

Donations to MU dip to lowest level in years

By Janese Silvey

Saturday, January 14, 2012

Donations to the University of Missouri slowed a little this past fiscal year, but development administrators say the total isn't bad given the economic climate.

In fiscal year 2011, which ended June 30, MU raised more than \$89 million in pledges, grants and endowments. That was down from the \$110 million raised in fiscal year 2010 — and the first time since 2004 that total donations dropped below \$100 million.

“The general consensus around here is that is a very good figure for the state of the economy last year and not being in a campaign,” spokeswoman Catey Terry said. “We still have generous donors.”

The decrease wasn't a surprise but came a little later than anticipated. “It happened earlier at other schools than it happened here,” Terry said. “We were expecting it.”

It has been three years since the last formal fundraising campaign on campus. The “For All We Call Mizzou” effort — which raised \$1 billion — spanned eight years and ended in December 2008.

Chancellor Brady Deaton has said the next campaign will exceed \$1 billion, and it officially will begin sometime this year. That effort aims to focus on supporting people, such as encouraging endowments to support faculty positions and student scholarships.

Gena Scott, director of development for scholarships, already is talking to would-be donors about giving money to specific scholarship programs. The Flagship Scholarship calls on a supporter to donate \$300,000, an amount needed to set up an endowment fund that would provide a \$15,000 scholarship to support a first-generation college student.

The program was created in 2008 with the goal of getting one flagship scholarship recipient from every county. Right now, there are scholarship endowments in seven counties supporting nine students, with a Clark County endowment currently supporting several students at a time.

Scott is meeting with Boone County residents in hopes of setting up a flagship scholarship here. Asked why the county that serves as home to the flagship campus hasn't yet gotten involved with

the flagship scholarship, Scott said it could be because local residents support MU in a number of other ways.

“People just need to be aware that this is an option, and it’s an investment in young people and our future,” she said. “It’s another way they can help support students in our state in a significant way that actually sends a student through college who might not otherwise be able to attend the flagship university.”

Jeanne Sinquefield, who devised the scholarship program while serving on the campaign steering committee, said the goal was mostly to make it easier for qualified high school students in small communities to attend MU.

She said she got the idea from a similar program that provides scholarships to Osage County students.

“I thought that was such a cool idea — to get” scholarships “to the best kids in a little county,” she said. “The idea was the kids would be from families where the parents didn’t go to college.”

Scholarship awardees are required to volunteer 20 hours and to return to their hometowns and make presentations to school and community groups about their experiences at MU.

Although the next official campaign has not started, MU is on par with donations half way through this fiscal year. As of Dec. 31, MU had nearly \$36 million, roughly the same amount the university had on hand this time last year.

“Spring is typically when we raise the most money,” Terry said, “so basically we are never at the halfway point” by December.



MU radiology department under scrutiny

By Janese Silvey

Sunday, January 15, 2012

University of Missouri Health Care was caught providing radiology services to patients without physicians ordering those services, according to an internal audit published in late 2010.

Problems have since been addressed, at least internally, according to a follow-up audit from September. It's unclear, though, just how deep problems run within the School of Medicine's Department of Radiology.

Multiple sources have told the Tribune that radiology employees, including low-level staff members, recently were instructed by the UM System General Counsel's office not to delete emails or destroy documents, indicating an investigation.

UM System attorney Paul McGuffey declined to comment on the alleged instruction to employees and would neither confirm nor deny whether an outside agency is investigating the department. Officials at the U.S. Department of Justice, which investigates fraud cases, and the Missouri Department of Health and Human Services said they were not at liberty to say whether their offices are conducting investigations.

Fueling speculation is the quiet resignation of Ken Rall as chairman of the radiology department. The announcement of his retirement came in a three-sentence blurb tucked between news of a Xerox partnership and a weekly quiz in the Dec. 21 issue of MU Health Care's "InSight" newsletter.

Rall, who remains a faculty member, was convicted of misdemeanor stealing in the 1980s for signing over Medicaid refund checks to himself while working at a Columbia radiology company. He had faced steeper felony charges, but the prosecutor lost evidence days before the trial. Rall also paid back nearly \$1 million from a check-kiting scheme that used lag time between banks to inflate one account balance with non-existing funds from another account.

The health care system's Office of Corporate Compliance looked into the department in December 2010 after receiving a tip that physician orders weren't being written for radiology

services provided at Women's and Children's Hospital, according to the audit obtained through an open records request.

