In April 2007, Dodge City native Hannah Love waited nervously at the Lawrence Yacht Club, eyes riveted on the television. It wasn't a basketball game that held her attention, it was the results of the student body election. Love was about to learn that she would lead the University of Kansas Student Senate in the coming year.

"We were just in shock," said Love, about the moment she heard the news. "We had been working since about November on the campaign and on the election. It was a great feeling of accomplishment to have gotten that far."

No stranger to the student political system, Love was the student body president at Dodge City Middle School and High School. Almost immediately after stepping onto the rolling campus of KU, Love was distributing flyers and campaigning to join the Student Senate.

"I joined Student Senate as a freshman. It was one of the first things I did when I came to campus. I'd always been involved in political organizations," said Love. "I've always enjoyed that and the projects I've been able to work on and accomplish. I wanted to continue to do that same kind of work."

Now a junior majoring in sociology, Love has worked tirelessly to improve campus life for the students at KU. Her projects include the Student Senate Tutoring Program and the Multicultural Education Opportunity Fund.

In 2005, she began the Campaign for Affordable Textbooks to bring textbooks to students at a much lower cost. This campaign led to the On-line Book Exchange, a program that will benefit every student on campus by allowing them to obtain the textbooks they need without forking over their entire savings.

Next year, Love and her running mate, vice president Ray Wittlinger, hope to with their missions. Their platform included increased lighting around campus to improve safety, creating a permanent drop-off recycling center and providing evening transportation for students parked in dangerous areas.

Like many of the other students Love will now represent, she's unsure of where her future will take her.

"That's kind of the million dollar question for me," Love replied to what's likely to be the number one question college students get asked. "I want to go to grad school, possibly law school. I'd like to take a couple years and do some-
Local optometric assistants attend the 2007 Kansas Optometric Association's Convention

TOPEKA — More than 175 optometric assistants attended the 2007 Kansas Optometric Association's Convention and Seminar in Wichita. Assistants attending received seven hours of continuing education. Among those attending were Janie Bebish of Spearville, and Rhonda Ward of Dodge City. Janie and Rhonda are Optometric Assistants of Dr. Laurie White's Office, Great Plains Vision LLC, Dodge City.

The seminar focused on improving patient care and service. Sessions covered improvement of communication skills, patient education, eyewear dispensing skills, pre examination work-up, third party billing, and ocular effects and symptomatology of disease.

The seminar also featured exhibits with the latest developments in eyewear optometric equipment and practice management.
Outstanding at KU

Former Emporian David Peavler, a doctoral student in history at the University of Kansas, was awarded an Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award at the university earlier this month. The honor included $500 in cash.

Peavler is the son of David L. and the late Connie Peavler. As a staff sergeant in the Kansas Air National Guard, Peavler returned to KU Feb. 28 after a six-month deployment to Kirkuk, Iraq, where he trained more than 100 Iraqi fire, rescue and emergency medical personnel.
KCC HEARS COMMENT ON WESTAR REQUEST

Company wants to recover cost of Emporia plant

BY BRANDY NANCE
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The effect of a new power plant in Lyon County on electric rates in Kansas was the subject of a state hearing Monday evening at Emporia State University. More than 25 people from Emporia and around the state attended the Kansas Corporation Commission hearing.

The application was to request predetermination of the ratemaking principles and treatment that will apply to recovery of the costs that Westar will be incurring by building the Emporia Energy Center, which is being constructed six miles northeast of Emporia.

The first phase of the peaking power plant is set to begin operation in the summer of 2008 with a initial generating capacity of 300 megawatts. Westar also asked for authority to apply for a rate-change request. Westar officials said the company expects to spend about $318 million to build the new plant and has filed a request that any predetermination apply to the investment up to the construction cost.

Jason Gray, the assistant general counsel to the KCC explained the hearing procedure and the KCC staff recommendation. After reviewing Westar's request, staff was unable to conclude that Emporia Energy Center is in fact needed or will be useful, Gray said. Gray also said that staff concluded that the load forecast that Westar provided KCC with is not an accurate reflection of future need. The commission will listen to the views of both parties and then issue their decision.

Gray said the public hearing is an important part of the process. "The comments are not taken lightly," Gray said. "The public hearing is a unique opportunity for the public to convey their views."

Monday evening's hearing opened up with a question-and-answer segment. Several members of the public stepped forward to ask questions. KCC members were not allowed to attend the question-and-answer segment because it would not be part of the official record.

