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COLUMBIA DAILY
TRIBUNE



Photo courtesy of Zack Luye

By

Last night's announcement that the United States had killed Osama bin Laden sparked a huge rally on Richmond Avenue in Greektown, where hundreds of students gathered to celebrate.

Old Glory was everywhere as jubilant students chanted "USA! USA!" The attendees made sure there would be plenty of evidence of the celebration — power lines were covered in toilet paper, and cans and bottles littered the street.

As the rally began to wind down, some attendees began smashing bottles.

University of Missouri police officers blocked off the street with squad cars to prevent traffic from passing through, and some officers stood at the perimeter of the celebration but for the most part kept their distance.

Capt. Brian Weimer of the University of Missouri Police Department said officers were providing a watchful eye for the rally in case things got out of hand. But, he said, nothing occurred there that warranted an arrest.

“Our concern was the safety of the people who were there,” Weimer said.

Many of those in attendance were celebrating the death of America’s nemesis with the help of alcohol, but some came just to be part of the experience.

MU student Eric Hayes had a 9 a.m. class this morning, but around 2 a.m. he was watching the carnage from the sidelines. He said he liked to see so many “patriotic and happy” and called bin Laden’s death the “first step in a big plan.”

“It marks the beginning of change and justice,” Hayes said.

Student Brian Eike was heading away from the rally sometime before 2 a.m. He also said he had a 9 a.m. class — with an exam waiting for him there. But, considering the occasion, a late night seemed to be far from his mind.

“America comes first,” he said.

Jannik Blair, an MU freshman who said he is from a town near Melbourne, Australia, came to the scene with an Australian flag tied around his neck. He said bin Laden’s death might not be as important for Australians as it is for Americans, but he wanted to see the celebration.

“We wanted to experience what it was like from the American point of view,” Blair said.

He also said he has friends and relatives who serve in Australia’s military, which has provided support for U.S. military operations in Afghanistan.

The University of Missouri Interfraternity Council helped clean up the area this morning.

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mizzou, Webster students celebrate with party, U.S. flags

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Monday, May 2, 2011 2:04 pm

News of Osama Bin Laden's death kept students out late at two Missouri campuses.

The largest celebration took place at the University of Missouri-Columbia's Greentown, where reports suggest 1,000 or more students gathered for a spontaneous street party shortly after the news was announced Sunday evening.

Among those who showed up for party was Kristen Wright, a sophomore from Columbia, who heard about it through the Facebook social networking site. Wright said she arrived to find a section of Richmond Avenue blocked off by police cars. Along the street, students were wrapping themselves in American flags, dancing with sparklers, spraying each other with champagne and flinging industrial-size rolls of toilet paper everywhere.

She and her boyfriend stayed long enough to join in the group's singing of the Star-Spangled Banner, before leaving the still-going-strong party around 1 a.m.

"It's still a mess," Wright said. "We drove down there this morning. There was toilet paper everywhere."

Webster University celebrated in a more subdued, though no less patriotic, manner.

It was around 1 a.m. that Tyler Holman, a senior from Jackson, was wrapping up a study session at the library when he was struck by an idea.

Using social networking, texting and phones, Holman quickly pulled together a group of a dozen other night owls to get a head start on what's become a campus tradition in recent years.

Several years ago, the College Republicans purchased 3,000 small U.S. flags for an annual tribute to the victims of the 9/11 attacks. September came early this year.

The group spent about two and a half hours planting the flags on and around campus.

"Then we all went back to studying," said Holman, who had a final exam in comparative politics on Monday morning.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

Greektown erupts in wake of bin Laden death announcement

No arrests and one report of vandalism were recorded Sunday night and Monday morning.

By Allison Prang and Sally French

Published May 2, 2011

An array of red, white and blue streamers, dozens of American flags and hours of "U.S.A." chants swept across campus following President Barack Obama's announcement of the death of Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Students immediately took the streets, particularly in Greektown, following Obama's national address explaining the situation. Students raced from across campus to join in the impromptu celebration that congregated on Richmond Avenue between Gamma Phi Beta and Alpha Delta Pi's houses.

"I'm shocked," freshman Jana Lynch said. "It feels like people dropped everything to come and find a car to hop in."

Alphi Chi Omega house mother, Marilyn Rose Thudium, said after she heard the news and saw the Tri-Delta sorority sisters running outside, she took to the streets herself.

"I've never seen anything like this," Thudium said.

