KU to host Welcome Picnic for area students

New University of Kansas students and their parents from Harvey, Marion, McPherson and Rice counties will be welcomed into the KU family at the Jayhawk Generations Welcome Picnic at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 5, in McPherson.

The KU Alumni Association and its Santa Fe Trail chapter will greet the next generation of Jayhawks at a picnic in their honor at Lakeside Cabin, 1101 E. Euclid. Area alumni, new students, students interested in learning more about KU, and parents are invited to attend and enjoy complimentary food and beverages. Each new Jayhawk will receive a free t-shirt.

Coordinating the event are chapter steering committee members Larry Chaney, McPherson, for McPherson County; Sue and Ted Ice and Bob Myers, all of Newton, for Harvey County; and Martin Tice, Marion, for Marion County; as well as Heath Peterson, director of Kansas programs for the KU Alumni Association. Association staff will arrive with the signature KU trailer full of grills, burgers and brats for the festivities. Alumni association representatives and guests planning to attend are: Mike Davis, senior vice president for alumni programs; Danny Lewis, alumni programs coordinator; David Ochoa, member relations coordinator; and Peterson.

For more information or to make reservations, visit www.kualumni.org, call the KU Alumni Association at 800-584-2957 or e-mail kualumni@kualumni.org.

Area students among those invited are Rachel Norland, Arthur Nuss, and Chantz Thomas, all Smoky Valley High School graduates.
Graduates

University of Kansas

Twenty-five ROTC graduates were honored as newly commissioned officers in the armed forces May 21 in the Kansas Union at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Area students commissioned include: Nichole Canton, Ashland, Air Force second lieutenant; Michael Merz, Garden City, Navy ensign; Ryan Dittmer, Tribune, Army second lieutenant; and Jeremy Carroll, Peabody, Navy ensign.
HAVEN – What does a Jayhawk think when he sees an alpaca? “Cute.”

On Friday morning, the University of Kansas’ Wheat State Whirlwind Tour rolled into the farm driveway of Jack and Pamela Young. The brief stop enabled a collection of staff, instructors and professors to see one of the unusual sights of Kansas – an alpaca herd.

“Oh, they’re so cute,” enthused Paula Baum, with the University of Kansas Medical Center. “Hi, guys. Hello, hello,” greeted Bernie Kish, director of facilities, health, sport and exercise at the University of Kansas. “They are so cute. This is great, this is a wonderful stop,” said Karen Kelly, deputy director of the University of Kansas Cancer Center.

Annually, the university organizes a bus tour to increase employees’ knowledge of the state. This statewide tour, with just under 50 participants, commenced Monday and was scheduled to wind up late Friday afternoon back in Lawrence.

Tour stops in Reno County included Thursday lunch at Carolyn’s Essenhaus in Arlington, a ride down to the Kansas Underground Salt Museum east of Hutchinson, and an overnight stay at the Holiday Inn Express in Hutchinson. On Friday morning, the group visited the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center near Yoder before dropping in to see the alpaca.

“Neat stop,” Kish said. The JP Alpaca Haven Farm & Ranch southeast of Haven is part of the growing agritourism industry in Kansas. Pamela Young started her efforts in February to get on the Whirlwind Tour’s itinerary. The organizer’s response evolved from “maybe 2008” to “just a drive-by” to “a 10-minute stop.”

The farmland was homesteaded by the Youngs’ grandparents. The family added the alpaca herd – now numbering 12 animals – about four years ago.

It’s a business, not a hobby.

The animals underwent their annual shearing in April, and one lucky member of the tour group won a stocking cap that Pamela Young made from alpaca wool.

As the bus lumbered into the driveway, Jack Young rustled a bucket to lure the alpaca to hurry to the fence near the visitors.

Young wasn’t worried that the alpaca would turn sheepish. “They’re curious, he said, and they’re “pretty trained to the grain bucket.”
People participating in the University of Kansas’ Wheat State Whirlwind Tour Friday morning feed the female alpacas at Jack and Pamela Young’s farm south of Haven. The alpacas are shorn once a year in April.
Joshua J. Umbehr, son of Keen A. and Eileen Umbehr, Alma, graduated from the University of Kansas School of Medicine. He will begin a three-year family practice residency program at Wesley Medical Center in Wichita this summer.