were on exploding.**

The caller told officers the description of the bus and police found it at the Hearnes Center. Police said Dante' Hopkins called officers and said he thought the bomb threat incident may have been a result of comments that he had made, which had lead to a misunderstanding.

Officers said they arrested Hopkins for creating a peace disturbance.

**UPDATE 4:20 pm:** Police report that the investigation is done and no explosive or suspicious device was found.

Officers said the campus is back to operating under normal conditions.

**UPDATE 3:56 pm:** Police said no suspicious or explosive device has been found but police continue to investigate the area.

Officers are continuing to ask residents to stay away from the area.

**UPDATE 3:45 pm:** Police said the area around the Hearnes Center shuttle bus stop has been evacuated.

Traffic is being rerouted and a police K9 is enroute.

**ORIGINAL STORY:** MU police are investigating reports of a bomb threat on Wednesday afternoon

Police said the threat was reported at the Hearnes Center Shuttle Bus Stop.

MUPD is asking students and residents to stay away from the area.

Police are currently investigating the threat.

ABC17 is working to figure out more details about the threat.

## Update: No Bombs Found Near Hearnes Center, MU Student Given Summons

By NOAH McGEE & COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

**No explosives were found Wednesday afternoon on a bus that stopped south of the Hearnes Center, but an MU student has been issued a summons for disturbing the peace.**

The University of Missouri Police Department received a call at 3:20 p.m. from someone concerned about comments she heard about an explosion on the bus they were riding, according to a news release.

The caller provided the department with a description of the bus and its location at the bus stop close to the Hearnes Center.

When MU police arrived, they evacuated the bus and the area and sent the campus community an MU alert message asking people to stay away from the area where the bus was located.

Officers directed traffic away from the area until the department's explosive K-9 officer and K-9 could check the bus for explosives. No explosives were found, according to the release.

After the first MU Alert message was sent, Dante' Hopkins called MUPD and told them he thought the bomb threat may have been as a result of comments he had made. He said it was a misunderstanding.

Officers contacted Hopkins, 20, and he was transported to MUPD where he was interviewed about the incident.

As a result, Hopkins was arrested in connection with a peace disturbance but eventually released from the department on summons.

# MISSOURIAN

## Historical society's new center intended to be '100-year building'

By KYLE LAHUICK

As workers poured concrete into the elevator shaft walls and ironworkers fine-tuned the steel framework of the building's west wing behind her, Chris Hart discussed the project she has overseen since late July.

"This is my home for the next year, year and a half," she said.

**Hart is project manager of the State Historical Society of Missouri's newest building, the Center for Missouri Studies, which will replace the society's space in the basement of MU's Ellis Library. Hart works for the historical society's general contractor, Peoria, Illinois-based River City Construction, which has a local office in Ashland.**

During a recent tour of the construction site, which lies north of Elm Street between Sixth and Seventh streets and opposite Peace Park, Hart talked about the day-to-day construction challenges. The center, she said, is on time for its scheduled completion of March 2019.

Hart and her crew set up shop in late July after an April 19 groundbreaking. Now, as winter approaches, Hart said she and 20 to 25 construction workers are going to brace for the shift in weather and hope for the best as they continue to make headway on the building's rise.

"You know, we're just gonna keep building," Hart said.

The goal, Hart said, is to finish pouring concrete for the 20-foot-deep basement before it gets too cold.

"So then once winter hits, we can work on steel erection, which is less temperature related," Hart said.

In early November, people passing by the site would have seen little construction because it was all below grade, obscured by the chain link fence draped in green that surrounds the property. Now, the steel skeleton of the building's west wing rises high above the fence, almost to the same height as its neighbor, the newest Brookside student apartment building.

"We had a big hole in the ground for a long time, and now we're starting to see (the frame of the building)," Hart said.

The 75,000-square-foot headquarters for the historical society will look vastly different from the Brookside building and other student apartment additions downtown, including the 10-story Rise on 9th, the nearby District Flats, and the other Brookside buildings that dominate the eastern edge of downtown.

A complex, distinctive edifice is what the historical society wanted, project architect Sam Loring said. Loring works for Kansas City-based Gould Evans architecture firm and is a member of the American Institute of Architects.