Thudium, a long-time resident of Brookfield, Mo., said this celebration surpassed what she saw following the end of World War II.

"I couldn't miss it," she said of the Greektown celebration.

The MU Police Department showed up shortly after the parade started and took to blocking off ends of Richmond Avenue. The crowd continued to grow as many students jumped into cars with American flags in hand. Songs like "Party in the U.S.A.," "American Soldier," "We Like to Party" and "I Gotta Feeling," provided the soundtrack to the night.

Some students spent the night draped in American, Army and Air Force flags. Empty boxes of patriotic popsicles littered the streets following the movement of the crowd.

Freshman Brittany Dick said she thought the Greektown celebration showed that students care more about the issues than people assume.

"We do care about the issues," she said. "Our generation gets a bad rap for not caring about these sorts of things, but this shows that we do."

Night shift officers from both MUPD and the Columbia Police Department were dispatched to the area to control the crowds. No arrests were made and only one report of vandalism was filed that occurred outside of the Alpha Delta Pi.

"Our officers were on patrol," MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said. "We simply blocked off the street to provide safety. There were no arrests made and no one was injured."

Columbia's city ordinances prohibit exhibitions which block the street and interfere with traffic, but CPD decided to shift their focus to directing traffic elsewhere, CPD spokeswoman Jill Wieneke said.

"The night shift officers decided the best thing to do would be to block the street off," she said. "It was more of a celebration than a riot. Because of that, they decided to just kind of observe it."

Wieneke said that while alcohol was likely present, police chose to focus on crowd control rather than issuing open container violations.

"Whenever we deal with any kind of large crowd situation, something we look at is if we are going to cause more of a problem when we are choosing to worry about an open container ticket when in reality that's a small, minor thing," she said.



MUPD says attempted sexual assault didn't happen

Investigators believe an attempted sexual assault reported to University of Missouri police early Friday did not happen.

Additional interviews with the victim and others have led investigators to believe an incident never happened in the parking lot of Campus Lodge Apartments, 2900 Old 63 S., as was reported by the supposed victim, said Capt. Brian Weimer of campus police.

The victim will not be arrested for falsifying a report.

"We don't know why she would make it up," he said. "We are just trying to make sure she gets the help she needs."

MU police on Friday informed the public of the alleged incident through a news release. The victim alleged the 1:35 a.m. incident happened when she went to her vehicle to retrieve an item. The victim told investigators a man wearing a hooded sweatshirt that covered his face grabbed her, spun her around and attempted to place his hand down her pants. She said she did not see if he was alone, what direction he fled or if he fled on foot or in a vehicle.

None of the victim's property was stolen. She told police the man was about 5 feet 2 inches tall.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Campus Lodge assault did not occur

By Alahandra Jones

May 2, 2011 | 6:25 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – The assault reported on Friday in the parking lot of Campus Lodge Apartments did not occur, according to a MU Police news release.

The woman said she was assaulted around 1:35 a.m. in the Campus Lodge Apartments parking lot by an unknown man while walking to her car, according to a previous Missourian article. The woman told police the man was about 5 feet 2 inches to 5 feet 4 inches tall and was wearing a hoodie that covered his entire face.

Through additional interviews and the reports of others, MU police concluded there was no incident, MU Police Department Capt. Brian Weimer said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

5,319 students to graduate from MU this spring

By Michael Davis

May 2, 2011 | 6:21 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – MU's colleges and professional schools will confer degrees to 5,319 students on graduation weekend, May 13-15.

The weekend commencements will kick off at 1 p.m. Friday with a Trulaske College of Business graduation and end at 2:30 p.m. Sunday with a ceremonies for graduates in the College of Engineering.

The Honors Ceremony this year may offer the most widely known speaker of all 16 ceremonies. Grammy-winning singer and songwriter Sheryl Crow will deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary degree. Crow graduated from MU in 1984.

Gov. Jay Nixon will be the keynote speaker at the College of Arts and Science ceremony at 7:30 p.m. Saturday May 14 in Hearnes Center. Nixon earned both his undergraduate and law degrees from MU.

Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster is the speaker at the College of Law's commencement at 1:30 p.m. Sunday May 15.

Sen. Claire McCaskill and Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer have both been invited to speak. McCaskill will be at the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources graduation and Luetkemeyer at the College of Engineering ceremonies.

For more information on the 2011 Spring Commencement, visit [MU's commencement website](#).