After reviewing random cases involving Medicare, the audit found that 62.5 percent of them did not have proper physician orders to support the services being provided to patients.

But that doesn't mean the X-rays or scans provided weren't called for, McGuffey said. "The fact that physician signatures didn't accompany orders didn't necessarily mean services were unnecessary," he said.

Auditors recommended the office develop a corrective action plan and address any overcharges or overpayments. The corrective action plan was negated by follow-up audits that showed improvement, mainly because of implementation of a computerized order entry system.

A request to the UM System for documents related to overpayments or overcharges is pending. Kathy Miller, UM's custodian of records, said staff members need more time to search for documents and anticipated the earliest that search will be completed is the end of this week.

Bob Churchill, dean of the School of Medicine, and other MU administrators, through the MU News Bureau, did not respond to requests for interviews.

Columbia prepares for students returning from winter break

By MISSOURIAN STAFF

January 15, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Outside the Defoe-Graham residence hall at MU on Saturday morning, there were five cars carrying students and their furniture back to school.

Bobbie Bennett, a freshman studying business, was carrying his flat screen TV from his car to a trolley. He came back from St. Louis for MU's spring semester, which starts Tuesday.

"It feels good to be back, better than the first time," Bennett said. "I was thrown into a whole new world then."

All around town, businesses are preparing and stocking up for the influx of more than 30,000 students who are returning to MU over the holiday weekend for the spring semester. Columbia College and Stephens College began classes on Jan. 9.

Although MU usually sees fewer students in the spring semester than in the fall due to graduating students in December, the returning rate of students for spring 2011 was up from the 2010 spring semester.

"We are expecting a fairly full campus for the spring semester," Christian Basi, associate director of MU News Bureau said. "We are really excited to have students back on campus."

With university students back in town, many businesses around Columbia are expecting to see an increase of customers. Brad Neely, perishables manager at the Rock Bridge HyVee, expects many students will come back this weekend.

The store, at 405 E. Nifong Blvd., will keep the store stocked and make sure people are able to get in and out quickly, he said.

Neely said he is aware that some products run out quickly when students are back on campus, such as frozen pizza.

Bars gearing back up

Bars in downtown Columbia are restocking liquor and beer and getting back up to usual staffing levels. At many bars, the staff is smaller over winter break as student employees go home. Bengal's Bar & Grill closed from Dec. 18 through Jan. 11. Jay Rader, general manager, said the staff is coming back to work and inventory is being restored.

"We're getting ready to roll again," Rader said.

Rader estimated that 90 percent of Bengal's employees are MU students. During the break, Rader said the staff spends a lot of time cleaning the bar.

Doug Stockton, general manager at Quinton's Bar & Deli, said the bar's inventory is stocked to meet the demand and needs of people in town. Quinton's is staffed for anticipated business. The liquor closet at Campus Bar & Grill was being filled Friday, and clear bottles of vodka were taken from boxes stacked on the floor and placed on a shelf. Campus Bar & Grill general manager Matt Hudson said the bar is getting back to ordering normal amounts of liquor and beer. The staff comes back a few days early to prepare for the first weekend before school. That is when things really start to pick up, Hudson said.

"Saturday, Sunday and Monday are crazy," Hudson said.

Shuttles to Columbia

Companies that transport people to and from Columbia are seeing an increase in business as well. The MO-X airport shuttle service is busy anytime MU classes resume or end, said Norm Ruebling, president and owner. During the busy periods, MO-X passengers include students, sometimes their parents and people who work at MU, Ruebling said. MO-X has about 30 percent more passengers at the beginning and end of each semester and during spring and Thanksgiving breaks.

MO-X driver Sherman Booker said Missouri weather is the most frequent topic of his conversations with international students coming to school in Columbia. Some are unfamiliar with the weather here, so they bring a lot of clothes. Booker also picks up in-state students from Kansas City and St. Louis. International students tend to come to campus early, while in-state students don't come until a day or two before classes begin, he said.

The number of trips to St. Louis and Kansas City that Mo-X operates remains the same throughout the year, but it uses different vehicles during busy times. Booker said it probably

would use coach buses, which carry 52 to 60 passengers, this Sunday and Monday. It normally uses minibuses or vans, which carry 33 or 14 people, respectively.

MO-X makes 12 trips to St. Louis and five trips to Kansas City every day, Booker said.