“The client wanted an iconic building,” Loring said. “They were pretty insistent on that. (Gould Evans) wanted to create something that would speak to the (historical society’s) goals and their missions and reflected who they were.”

Part of that reflection will come in the form of a Missouri limestone facade. The building’s design is intended to replicate Missouri’s geological features, [according to previous Missourian reporting](#).

In fact, many of the materials will originate from Missouri, Hart said. She pointed to the standards laid out in the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, more commonly referred to as LEED. Loring said Gould Evans and the historical society are aiming for LEED Gold status.

“With this project being LEED, recycled and regional materials are a big part,” Hart said. “The energy-efficiency of the building is also a big factor. You know, LED lights, very efficient HVAC system, the roofing, things like that.”

Mary Ellen Lohmann, spokeswoman for the historical society, said the environmental factor is key to the new building.

“We’re building not only for our generation but for future generations of Missourians,” she said. “We want them to be able to interact with their own history and explore what that means, but we also have a responsibility to do what we can for the environment.”

All the LEED prerequisites and credit requirements will push River City to assemble a sturdy complex that’s able to endure the wear and tear of future visitors, exhibits, a conservation lab and other uses for decades.

“This building is designed to be a 100-year building,” Loring said. “So all the structure, cladding, mechanical systems — everything is designed for long-term use.”

Throughout the design and construction, Loring said “thinking sustainable strategies” and “being sensitive to the environment” is important.

Neither Hart nor Loring have worked on the downtown apartment buildings that have more simplistic designs, but they said there are definitely challenges to finishing a structure that architecturally is far more complex.

“Everything is going to be more robust,” Loring said, emphasizing the real stone cladding the building’s exterior will feature and high-end interior materials such as epoxy terrazzo flooring.

The construction, Loring noted, is typically more difficult than “lightweight, wood-framed apartment complexes” because of the extensive coordination and time involved.

Gould Evans and River City consult each other frequently. At a minimum, Loring, Hart and the historical society have weekly conversations to discuss the project’s progress, scheduling questions, issues that arise during the week and any necessary changes.

In her 28-year construction career (a thought that made her chuckle), Hart has never worked on an apartment building like the ones downtown. She’s worked on various types of commercial construction, including the University of Missouri-St. Louis Rec and Wellness Center and the new Fulton State Hospital project with River City Construction.

While giving an overview of the construction site, where Hart helps the project supervisor oversee 15 River City carpenters and laborers and 10 to 15 subcontracted trade workers, she discussed some of the center’s construction challenges.

“It’s a very small site, so there’s not a lot of storage area, which creates some challenges...,” Hart said. “We can’t have all the steel delivered at one time, so we have to break up the construction into sequences.”

The center’s construction is broken into 10 phases. Workers now are focusing on the concrete foundation and shoring up the basement in Sequences 3 through 8 and the three-level steel framework of the west wing, which represents Sequences 1 and 2. Sequences 9 and 10, the center and east wings, will come last.

“Every project has, you know, its own set of challenges,” Hart said. “Building downtown, whether it’s apartments or a building like this, you have a very small area for storage, lay down area for equipment, materials (and) parking.”

Rebar, wooden pallets, stray steel beams, trucks and the River City’s trailer offices all compete for space on the site.

The deep basement of the center, which will house mechanical rooms and storage areas, was a unique challenge. Workers had to chip a lot of rock and pump a lot of water early on. Now, with the steel frames going up, the workers are dealing with the building’s proximity to the Elm Street sidewalk, a lack of repetition in the building’s design, and the architectural angles and curves.

“There is not one straight wall,” Hart said with a chuckle as she scanned the west wing’s steel framework.

“It’s fun doing hard projects. It’s challenging.” Hart said, “but at the end of the day you want to give the customer what they want and produce a product that is quality. It doesn’t matter if it’s a box or if it’s a building like the historical society. It’s kind of the same thing.”

Weather and other similar challenges aren’t unique to the Center for Missouri Studies.

Lohmann said the new building will be a big benefit to the society. Its gallery and storage space will increase by nearly 80 percent and 40 percent, respectively, and the preservation of manuscripts and other materials will be more environmentally friendly. Ellis is heated by steam, which is a difficult condition to work with.