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Wentzville clinic will treat pets with cancer

By Raymond Castile > rcastile@yourjournal.com | Posted: Monday, May 2, 2011 5:31 pm

A cancer care clinic for dogs and cats is expected to draw pet owners from across the St. Louis area when it opens next month in Wentzville.

Mizzou Animal Cancer Care is scheduled to open in early June at 1092 Wentzville Parkway. The University of Missouri purchased the building last October. It used to house the Missouri Cancer Care oncology office.

The University of Missouri-Columbia College of Veterinary Medicine will operate the new clinic, the first in the St. Louis area to offer radiation therapy for dogs and cats.

Previously, St. Louis area pet owners had to drive to the college's Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital in Columbia to obtain radiation treatment for their animals.

Besides radiation therapy, the Wentzville clinic will offer diagnostic and treatment options such as computed tomography and clinical trials.

Veterinarian George Buckaloo is leaving his 35-year practice in Independence, Mo., to manage the Wentzville clinic. Buckaloo has spent the last several weeks commuting between Independence and Wentzville, working with staff to prepare the clinic for opening.

The Columbia location drew patients from as far away as Memphis, Buckaloo said. The Wentzville location should be more convenient for pet owners in southeastern Missouri, he said.

"This is an effort to bring therapy to pets that would otherwise not be able to receive it," Buckaloo said.

Radiation therapy can require daily treatment for four or five weeks, Buckaloo said. Pet owners had the choice of driving round trip from the St. Louis area to Columbia every day, or leaving their pet in Columbia for a month. Faced with two difficult options, some pet owners chose to skip care, Buckaloo said.

The Wentzville clinic will make it possible for local pet owners to conveniently drop off their animals in the morning and pick them up in the afternoon, he said.

Buckaloo said the college chose the Wentzville location because the 9,579-square-foot building is uniquely suited to meet the clinic's technical requirements. Because it previously housed a human cancer care clinic, it already had the vault room necessary to house the linear accelerator for radiation treatment.

Radiation treatment offers "the same hope and care" for animals as for humans, Buckaloo said. Chemotherapy also exists for pets, but the Wentzville site will focus on radiation, he said. Other specialists in St. Louis already offer chemotherapy for pets, he said. The Wentzville clinic will not compete with them, but could incorporate chemotherapy in some clinical trials, he said.

Before coming to Mizzou Animal Cancer Care, pet owners will need a referral from their regular veterinarian. Oncologists will perform intake exams and prescribe the treatment protocol. Veterinarians from the University of Missouri-Columbia will constantly monitor treatment, Buckaloo said.



The Cost of Living Near Nuclear Power

By Jay MacDonald

Published May 02, 2011 | Bankrate.com

Is it safe to live near a nuclear plant? What are the dangers? How close is too close? Can you somehow make your home "nuke-proof?" Will you need special insurance? And what might a plant accident do to your home's value?

These are top-of-mind questions for many homeowners who either live in a nuclear neighborhood or are thinking of buying or building near one of America's 104 nuclear reactors.

The March 11 explosions and radiation leaks at Japan's Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear facility, like the 1986 Chernobyl and 1979 Three Mile Island accidents before them, introduced a whole new generation of homeowners to the complexities of living with nuclear neighbors.

We put these questions and more to a trio of experts: William Miller, professor of nuclear engineering at the University of Missouri's Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute; Tristan Roberts, editorial director of BuildingGreen.com; and Alexandra "Sascha" von Meier, professor of environmental studies and planning at Sonoma State University.

Judging by their strong responses, this hot topic isn't likely to cool down anytime soon.

Financial Upside: Better Standard of Living

Let's start with the obvious question: Is it safe to live near a nuclear plant?

"Absolutely; study after study has shown this," says Miller. "The bizarre fact is, cancer rates and risks in general are *lower* around plants. That has nothing to do with the plant itself, but instead with the higher standard of living of the people who live and work there. They have good-paying jobs, they take care of themselves, they have the money to pay for medical care."

Von Meier begs to differ. "(Nuclear power) is obviously very dangerous, very susceptible to mistakes, and I don't believe it's necessary because I am more optimistic that renewable resources can supply a very, very high percentage of our needs."

But von Meier admits her concerns have as much to do with who's operating the plant as it does with nuclear power itself.

"I wouldn't buy a house next to a random reactor because I don't know the training and the culture of the people who operate it, which is not generally accessible," she says. "I think this issue of transparency has been a major problem."