University Bookstore

The University Bookstore is prepared for the mass of students flocking back to school after the winter break with extra workers and cashiers.

On Friday, the basement of the bookstore was a labyrinth of book-crammed shelves and palettes of books stacked four feet tall. An army of greeters and cashiers greeted customers on the first level. Meanwhile, the Student Center basement acted as an overflow stock room, with boxes of books piled all over the lounge.

MU Bookstore spokeswoman Michelle Froese said the bookstore prepares for back-to-school time by hiring about 100 temporary workers to serve as cashiers and greeters and to work in the distribution center. They also operate an additional 20 cash registers to handle the high volume of business. Froese said the store staff makes sure to stock up on any miscellaneous items that professors require for classes, such as lab goggles or art and architecture supplies. Other popular items include binders and notebooks, highlighters, packages of pens and flash drives.

"We've moved some of the general supply items downstairs closer to the books and electronics so it's more convenient for students to get it all at once," Froese said. In addition to stocking up and staffing more, the bookstore also extends its hours this time of year.

"We open earlier and stay later. But during the peak hours of 10 to 2, we get really busy," Froese said. She advised shoppers to avoid peak hours and instead shop early in the day or later in the evening.

The bookstore will be open on Monday, even though it's Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

"We want to support the university in observing the holiday, but with 30,000 students returning and classes starting the next day, they allowed us to stay open," Froese said. The bookstore will be open from from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday and from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday.



Gubernatorial candidate fixes online claim about MU degree

Associated Press

Friday, January 13, 2012

JEFFERSON CITY (AP) — Missouri gubernatorial candidate Dave Spence changed his online biography yesterday to fix a claim about a college economics degree and acknowledged that his campaign also had distributed fliers wrongly asserting that he attended business school at the University of Missouri.

The biographical adjustments come as Spence — a St. Louis businessman making his first political campaign — has been traveling the state trying to ramp up his challenge to Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon in 2012 elections. Spence's campaign has emphasized his business acumen.

Spence, 53, has a degree in home economics from the University of Missouri. But the biography on his campaign website originally omitted the word "home" while describing his economics degree — a fact first reported earlier this week by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Spence acknowledged that the description might have been misleading.

Yesterday, Spence's website was changed to remove any reference to a degree, saying merely that he attended the University of Missouri in Columbia. Later yesterday, the website was changed again to provide a more elaborate description of his college experience.

His website biography now reads: "After high school, Dave attended the University of Missouri-Columbia where he majored in family economics and management (also known as consumer economics) and earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Home Economics."

It wasn't the only time Spence's biography had to be changed.

The Associated Press obtained a copy yesterday of a Spence campaign flier that had been distributed at a Republican Party event that Spence attended Dec. 6 in the St. Louis area. The flier claimed: "After high school, Dave attended University of Missouri-Columbia School of Business and earned a degree in Economics."

But Spence never attended the university's business school. His degree in home economics was awarded through a different school at the university.

Spence said in emails yesterday to the AP that he didn't know his campaign materials had included the business school claim.

"I have said all along that I will not or do not lie," Spence said. "A lot of this is overblown, as I was not aware of any place that said business school."

Spence later added: "I will take responsibility for this. I did not catch the mistake on early campaign literature."

Spence campaign manager Jared Craighead said the statement about the business school was a "staff oversight that was corrected."

The flier distributed in December also listed the wrong dates for when Spence had received awards from the Missouri Chamber of Commerce.

The Missouri Democratic Party said yesterday that Spence's education assertions are more than mere oversights.

"If David Spence can't tell the truth about something as basic as his college degree, Missourians shouldn't believe a word that comes out of his mouth. This guy is just shameless," said state Democratic Party spokeswoman Caitlin Legacki.



Van Matre's curators appointment goes to Senate

By Janese Silvey

Saturday, January 14, 2012

Craig Van Matre's appointment to the University of Missouri Board of Curators heads to the Senate for confirmation next week.

The Senate Gubernatorial Appointment Committee is slated to meet at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday in the Senate Lounge to approve several recess appointments, including Van Matre's.

Gov. Jay Nixon also appointed Jefferson City attorney Pam Quigg Henrickson and UM-Kansas City student Amy Johnson to the board when lawmakers weren't in session, although those confirmations haven't yet been scheduled.

If Van Matre gets the green light, it will mark the end of a yearlong appointment process.

