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## The cost of competing; MU would rank near bottom of SEC budgets

By David Briggs

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**The Missouri athletic department's upcoming \$160 million capital campaign was planned long before the university flirted with a potential move to the Southeastern Conference.**

But the timing is appropriate.

Leaving the Big 12 for the SEC would transport Missouri into a new economic world, where the arms race for the best facilities, stadiums and coaches is unrivaled nationally.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Education, Missouri's \$53.2 million athletics budget in 2010 would rank 11th in a 14-team SEC — ahead of Mississippi, Mississippi State and Vanderbilt. Texas A&M, which is third in the Big 12 behind Texas (\$114 million) and Oklahoma (\$88.5 million), would be 10th in the SEC at \$69.2 million.

Missouri's football team would be in the bottom half of the SEC in spending, stadium size and the salaries of top assistant coaches.

"You're closer to a have-not than you are to a have in the SEC, where in the Big 12 you're closer to the top than you are to the bottom of the batch," said Bruce Feldman, a national college football writer for CBS Sports.

Missouri would hardly be starting from scratch financially. Football Coach Gary Pinkel is the nation's 11th-highest paid coach with an annual salary of \$2.55 million, the 101,000-square-foot Mizzou Athletics Training Complex is a selling point for recruits and Mizzou Arena is among the nation's top basketball facilities.

Missouri also expects an immediate windfall if it moves south, with a projected increase in television revenue, ticket sales and donations.

Yet the SEC poses a vast challenge. Missouri would be playing catch-up to financially compete even with the conference's mid-tier schools.

Seven SEC football programs — Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana State, Florida, Auburn, South Carolina and Tennessee — raked in more than double the \$25.4 million in revenue MU generated in 2010.

Alabama poured \$65 million into renovating Bryant-Denney Stadium last summer — the third major expansion in a dozen years. The expansion increased the number of luxury boxes in the 101,000-seat stadium to 160. Missouri's Memorial Stadium has 35.

Elsewhere, Tennessee is set to open a new \$48 million football-specific facility next year and is planning \$200 million in renovations to Neyland Stadium. Kentucky is fundraising for a \$150 million-plus facelift to Commonwealth Stadium. And Arkansas, which spent \$100 million in a 2001 renovation of Razorback Stadium, is building a \$35 million Football Operations Center.

Feldman said he gained an appreciation for the sheer scale of the SEC building boom when he spent a year at Ole Miss researching his 2007 book, "Meat Market: Inside the Smash-Mouth World of College Football Recruiting." The author said he was impressed by the Rebels' football facility. The \$35 million modern complex included a practice field connected to the football stadium by an underground tunnel, a massive weight room and player lounge and a training area with hydrotherapy pools and submersible treadmills.

In the SEC, the facility is very average.

"You basically have Vandy and the Mississippi schools, and everything else is very impressive," Feldman said.

Missouri co-offensive line coach Josh Henson, who spent four years at LSU before arriving in Columbia, said there is "no argument" that the facilities in the SEC are on average better than those in any other conference. Ask him about the SEC arms race, and he said, "All you need to do is look at the attendance numbers and the size of the stadiums."

The SEC indeed boasts — and sells out — many of the nation's biggest stadiums. The average attendance at SEC venues last season (76,719) smashed even a conference-record turnout by the Big 12 (62,795).

This commitment manifests not only in the salaries of head coaches — nine of the nation's top 25 highest-paid coaches are in the SEC — but also in the league's ability to attract top assistants. Florida lured former Notre Dame Coach Charlie Weis away from the Kansas City Chiefs with a three-year, \$2.625 million deal to be the school's offensive coordinator.

According to a USA Today database of assistant coaches salaries from 2010, the \$320,000 salary of Missouri's highest-paid assistant — defensive coordinator Dave Steckel — is tied for 28th in the SEC with Ole Miss offensive line coach Mike Markuson.