Potential Health Costs

A nuclear accident nearby poses two main health threats: direct radiation from the damaged reactor and ingestion, typically by breathing, of a radioactive isotope such as iodine-131 or cesium-137 that has become airborne from an explosion.

Ingestion is the greater health threat because of its potential to concentrate radiation within the body. Iodine-131 typically leads to cancer of the thyroid, especially in children. Cesium-137 can contribute to a wide variety of cancers.

Direct radiation, by contrast, dissipates rapidly the farther away you are from the source. "Distance is obviously a very large player here, as is the direction of the wind," says Miller.

So how close is too close?

"A 10-mile or so radius is more than sufficient," Miller says. "There is always the statistical chance of cancer in the future, but in the Japanese situation, with the doses we've seen, even the workers at the plant might have a one-half (percent) to 1% increased cancer risk over their lifetimes. A mile away, that radiation level is way, way down by comparison."

Extra Work to Protect Home

Here's the 411 on disaster-proofing your home:

Despite a plethora of products that purport to block radiation, including metallic paints and lead-lined drywall, direct radiation will blow right through them just as it does through the pressurized metal cabins of commercial aircraft.

You can, however, inexpensively block 95% of the more dangerous airborne particles by using plastic sheeting and duct tape to create airtight barriers over all door, window and chimney openings, according to ABC's Richard Besser.

What you really need is a strategy to make your home "passively survivable" for an extended stay inside your makeshift oversized "Glad bag."

Roberts offers these suggestions:

- Photovoltaic solar panels: Two panels may be enough to power your gas furnace, refrigerator, water pump or laptop indefinitely.
- Rainwater harvesting: Roof runoff stored in a closed rain barrel or buried cistern comes in handy when the town water is shut off or contaminated.
- Orientation: When building in warm climates, orient your home on an east-west axis with windows on northern and southern exposures to reduce sun exposure. In colder climates, use a north-south axis with windows facing south for solar heat gain.

Do You Have to Get Nuclear Insurance?

You won't find nuclear coverage in your standard homeowners insurance policy. In fact, it specifically excludes nuclear hazard liability to avoid sharing this largely uncharted risk.

But the main reason you can't purchase nuclear insurance is Americans already have it, thanks to a nuclear industry contingency fund mandated by Congress in 1957.

In the same year that President Dwight Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" program launched the nation's first nuclear plant at Shippingport, Pa., Congress enacted the Price-Anderson Act. It requires all nuclear plant operators to maintain an insurance fund, currently at about \$12.9 billion, to pay liability claims for personal injury, sickness, disease and death, property damage and loss, and living expenses for displaced victims resulting from a commercial nuclear plant accident.

To date, that fund has paid out \$71 million in claims resulting from the 1979 accident at Three Mile Island.

"The nuclear program really completely hinges on many billions of dollars of federal money being spent to shore it up," says von Meier. "It is not viable in the private sector alone, starting with liability insurance: you can't get it, we have to underwrite it as a society."

Are Nuclear Plants a Buyer Turnoff?

The Atomic Energy Commission once envisioned that America would have 1,000 nuclear reactors online by 2000. Public protests and safety concerns following Three Mile Island trimmed those hopes dramatically. Today, America boasts 104 reactors at 64 commercial nuclear facilities, some near major cities such as Boston, Los Angeles and New York City.

Do good nukes make good neighbors? It seems so, judging by the 2010 U.S. Census, which found that the number of residents living within 10 miles of a nuclear plant increased by 17% over the last decade. If you expand the radius to 50 miles, one in three Americans (116 million) now lives within the nuclear neighborhood.

Most plants are located on bodies of water away from large populations, two natural draws for many homebuyers.

Miller says it's ironic that suburban sprawl is closing in on America's once-remote nuclear plants.

"Ours are remotely sited; some of us in the industry think maybe to excess," he says. "In Europe, some plants are located fairly near towns where (nuclear) waste heat is actually used for heating and industrial purposes."

Then again, nuclear housing markets are always just one plant accident away from a meltdown.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1935

Gwynn Hall next on Campus Facilities' renovations list

A metabolic kitchen will be added to the building.

By Mengti Xu

Published May 3, 2011

After the renovations of Switzler and Tate halls, Gwynn Hall is the next target in the deferred campus renovations project.

According to the Campus Master Plan Update, "Plans to renovate Gwynn Hall for the College of Human and Environmental Sciences are in the beginning stages. Construction is slated to begin in summer 2013."