Nixon named the Columbia attorney to the board last January, but the appointment was held up in political negotiations between Nixon and Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer, R-Dexter. In May, just before the session ended, Nixon withdrew Van Matre's appointment but then renamed him to the board after the regular legislative session.

When lawmakers reconvened for a special session in the fall, Nixon once again withdrew the nomination of Van Matre, along with Henrickson, but then reappointed them after that session ended.



Lots still to sort out in expanded SEC

By Steve Walentik

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

Conference realignment became an exhausting storyline for people throughout the country last fall, but the real work for administrators in the Southeastern Conference only began with the formal announcements of Texas A&M and Missouri as the league's newest members.

Since finalizing plans to bring the SEC membership to 14, they've had to figure out how to align the expanded league and reconstruct schedules in all sports, starting with football.

Larry Templeton, the former Mississippi State athletic director and SEC consultant charged with overseeing the transition of the new members, said the way they arranged things for the first season won't necessarily be permanent.

As it stands now, Missouri will join the Eastern division, Texas A&M will play in the west and the two will be anchored together as cross-division rivals the way Alabama and Tennessee, LSU and Florida and South Carolina and Arkansas all are. But with the SEC set on keeping an eight-game conference schedule, having six divisional games and one nondivisional matchup locked in limits change in the schedules. Opponents from opposite divisions could conceivably go more than a decade between meetings.

"That is a huge question that has not been answered," said Templeton, speaking yesterday at Mizzou Arena before the Tigers and Aggies met on the basketball court. "I think anything else is on the table for discussion. We're going to have to make some tough decisions. Are we going to stay with the permanent opponent? And then, how are we going to rotate that one other game?"

Templeton said it's possible some of the cross-division rivalries could change and suggested it's on the table to pair Missouri and Arkansas together in the future.

There simply wasn't time to sort out all those issues this fall. The SEC had a difficult enough time building a schedule for 14 teams while preserving the contracts already in place between its existing 12 members and their nonconference opponents.

“We didn’t want to be a league that said we’re just going to go out here and start canceling games, so we moved a few nonconference dates with the help of those schools,” he said. “Matter of fact, at the very end, we moved two football games that were four games removed from the Southeastern Conference to make it fall in place. But that’s the kind of cooperation that we got because we had the attitude” that “we don’t want to break any contracts.”

There are still unanswered questions about the setup of the league’s basketball schedule, but Templeton said it is likely to grow to 18 games beginning next season, with every school playing the other 13 members at least once with five additional meetings to be determined.

While league members debate potential changes to the makeup of the regular season in both sports, there could also be adjustments coming in the postseason.

The SEC has no plans to move its football championship game out of Atlanta, but the league prefers to rotate its men's and women's basketball tournaments around, with the men's event scheduled to be played in New Orleans this season and Nashville, Tenn., next. It’s also been played in Atlanta; Tampa, Fla.; and Memphis, Tenn., among other locations.

Templeton said St. Louis and Kansas City could make bids to join a rotation of hosts, though he said the men’s tournament sites are set for the next five or six years.

In football, the SEC could need to expand its bowl affiliations. Had Missouri and A&M been playing in the league this season and finished with the same records, the SEC would have needed more bowl places to accommodate each of its eligible teams.

“Whether we will do it quickly or not, I’m not sure,” Templeton said. “But the other good part is that our TV partner, ESPN, owns some bowls, and they have an open slot in one of those bowls, so we’ll have some conversations with them. But to be honest, there have been some bowls that have contacted us.”

Templeton also discussed protocol for placing SEC members in bowls and said it’s not as simple as assigning the team with the best record to the top bowl in the pecking order.

“We do it strictly by we let the bowl say which team they want, and we let the school say which bowl they want,” he said. “If we have a conflict there, we’ll sit down and work it out, and I’ve been in this league 21 years, and we’ve never had a conflict. The one thing that this conference has always been able to do is have a sense of doing what’s best for the conference, and it’s always come together.”

He said the league does make an effort to prevent a team from returning to the same bowl site in back-to-back years.

Templeton’s visit to Columbia was timed around the basketball game, but its primary purpose was to give him a chance to take part in a series of discussions about the transition with Missouri

administrators today. Some 10 or 12 MU staffers are also scheduled to visit the conference headquarters in Birmingham, Ala., next week.