## **The value of the SEC has yet to be determined League's TV deal might not produce massive increase.**

By Joe Walljasper

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**Two years ago, when Missouri first started getting restless about the state of the Big 12 Conference, MU Athletic Director Mike Alden said he was less worried about television revenue inequality within the league and more concerned about the gap between the Big 12 and other conferences.**

That financial disparity was the attention-grabbing item in Missouri's 45-page realignment document recently obtained by The Associated Press. The AP reported that the document was studied during last week's Board of Curators meeting in which conference affiliation was discussed. It stated that MU could expect to make \$17.16 million in TV revenue if it stays in the Big 12 next year and could increase that figure by at least \$2 million and as much as \$12 million in the Southeastern Conference.

The \$12 million figure is an eye-opener.

"I don't think that's accurate. ... I'd like to see the report. I'd like to know who wrote it," Big 12 interim Commissioner Chuck Neinas said yesterday.

Without knowing the details of Missouri's analysis, it's hard to say if it's a realistic projection of life in the SEC, but some industry experts said it would be difficult for the SEC to sign a massive new deal based on the addition of Texas A&M and Missouri.

Neal Pilson, the former president of CBS Sports, is a consultant who helped negotiate recent multibillion dollar deals for NASCAR and the Olympics. He said the fact that the SEC is just two years into a 15-year contract with its TV partners means it has little leverage.

"I think the networks will want to have a very narrow discussion of how much incremental value is brought to the TV package from Texas A&M and Missouri, and I think that's all they're going to want to talk about," Pilson said in a phone interview. "I think CBS and ESPN feel they made a fair deal with the SEC and that adding two schools might modestly change the value, but I don't think they would be looking to completely renegotiate the deal."

“I’m not about to put a dollar figure against it, but that would be how I think the networks would approach it. Obviously, I don’t know how the SEC would approach it.”

The SEC could argue that the value of TV contracts has skyrocketed, even in the two years since its current deal was signed. Last spring, the Pac-12 signed a 12-year deal worth about \$250 million annually — quadrupling its previous contract.

“If the conference is looking to reopen the negotiation based on the success of the” Pac-12, “then the parties could be in for a long and difficult discussion,” Pilson said.

At the request of the Tribune, A.J. Maestas, the president of Navigate, a Chicago-based firm that analyzes sponsorships and multimedia rights in sports and entertainment, had his company estimate the value of the TV contract for a 14-school SEC including Texas A&M and Missouri. Navigate’s projection was \$21 million to \$23 million per school annually.

That would be a healthy increase from SEC’s current per-school payout of about \$18 million but well below the upper end of MU’s estimation.

He said the SEC’s best leverage is if its current contract has a clause nullifying the deal if the sides can’t come to an agreement and an arbitrator rules in favor of the conference.

“Without knowing exactly what the clause is that would allow them to reopen negotiations, I couldn’t say with extreme confidence, but if that clause allows them to go to the open market if they don’t find an amicable fair price, then it allows them to apply pretty heavy pressure,” Maestas said. “I don’t think the SEC failed to do their homework, but they did leave money on the table on their last deal. Just by opening up and negotiating with their existing partners, I have a feeling they could see a nice little bump.”

A major factor in the Pac-12’s blockbuster deal was that its previous contract was expiring, and thus it was a free agent that could seek the highest offer. Comcast — which owns NBC — was eager to enter the college sports market and created a bidding war for the rights. Fierce rivals ESPN and Fox were so determined to keep Comcast on the sidelines, they took the unusual step of joining forces to write the biggest check.

Because the SEC is under contract until 2024, there would be no bidding war.

Also, there is the matter of tiered TV rights. Tier 1 content includes the games chosen for broadcast on the conference’s network provider, Tier 2 content includes the games broadcast by the cable partner and Tier 3 content is everything else.

The Pac-12 and Big Ten pool the television rights for all tiers to the conference. That allowed them to start their own networks and show athletic events that weren’t selected for network or cable broadcasts. In the SEC and Big 12, schools retain the Tier 3 rights. They can cut their own

deals to televise that content. The extreme example of one of those deals is the Longhorn Network, ESPN's venture with the University of Texas.