"The university administration came to us and informed us that it would cost more to repair the building than to completely renovate it," College of Human Environmental Sciences Dean Stephen Jorgensen said.

Jorgensen said the building was falling apart inside. Among the many problems are the electrical circuits, which could potentially pose a fire hazard in the building.

"It gets mold in the downstairs area, the roof leaks and we get water in basement," Jorgensen said.

The renovation is expected to last about 15 to 16 months. The building will be closed during the renovation, and those currently working inside are unsure of where they will be relocated.

"We don't know where we will be placed during the construction phase," Jorgensen said.

According to the Campus Master Plan Update, the nearly \$9 million project is campus funded and is similar to the Tate Hall renovation, as interior floors remain but infrastructure and life safety systems will be replaced.

Plans for the renovation aren't exactly clear, Jorgensen said. The committee responsible for planning the renovation is still discussing what will be added into the new hall.

Jorgensen said one thing they know will be included in the renovation is a metabolic kitchen, called the Missouri University Nutritional Center for Health. The kitchen, or MUNCH as

Jorgensen referred to it, will provide an opportunity for them to conduct research in the human nutrition program. Previously, they haven't had a place to perform these studies.

"People who participate in these studies might be participating in research geared toward improving health, reducing cholesterol and reducing obesity," Jorgensen said. "Since our child development lab is here, we are hoping there will be interaction with the children in the metabolic kitchen as well, maybe resulting in improving their eating habits."

The new building will look nicer with new carpeting, windows and ceilings. It will accommodate more modernized classrooms and meeting spaces and more efficient conference rooms, Jorgensen said.

He said the renovations will add a new elevator, because the old elevator is unreliable. A second stairway will be installed to meet building codes for fires and emergencies.

It is interesting that the offices in the new building are going to be smaller, Jorgensen said.

"For example, my office is now 300 square feet, and my new office will be 200 square feet," Jorgensen said.

Jorgensen said he believes it will be more efficient.

Because the UM System received less state funding in recent years, Campus Facilities spokeswoman Karlan Seville previously told The Maneater that without enough state funding, they are working with what they have.

"We could definitely improve the learning environment to bring it up to today's standards," Seville said in the article.

To cover the nearly \$9 million estimated cost of the renovation, about \$8 to \$8.5 million will come from the campus and the rest will come from the College of Human Environmental Sciences, Jorgensen said.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Reward offered in case of missing Mizzou student

By Susan Weich | sweich@post-dispatch.com | Posted: Tuesday, May 3, 2011 12:00 am

The family of a missing University of Missouri-Columbia student has offered a \$3,000 reward for information leading to his safe return. Nicholas Michael Coppola, 24, of Weldon Spring, has not been seen since Dec. 12, the day Foristell authorities first noticed his abandoned 1998 Subaru Legacy on Interstate 70, just west of the Foristell exit.

Coppola apparently tried unsuccessfully to get help from a nearby resident before he walked to Wright City, where he sought shelter from the cold by trying to break into a home. Authorities arrested him for trespassing but released him later that day after the homeowner declined to press charges. Anyone with information about Coppola is asked to call Foristell Police Chief Doug Johnson at 636-463-2123, ext. 227.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MUMFORD SINCE 1935

AEPi Rock-A-Thon raises more than \$80,000

The event expanded to include a benefit concert this year.

By Kelly Olcjenik

Published May 3, 2011

Alpha Epsilon Pi raised a total of \$80,378.09 at its biannual Rock-A-Thon, making the fraternity the top Greek Life philanthropy in the United States.

According to the Rock-A-Thon news release, the event is a philanthropic effort coordinated by the men of Alpha Epsilon Pi benefiting the American Cancer Society.

“Basically a brother from the fraternity sits in a rocking chair on a stage in the corner of Ninth and Broadway for 63 straight hours, while volunteers and members of the frat solicit donations around the states of Missouri by canning on street corners and in front of grocery stores.” Rock-A-Thon event planner Lee Zucker said.

According to the release, fraternity members solicited donations during the event by canning, or collecting money in cans, in Kansas City and St. Louis for the first time in the event’s history.

“I’ve been planning this event for over a year,” Zucker said. “We have about 15 sponsors, and it takes a lot of time to get those sponsors. Every place that we can has to be approved by the business that we are canning in front of or by the city of Columbia. Getting the proper licenses and getting canning approval takes a really long time and a lot of manpower.”