“We’re going to walk them through an entire process, everything from compliance to digital rights to media or how we operate the Southeastern Conference,” Templeton said. “Student seating, crowd control, everything, and just kind of give them a sense of where we are.”



City asks apartment sites for bus help

By Andrew Denney

Friday, January 13, 2012

City officials have turned to south Columbia apartment complexes to seek financial support for Columbia Transit after a similar proposal to bolster the bus system's coffers with an increased activity fee for college students failed to attract broad support.

The city maintains that the clock is ticking for the Black and Gold routes, which provide service from the apartment complexes to the University of Missouri campus. At a meeting Monday between city officials and owners and managers from the apartment complexes, city officials said that if nine student apartment complexes do not provide a combined \$569,941 in funding, the Black and Gold routes will cease operation in May. Jill Stedem, a spokeswoman for the Columbia Public Works Department, said that breaks down to roughly \$62 per bed.

The city estimates those two routes provide more than 800,000 rides annually. According to a city presentation, the city also has proposed the elimination of Thursday- and Friday-evening service and Saturday service for all routes if no additional funding is found.

In a letter dated Dec. 14 and sent to south Columbia apartment complexes, Columbia Public Works Department Director John Glascock said the city has had to use reserve funds to balance increased costs associated with the Black and Gold routes.

"The Gold and Black Routes are by far our highest ridership routes," Glascock wrote in the letter. "However, they are also the most costly to operate as they are the most poorly funded."

City Transportation Manager Ken Koopmans wrote in an email, which Stedem provided to the Tribune, that the city is awaiting a collective response from south Columbia apartment complexes.

"Some of the complexes have given other options and stipulations, but there really can't be a dozen different contractual models," Koopmans said.

Justin Starr, owner of The Pointe at Rock Quarry Road, attended the meeting Monday. He said he would like to see bus service to the apartment complexes continue and that the elimination of

service would increase traffic in south Columbia and could create further parking complications on the MU campus.

He said he would like to see alternatives to the city's all-or-nothing approach, such as phased-in contributions from the apartment complexes. "I think we'd like to see a third option," Starr said. "But we haven't seen it yet."

The Pointe was one of five apartment complexes invited to the meeting that do not have contracts with the city to pay for bus service. The complexes with contracts are Campus Lodge, The Reserve, The Cottages and Gateway at Columbia.



Security cameras proliferate on MU campus

By Janese Silvey

Friday, January 13, 2012

A security camera captured images of a man suspected of setting fires in Ellis Library on the University of Missouri campus, and the building could use a few more electronic eyes, an administrator said.

Pat Jones, director of library security, said the library lacks cameras on the upper floors. That's where 25-year-old Christopher Kelly — who is charged with the arson and burglary — allegedly set additional fires and defecated and urinated on property.

"We have no idea what he was doing" on the upper-level floors "other than what he left for us," Jones said, recommending additional cameras.

Campus Facilities and other departments are installing more security cameras "all the time," MU Police Chief Jack Watring said. "We sit down with" Gary Ward, associate vice chancellor of facilities, "and look at areas and make suggestions as to where we think they should go as money becomes available."

He estimated there are 500 to 600 cameras stationed across campus, namely in new or recently renovated residence halls, parking garages, athletics facilities and high-traffic areas.

Critics of surveillance cameras — including some in Columbia when the issue went to a vote in 2010 — often cite a violation of privacy or fears about "Big Brother" watching private residents. But Watring said he doesn't hear those complaints from students, a generation that willingly makes personal images and information public on online social websites.

"Probably — and this is just my own speculation — I think students are more used to those kinds of things," he said.

Although the cameras mostly capture footage that can be reviewed later during investigations, campus police do regularly monitor some live video feeds. During football game days, including several hours before and after the games, officers watch monitors from nine cameras in and around the stadium.

Police credit the cameras in several investigations. In addition to Kelly's arrest, officers have used surveillance video to make arrests in garage assaults and when Ben Elliott, a former MU freshman, allegedly painted a racist slur on campus property last winter.

There weren't any cameras at the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center when students left cotton balls outside two years ago, but cameras have since been installed, Watring said.

The Maryland Avenue parking garage on campus also lacked a camera surveying the area where microbiologist Jeong Im was murdered in 2005.

But having a camera doesn't automatically mean a crime will be solved, Capt. Brian Weimer said. There is also no guarantee a camera will deter crime, he said.