The new building also will be more accessible.

“We’ve vastly outgrown this space, plus the environmental controls,” Lohmann said of the Ellis facility. “We’ve always been a part of Ellis and its history, so it will be a little interesting being apart from that, but we’ll still be able to be close and be an asset on campus.”

Lohmann said the Center for Missouri Studies will give the society a new face in the local community.

“We’re a place where you come once an instructor brings you in,” she said. “We have a lot of researchers that come in on their own, people that come in from all over the country who come for a week at a time to do research. But I think our own community is probably the least served because they don’t know as much about what we have.”

“And, I think, a lot of that is going to change by having better access.”

# the maneater

## “Thrifty budget” reduces overall MU law school debt by \$25,000 since 2014

By STEPHI SMITH

Generated from a News Bureau Press Release: [MU School of Law ‘Thrifty Budget Plan’ leading to 32% reduction in student debt](#)

**The School of Law’s budget plan, which is now available for all law school students as of this fall, has decreased student debt by 21 percent.**

The “thrifty budget” is specific to MU law students, said Jeff Turnbull, coordinator of student financial aid at the law school. The budget includes group and individualized counseling from MU law financial aid officers, such as Turnbull. Students are provided with tips and advice on how to decrease the amount of debt they may graduate with.

“What I like to tell students is that ‘this is not your landing point; this is not where you’re going to stay for the rest of the career,’” Turnbull said. “‘While you’re here, just nickel and dime your way through it and do everything that you can to save money throughout law school.’”

Turnbull said the law school determines the cost of living as a law student at MU through the annual consumer price index. Using this data, the financial aid officers try to decrease that cost as much as possible for students.

For example, Turnbull said the thrifty budget emphasizes the financial benefits that come with having roommates and sharing living expenses.

The financial aid officers at the law school also use survey data from MU students about how they allocate their individual finances. Using this data, Turnbull said the budget then informs students of areas where they can cut back on spending after calculating their total expected debt using scholarships, family support and student savings.

“It directs students to be proactive and to be aware of how they can potentially impact their cost by focusing on the one area they have the most control and that’s in the living expenses,” Turnbull said.

The budget was initially proposed and phased in fall 2014, Turnbull said. Only incoming freshman law students had the opportunity to learn about it while the second- and third-year students kept to the standard budget. Now all students have the option to adhere to the new budget.

Since 2014, the thrifty budget has decreased overall student debt by about 21 percent, Turnbull said. MU law students are graduating with about \$25,000 less debt than they were five years ago, Turnbull said. The average debt in 2012 was \$78,110 and has since dropped to \$53,480. He said that this is mainly due to both the budget plan and an increase in scholarships.

Turnbull adopted the thrifty budget idea from Michigan State University’s law school after meeting with other financial aid advisors from various universities and learning about the benefits the budget offers for students. Turnbull proposed it to the dean of the MU School of Law and it was soon brought to life with help from Michelle Heck, director of admissions and financial aid. The budget is an “opt-out” program, meaning that students are automatically provided with it when they enroll and begin school but can choose to stop working with it at any point. Turnbull said that about 74 percent students maintain the thrifty budget.

Lyrissa Lidsky, dean of the MU School of Law, said she appreciates the thrifty budget because less debt allows students to pursue different career paths that they might be more interested in despite a lower salary.

“The advantages are that students are not left paying off all this debt after they graduate and are free to pursue their passion, whatever that may be,” Lidsky said. “It gives them more of a financial freedom.”

Lidsky said she was “lucky enough” to attend law school on a scholarship and knows the benefits of not having to worry about debt after graduation. Because of this, Lidsky said she was able to pursue teaching at a university, even though she wasn’t paid as much at first.

From here, Lidsky said she would like the thrifty budget idea to expand to more law schools across the country as well as other schools within MU.

“I would love to see more law schools adopt this budget,” Lidsky said. “I think all higher education institutions can use it. Success hinges on professional counseling and the help they provide to students.”

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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## [Vote to cut \\$31 milion from St. Louis County budget more about control than cutting](#)

By Jeremy Kohler

**CLAYTON** • A St. Louis County Council vote this week advancing a plan to slice \$31 million from next year’s county budget may have looked at first like the council tightening its belt.