If SEC wanted now to pool its Tier 3 rights and try to start a network, its bargaining power might be diminished, according to a media consultant with experience in TV rights negotiations, who wished to remain anonymous. He said the SEC's big chance came before it signed its current contract.

"With the SEC, it's a little like trying to put the genie back in the bottle — it's not easy to do," the consultant said. "They've sold CBS and ESPN on a 15-year structure. It would be awfully difficult to now say, 'Oh, we want to do our own network.' I think that's going to be a tough putt. Not impossible, but it's a lot harder to do it that way than to construct it up front. So I suspect that's something they would like, but that doesn't necessarily line up in the best interest of CBS and ESPN.

"They'll never be able to do what the Pac-12 did, which is retain 100 percent control over it. If it were to happen, it would look more like the Longhorn Network, which is 100 percent owned by ESPN. It would have to be something that is owned and very likely operated by one of those media partners. ESPN and CBS are certainly not going to pay these guys \$200 million dollars a year and let them take back rights and go start a network to compete against them. That's not going to happen."

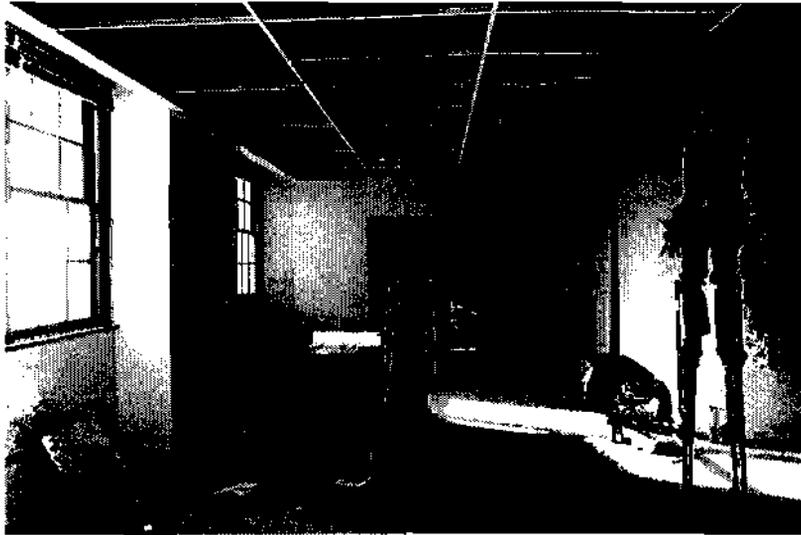
Maestas also was dubious about the SEC's ability to start a network on par with the Big Ten or Pac-12 considering it's current circumstances.

"Because they signed a pretty comprehensive deal and decided not to launch their own network last time, they didn't leave themselves the kind of inventory you need to really do a network successfully," Maestas said. "Let's use the Pac-12 as an example. I think the direction conferences will go is leaving a lot more quality football and basketball inventory to drive distribution and sales of that network. The Big Ten did a decent amount and had great success. The Pac-12 has left a good deal of inventory and has had tremendous success. The SEC doesn't have that high a quality of inventory left over on a relative basis.

"We know people are going to tune in to watch Alabama play Troy" in football, "but it's a challenge because of the deal they signed with ESPN and CBS and deciding to forego it on this last contract. And, secondly, because they have very minimal leftover games. Very minimal."

## Library, historical society still clearing fire damage

Don Shrubshell



Kevin Graham of Modern Interiors of Jefferson City hangs the ceiling frame in an office Wednesday at the State Historical Society of Missouri in Ellis Library on the University of Missouri campus. The historical society is still dealing with damage from fires set in the library last month.