MU has a couple of mobile camera units police can station in areas that experience crime sprees such as repeated thefts or vandalisms, Watring said. At other universities, those types of mobile cameras have helped police solve muggings, bike thefts and other cases. At one school, mobile cameras helped police stop students from repeatedly having sex in a dangerous location, according to an article this week in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

"I'm 200 percent in favor of cameras as long as they're in the public eye," Watring said. "They certainly have helped us solve a lot of different crimes."



A look into the crystal ball

By Bob Roper

Sunday, January 15, 2012

As we move into the new year, the following are some issues that face us and my predictions about their outcomes.

THE STATE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

No more stimulus money and a slowly improving economy mean Missouri has a budget gap of \$450 million to \$500 million that probably cannot be filled. **Thus, both Missouri and the University of Missouri likely are heading for a RESET — a reduction of the services they are able to offer to the public.** The university might well be cut by a shocking 10 to 12 percent after big cuts during the past several years. A lot of university and state programs will face termination.

As the rapid growth of Internet-based sales continues, Missouri will get on the bandwagon of states in a compact that requires out-of-state sellers to collect sales taxes and remit the proceeds to the respective states. Roughly half of states already are on board. Missouri's annual losses associated with online sales are estimated at between \$100 million and \$200 million.

The foundation formula, which divvies up tax proceeds to the state's K-12 schools, is broken again. Both rural and suburban school districts have good arguments to make, so expect a battle royal on this one in the legislature.

A serious effort will be made to reform K-12 education by weakening tenure rules to get rid of poor teachers. In addition, a plan to provide a tax credit system to help poor children get out of terrible schools will be pushed. And an effort will be made to allow charter schools to operate throughout Missouri and offer a competitive alternative to traditional public schools. All of these will be bitterly fought by the teachers unions.

Tired of the governor using "estimates" to shift money budgeted for one purpose to his own preferred purpose, a bipartisan effort will be made in the legislature to circumscribe the governor's power and authority in that regard.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

The U.S. Supreme Court will declare Obamacare unconstitutional because of the individual mandate provision. A blow is struck for individual liberty.

Despite President Barack Obama's great campaign skills, the best scorched-earth negative campaign in history and the best efforts of his mainstream media allies, he will lose his bid for re-election in November, probably to Mitt Romney. A poor economy and a huge national debt, policies that do not appear to be working, Obamacare and the fact that 72 percent of Americans think the country is headed in the wrong direction are collectively too much to overcome. One caveat: If either Ron Paul or Donald Trump runs as a third-party candidate, Obama wins.

Republicans hold the U.S. House and win control — but not filibuster-proof control — of the U.S. Senate.

Americans increasingly become aware they need to make a big choice: Is our country going to be an "entitlement state," where equality of results is the goal, like the European social democracy model? Or are we going to remain the "opportunity state," where equality of opportunity is the goal? The left favors the former, even as it is coming apart at the seams in Europe. I am for the latter. Voters will have to sort it out over a few election cycles.

The European sovereign debt crisis probably will be contained in 2012 but not really solved for the long term. Thus, Europe will have little or no economic growth and perhaps a recession, but that should not cause one in the United States. Greece will continue its progression to third-world status.

The U.S. economy will continue to improve, growing 2 percent to 3 percent annually. Danger areas that could thwart that are a collapse of the housing market, a major problem such as war with Iran or a financial meltdown in Europe.

Efforts to stop Iran, short of war, from developing a nuclear weapon will be attempted. If they fail, the West has a tough decision to make. A nuclear Iran means a good part of the volatile Middle East will get "nuked up" also. Does anyone really think Iran would not give a nuclear weapon to terrorists who would be quite willing to use it against us?

SOME ISSUES AND PREDICTIONS FOR THE YEARS BEYOND 2012

Without much fanfare, a bipartisan free-trade effort involving Southeast Asia and Pacific Rim countries — including North, Central and South American countries — is well under way. The Pacific Century lies ahead, and the United States should be the biggest winner. It also will act as a check on China, a good thing.

Thanks to new technology and unbelievable discoveries of oil and gas, the United States should be self-sufficient in fuel and energy in five to 10 years. We already are the largest producer of natural gas in the world, and our lead will grow. We meet 72 percent of our oil needs; a few

years ago, it was 50 percent. The Obama administration's animus to fossil fuels will fail to stop this long-term trend. And it will be fun to say goodbye to our "friends" at OPEC.