But it was more about the council tightening control of how the county spends money. And if the 6-1 vote holds up for final approval Tuesday, it will be a veto-proof move to wrest power from County Executive Steve Stenger and individual department heads, who have enjoyed discretion to overbudget for programs and roll over unspent money year to year.

Take the county’s road and bridge fund. It began this year with a balance of \$30 million. It got nearly \$66 million in appropriations this year, and the county spent \$53 million. It’s finishing the year with about \$43 million on hand.

Stenger’s spending plan called for putting \$59 million in the fund for next year.

But the council slashed that figure to \$53 million, the amount spent this year. It’s a \$6 million cut from Stenger’s 2018 budget.

“It’s a budget freeze,” said council member Mark Harder, a Republican from Ballwin. “We’re giving the county government exactly what they spent in 2017. You can keep going, people will stay employed, and then every six months we will look at it really tough and see where we stand.”

The effect would be felt at the end of next year. County departments would have less money left over at the end of the year, but the county would have more in the bank.

Stenger’s 2018 budget proposal had included a \$6 million deficit — the fourth straight year of dipping into cash reserves — and a warning that available cash would run out by 2019 without a tax increase or cuts to services. The council’s budget has no deficit.

Although Stenger has insisted the county’s fiscal situation is not that bad, the dwindling reserves upset members of the council. In comments Tuesday, they said they believed that keeping money in the bank was prudent.

If department heads could not live with the same funding level as the previous year, Harder said, they could appear before the council and ask for more. But they would have to ask.

“In our opinion, we’re trying to slow things down,” Harder said. “They keep telling us that we are heading toward Armageddon. Once that reserve money is spent it’s hard to fill back up, and then we are looking at big cuts in the future.”

Robert Cropf, professor of political science and public policy at St. Louis University, said the council’s power move was likely to deepen the divide between the county executive and council.

“Stenger is right by saying that if you look at revenues and expenditures, the county is going OK, but the council also makes a good point that the rainy day fund is there for a reason and if you keep spending it down, it’s not going to be there.

“The council is very aggressively saying to the executive, ‘Look, you don’t have the final say in this. We have enough votes on the council, 6-1, to put our foot down and override anything you give back to us.’ I think that’s a pretty strong statement.”

Harder likened the Stenger budget to a parent giving a child \$125 to go to an amusement park that costs \$100 and counting on the child to come home with \$25.

“If we give him \$125, he’ll spend the whole \$125,” he said.

What does Stenger think? He hasn’t said. He did not attend Tuesday’s council vote slashing his budget plan. He has been in closed door meetings with advisers all week. A spokesman, Cordell Whitlock, said Stenger would not have anything to say until after the council vote on Tuesday.

There could be a downside to taking spending discretion away from county departments, one expert said.

**Judith Stallmann, a professor at the Truman School of Public Affairs at the University of Missouri who studies local and state public finance, offered a different riff on parenting.**

If a parent tells a child he can't get his allowance until he spends last week's allowance, it creates an incentive for him to always spend all of it by the end of the week, she said.

"So what you get if you make them return everything to the general fund is you will get a lot of equipment purchases put off until the end of the year. You don't create an incentive to save or think about longer-term investments."

## THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

### Don't make the 'Merry Christmas' - 'Happy Holidays' debate all about you

By S.I. STRONG

Now that we're deep into December, the "Merry Christmas"- "Happy Holidays" debate is heating up, right on schedule. There are lots of perspectives on this issue, ranging from the religious to the political to the historical, and we are doubtless seeing all of them raised during the holiday season. There is, however, one approach that is often overlooked: the grammatical.

To those who are still haunted by nightmares about commas, semicolons and the difference between "lay" and "lie," I apologize. Flashbacks to middle school are never fun. Fortunately, the analysis here is not too complicated.

In fact, a grammatical analysis is pretty simple and hinges on the purpose of the phrases "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Holidays." When we utter these terms, how are they being used?