By Janese Silvey

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**A popular Halloween event has been canceled this year because of damage from fires intentionally set last month at Ellis Library on the University of Missouri campus.**

The State Historical Society of Missouri had to forgo "Trick or Treat through Missouri History," a program that began in 2009 and had attracted hundreds who came for spook-themed crafts, educational booths and a haunted gallery. The historical society is located within Ellis Library.

"We're sorry we have to do it," said Gary Kremer, executive director. "We're just trying to stay open as much as we can right now."

Small arson fires were extinguished in the early-morning hours of Sept. 10, but the smoke and water damage left behind are still causing headaches for library and historical society workers.

Damage has been estimated between \$600,000 and \$1 million, most of which will be covered by insurance, and renovations are expected to take much of the semester.

Christopher C. Kelley, 25, is charged with second-degree burglary and second-degree arson. He has admitted to being in the library after hours but denied starting the fires, according to court documents

Cleanup efforts required staff to close a student computer lab and some study spaces, spokeswoman Shannon Cary said. The circulation office had to move, visitors have to navigate partitions that separate closed and open areas and noises are making it tough for some to concentrate.

The TelePresence Center is also offline as crews replace the carpeting in that room. Cisco Systems is storing the equipment, which allowed Columbia users to meet face-to-face with others at satellite sites via video.

At the historical society, the northern section is being gutted and is shut off to the public, including an area where a small amount of asbestos was found under flooring. Ten employees, including Kremer, were displaced and are working out of other offices on campus.

The society is still open for researchers, although Kremer expects it to temporarily close when crews start removing ceilings above the microfilm newspaper collection.

“This couldn’t have happened at a worse time for us,” Kremer said, noting that the society’s annual meeting in Columbia is Nov. 5.

The society has had to scale back staff over the past couple of years after being dealt funding cuts from the state.

But Kremer also is thankful that damage from the fires wasn’t worse. Historical collections — including paintings by George Caleb Bingham and Thomas Hart Benton, original manuscripts and historical records — did not sustain significant damage, and the \$10,000 in destroyed duplicate microfilm can be replaced.

The incident highlights why the society needs a new facility, Kremer said. Administrators have long-term plans for a new center next to the Heinkel Building off Locust Street, although funding shortfalls are stalling the project.

“This is yet another clarion call for the need for a new facility for us, a space we can control,” Kremer said. “This could have been a disaster.”



## **MU administrator to help lead task force**

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**A University of Missouri administrator has been appointed to help lead an educational task force for the Association for International Education Administrators.**

Handy Williamson Jr., vice provost of international programs and strategic initiatives, will serve as co-chairman on the AIEA's task force for funding and development activities.

The new assignment is in addition to Williamson's other current AIEA board assignments, including the public policy advisory board.

AIEA is made up of institutional leaders interested in advancing international relations in higher education.



## **Details withheld on attorney's arrest**

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### **The University of Missouri refuses to release details about the arrest of a former Boone County domestic violence prosecutor on suspicion of domestic assault.**

The Tribune requested incident and arrest reports concerning the University of Missouri Police Department's Sept. 12 arrest of John M. Roodhouse, 35, on suspicion of third-degree domestic assault.

Though basic details surrounding the arrest are included in such reports, MU officials blacked out that information on the reports on Roodhouse's arrest. Such information is routinely available from law enforcement agencies: incident reports are considered open records under state law and are often made available without even the necessity of a written request.

The only portion of the incident description not redacted says an officer "investigated a domestic assault at 4800 Santana Circle, the Parent link building."

Roodhouse, of 2602 Greenbriar Drive, was released from the Boone County Jail after posting \$1,000 bond. The case was transferred to a special prosecutor in Cooper County, Cooper County Prosecuting Attorney Doug Abele said. Roodhouse has yet to be charged, and an investigation is ongoing.

The alleged victim and Roodhouse are involved in a pending divorce. Roodhouse deferred comment to his attorney, Milt Harper.

"Domestic situations are sometimes complex matters," Harper said. "The situation is under review."

Roodhouse left the Boone County Prosecuting Attorney's Office in 2008 and continues to practice law at a Columbia law firm.