We someday will take a serious look at whether we should change our Constitution from our presidential, or divided government, system to a parliamentary system. With our system, it is hard to enact something, but it also is hard to reverse something that should not have been enacted. The enduring gridlock makes getting control of our massive debt problem virtually impossible. Canada has a parliamentary system, and it got control of its debt by avoiding gridlock and acting.

The United States should compete well with the rest of the world in the years ahead. Unlike many other nations, our workforce is growing. Also, our entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well, and we are competitively productive compared to other nations. In fact, look for a lot of work (and jobs) that went to China for many years to come back home. This is because of our growing relative advantage — thanks to an inflation problem in China — our competitive exchange rate and our productivity. Some companies have come back already. Look for more, especially in the fields of manufacturing and technology.

Samuel Huntington, the late (and great) Harvard academic, posited that the Judeo-Christian West, particularly the United States, is in what he termed a long-term "clash of civilizations" with Islam. In his view, the 20th-century struggles against fascism and communism were ancillary to the major issue. As he put it, "The 20th century conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism is only a fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relation between Islam and Christianity." As we see the Arab Spring largely go awry — for example, in the recent elections in Egypt, 70 percent of the vote went to hard-line Islamic parties — one has to wonder. That will be something to watch for many years during the 21st century.



Mid-Missouri makes progress

By Jake Halliday

Saturday, January 14, 2012

By now, we are either winning or losing the battle with our New Year's resolutions. We also are learning a basic tenet of entrepreneurship: Ideas and intentions are a dime a dozen, but it is faithful execution that determines failure or success.

The key to success is a "friendly and welcoming attitude towards change," said the energetic, hyper-inventive and often-vocal Charles Kettering (1876-1958).

Kettering did his share of causing change. Among his 180 patents, he invented the mechanism behind the cash register that propelled the growth of NCR (previously the National Cash Register Co.). He invented the electric self-starting system, eliminating the need to stand dangerously in front of your automobile to hand-crank the engine. He co-founded the Dayton Electric Co. (DELCO) around such inventions. Kettering served as head of R&D at General Motors for 27 years and co-founded Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center with then-GM CEO Alfred Sloan.

The ingenuity and philanthropy of Kettering and his contemporaries made Dayton, Ohio, a powerhouse of technological innovation that has been the driving force in its economy ever since.

How about innovation, change and progress in Columbia?

About five years ago, a decision was made to contribute to a sound, stable and growing economy in Mid-Missouri by leveraging the ingenuity of the researchers at the University of Missouri, inventors in our community and entrepreneurs we recruit to our area. One initiative in that strategy was the creation of Centennial Investors Angel Network to help finance startups in Mid-Missouri.

In a recent report to Centennial members, Gene Gerke reflected on public and private initiatives in the entrepreneurial landscape in Columbia over the period (see panel).

Wow, that is a lot of change, and, as Kettering said, "the world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress." He is still right.

Jake Halliday is CEO of the Missouri Innovation Center, operator of the MU Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place.

Missourinet

Senator McCaskill heads up energy talks throughout Missouri

January 17, 2012 By Jessica Machetta

Senator McCaskill is taking an energy tour throughout the state to see how researchers, utilities and energy stakeholders are moving our state forward.

From pond-scum farms, miscanthus grass, nuclear rods and more ... McCaskill says she's learning a lot on this tour. She says technology and research are key to protecting the environment but doing it with affordability and reliability.

McCaskill says she wants Missouri to be competitive in the energy sector as well as create new jobs and keep costs in check.

McCaskill is visiting St. Louis, Kansas City, Cape Girardeau, and the Springfield and Hannibal this week, speaking with energy researchers and stakeholders. The Missourinet caught up with the Senator in Columbia, where she took a tour of the plant that has supplied power for that city for 100 years.

The plant uses a mix of 20 percent wood chips-from scraps of oak wine barrels made in Missouri-with 80 percent coal to produce power. This summer, the plant will do a test-burn on biomass.

She says there are some voters who think research should be left to the private sector ... she says that's not possible. Professors and researchers at the University of Missouri, Missouri S & T in Rolla and Washington University have been a part of the talks ... all of whom she says are making huge strides in sustainability and renewable resources.

She says moving forward in the energy sector will help grow and expand Missouri businesses, such as opening up alternative forms of energy production and focusing on energy efficiency.