Several alternatives exist. First, "Merry Christmas" can be used as a greeting, similar to "Hello," "How are you?" or "What's up?" In those situations, we are focusing on the person to whom we are speaking, not on ourselves. When meeting a friend or even a stranger on the street, we don't immediately say, "I'm great," or "I have a hangnail that really hurts." Instead, we express an interest in the other person.

"Merry Christmas" can also be used as a farewell, similar to "See you later," "Have a nice day," or "Take care." Again, the emphasis is on the other person, not on ourselves. We're wishing the other person well or indicating a desire to see him or her again soon. The one exception is the phrase, "I'll call you" at the end of a bad date. In that context, "I'll call you" is of course code for "I never want to see or hear from you again." Interestingly, those who use "I'll call you" in that way often say that they're being kind, although they're actually being somewhat insensitive and self-absorbed.

Finally, “Merry Christmas” can appear on greeting cards. Again, however, the focus of such messages is traditionally on the recipient, not the sender. When we send birthday cards, we send them on the other person’s birthday, not our own. When we send sympathy cards, we send them because the other person has suffered a loss, not because we have. In short, it’s not all about us.

This analysis suggests that holiday greetings are meant to focus on others, not on ourselves. If we know the other person celebrates Christmas, then saying “Merry Christmas” makes perfect sense. If, however, we don’t know whether that person celebrates Christmas — and it is pretty much impossible to tell just by looking at someone unless they’re wearing an ugly Christmas sweater at the time — then “Happy Holidays” is better. That phrase not only covers those who celebrate Christmas, it also covers those who celebrate something else. By saying “Happy Holidays,” you have successfully wished the other person joy on their particular event, just as you would wish them well on their birthday, not yours.

Those who argue that we need to “bring Christmas back” (back from where is not clear — Poughkeepsie, perhaps?) often justify the broad, indiscriminate use of “Merry Christmas” by saying that “I’m sending a message about what I think is really important.” However, it’s important to ask what precisely that message is. Under the grammatical analysis, the message seems to be that, contrary to the traditional norms of polite society, I, the speaker, am more important than you, the listener. Is that really what Christmas is all about?

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**FORTUNE**



**REUTERS**

## **Missouri Has Issued Fines for Misuse of Chemicals that Damaged Crops**

Missouri has issued its first fines over the misuse of a farm chemical in 2016 that went on to be linked in different formulations to widespread U.S. crop damage this year, the state said on Thursday.

Authorities fined eight people a total of \$145,125 for improperly spraying the chemical known as dicamba, used to kill weeds, in what Missouri called “the first wave of civil penalties issued to applicators,” according to a statement.

The delay between sprayings last year and the state’s action shows how a long process of investigating many complaints about dicamba use is straining resources in farm states.

The United States has faced an agricultural crisis this year caused by the new formulations of dicamba-based herbicides, which farmers and weed experts say have harmed crops that cannot resist the chemical because it evaporates and drifts away from where it is applied.

Monsanto ([MON, -0.19%](#)) and BASF say the herbicides are safe when used properly.

Last year, farmers sprayed dicamba illegally in states including Missouri, Tennessee and Arkansas on soybeans that Monsanto Co engineered to resist new versions of the chemical, according to regulators and weed scientists.

Monsanto sold the GMO soybean seeds for planting in spring 2016 before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the autumn approved use of the new versions of the herbicides, made by Monsanto and BASF SE. The herbicides are designed to be sprayed on the soybeans during the summer growing season and not drift away.

That delay left farmers who bought the seeds with no matching herbicide for use in summer 2016 and three bad alternatives: hire workers to pull weeds, use a less-effective herbicide called glyphosate, or illegally spray an older version of dicamba at the risk of damage to nearby farms.

A resulting rash of illegal spraying that year damaged 42,000 acres of crops in Missouri, among the hardest hit areas, as well as swaths of crops in nine other states, according to an August 2016 advisory from the EPA.

Monsanto, which is being acquired by Bayer AG for \$63.5 billion, has blamed farmers for the illegal spraying in 2016. The company has said it could not have foreseen that the delayed approval of the new dicamba herbicides would result in damaged crops.

**This year, damage related to dicamba herbicides covered 3.6 million acres in 25 states, according to University of Missouri data. Several states have imposed new restrictions on dicamba use for 2018 to avoid a repeat of the damage.**