Zucker said a benefit concert was also new to the Rock-A-Thon this year.

“This year we did a benefit concert to kick off the event,” he said. “It was the first benefit concert that happened on Wednesday. We raised money through ticket sales for that, and then we had the actual 63-hour event on Ninth Street and Broadway.”

This year, MU senior and Alpha Epsilon Pi member Lenny Goldman was the event’s sole rocker.

According to the release, the rocker is required to sit in a rocking chair for 63 consecutive hours while volunteers solicit support and donations.

In order to become the event rocker for the fraternity, there is an election. A total of five fraternity members ran for rocker, Goldman said.

“It was an amazing experience,” Goldman said. “It was definitely unlike anything I’ve ever done before.”

Goldman said he was happy to represent his fraternity in promoting a good cause, but the amount of money raised made the event worth it.

“It was the best feeling when I found out we raised that much money, to see everyone come together and work so hard is out of the normal for a group of fraternity guys,” he said. “It just shows what amazing work a group of motivated guys can do.”

Zucker also agreed the money the event raised was a direct result of hard work and a generous community.

“\$80,000 doesn’t just appear just because we have 100 guys in our fraternity,” he said. “\$80,000 appears because the generous people all around this community donated their money for this great cause.”



REUTERS

The Economics of Car Sharing Still Unclear to Rental Car Giant

Mon, May 2 2011

While car sharing company Zipcar had a smash hit debut on the Nasdaq last month, how big of a market car sharing will become is still unclear — particularly to rental giant Enterprise. Enterprise Holding Chief Strategy Officer and EVP Greg Stubblefield told me in an interview that car sharing (or the automated local car rental market, as Stubblefield prefers to call it) is “in the early, early stages,” and it’s still unclear if it will become more than a niche market.

Right now, car sharing services like those from Zipcar and City Car Share tend to offer members the ability to rent cars in 15 minute intervals, and cars are parked around urban areas, can be unlocked using a key fob, and can be reserved on the web or a cell phone. In addition, car sharing services often include fuel in the service fee. In contrast, more traditional car rental businesses tend to rent cars through actual stores, mostly rent cars only during business hours, and most of the time, fuel isn’t included in the price.

Stubblefield told me he sees car sharing as an extension of what Enterprise is already doing: offering cars as a service to people who want them. But Enterprise has also been exploring the car sharing market with its own branded car sharing service WeCar, which it has launched in select locations including in Mountain View, Calif.; Nashville, Tenn.; and universities like Washington University, University of Missouri, and Tulane University.

However, Enterprise wouldn’t tell me how many cars were being shared in its WeCar service or how much money the division was making. That would lead me to guess that it’s a pretty small number in terms of both cars and revenues.

Overall, car sharing is still a tiny market compared to the car rental market. Stubblefield said out of the 1.6 million cars that make up the car rental market in the U.S., automated car sharing makes up around “one-half of one percent.” Enterprise itself has 850,689 cars in its rental fleet, while Zipcar had 8,541 cars in its fleet as of September 2010.

The economics of car sharing haven’t yet proven to be profitable, even for leader Zipcar. For the year ended December 31, 2010, Zipcar generated revenue of \$186.10 million, with a net loss of \$14.12 million. As of December 31, 2010, Zipcar had an accumulated deficit of \$65.4 million, and in the company’s risk factors in its S1, it says, “We expect to incur a net loss in 2011. We do not know if our business operations will become profitable or if we will continue to incur net losses in 2012 and beyond.”

There’s the concept of car sharing and then the economic viability of car sharing, Stubblefield said:

There's a whole litany of things that are associated with a vehicle that have to be played out from an economic viability point of view. There's an asset that is fairly expensive that has to be paid for and utilized in a certain way. Is there an economic model that will sustain this [car sharing]? Or will it be a niche business that is in certain areas or for a non-profit?

It's still too early to tell, said Stubblefield. In particular, car sharing based around having the company cover the cost of fuel is difficult, because the price of fuel has gone dramatic up in recent months, Stubblefield pointed out.

Another issue is whether or not the Zipcar model will work in many more cities. An investor who shorted the stock told Barrons in an article this weekend: "I think they're going to rapidly run out of cities where this works."

What's more clear is that the rental car business is changing to become more automated and more distributed. Enterprise says its weekend local car rental business in cities like San Francisco — where a sizable portion of the population don't own cars — is a very important business for them, and Enterprise is also incorporating more automated services.