Niki Christopher, an attorney
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with the Citizens Utility Ratepayer Board, was present at the meeting and gave some comments before the floor was opened up to the public. Christopher said the board’s role in the hearings was to represent the public.

The issue of wind energy was raised several times during the public comment time. Christopher commented on this issue.

“We like to see everything as green as possible, as cheap as possible and the air as clean as possible, but you can’t have it all,” Christopher said. “We at CURB try to keep our finger on the pulse of things, but I get a lot more calls from people complaining on how high their bills are. Our statutory job is to represent customers and make sure their voice is heard in the process.”

Jim Ludwig, Westar’s vice president for regulatory and public affairs, also commented on a question regarding renewable wind energy in Kansas. Ludwig said that Kansas does not have a renewable wind energy portfolio.

“I’m hopeful that our (request for proposals) will result in Westar moving forward,” he said. Ludwig said Westar received proposals for wind power early this month.

Ludwig said the construction of Emporia Energy Center will support the company’s plan for future wind energy.

The second part of the hearing gave the public an opportunity to testify before the commission. Six people were sworn in and gave statements before the commission. A court reporter was present and the comments will be entered into the official record.

Many different issues were raised.

Jeanine McKenna of the Emporia Area Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, spoke for the chamber and for the Regional Development Association of East Central Kansas.

“We do support the construction of the peaking power plant,” McKenna said. “It will supply the power needs of customers during the summer months.”

“We respectfully urge the approval of the Westar Energy filing,” McKenna said.

Paul Johnson of Perry, and a representative of the Kansas Catholic Conference, had several comments to make. He said the Kansas Catholic Conference is concerned about the utility costs that low-income households already endure.

“Premises that are repetitively cut off for non-payment should be investigated,” Johnson said.

Johnson also said plans must be developed to access energy cutoffs of dwellings and ways to make energy more affordable.

Sarah Hill-Nelson, of Lawrence, and a representative of a renewable energy company in Lawrence, suggested three things to make Kansas more renewable-energy friendly: an integrated resource plan that includes third party assessments; enforcement of conservation and efficiency; and development of an integrated resource plan. Hill-Nelson also suggested that Westar offer a “green” plan for people who are willing to pay more for renewable energy.

Hill-Nelson’s comments met approval with the three-member commission, but she was told that her comments would need significant statutory changes and should be sent instead to the appropriate state legislative bodies.

Raymond Dean of Lawrence, a retired professor at The University of Kansas, proposed limiting the approval of fossil fuel peaking power plants until the company commits to a certain amount of renewable energy and requiring a certain percentage of Westar’s peaking power plant be devoted to renewable energy.

Dean also proposed a loan program that customers could participate in with power companies to improve their energy efficiency. The customers could pay off the long-term loan with money saved on their utility bills.

Bill Morris, of Topeka; and a representative of the Kansas Sierra Club, voiced his approval of Emporia Energy Center.

“We believe that this natural gas-fired (plant) addresses some of the immediate concerns with wind energy,” Morris said.

Morris said there is still room for improvement.

“We know Westar, with the help of the KCC, can do much better,” he said.

The next phase of Westar’s request includes more hearings including a technical hearing which will be at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday in the first floor hearing room at the KCC’s Topeka office, 1500 S.W. Arrowhead Road. The commission
must issue a decision by June 18.
Alison Winkelman, daughter of Tim and Karen Winkelman; Ryan Erb, son of Don and Diane Erb; and Jessica Vink, daughter of Terry and Sandy Vink, all 2002 graduates of Great Bend High School, graduated from the Kansas University School of Pharmacy in the annual White Coat Ceremony on April 23.
Funding slowdown hurting research at KU

LAWRENCE (AP) — The University of Kansas is cutting some corners in response to an unexpected drop in the amount of money it recoups from research grants for overhead costs.

The money, called facilities and administration dollars, will be about $19.9 million this year, less than the $22.2 million the university had anticipated.

That reduction has left 35 vacant jobs unfilled on the university's Lawrence campus and delayed such plans as installing a chiller at a research building.

Jim Roberts, the university's vice provost for research, said the federal government has kept the total amount of money earmarked for research stagnant in recent years.

"Kansas has done very well in the face of that, but it looks like we might get caught a little bit this year on it," Roberts said. "This whole forecasting method that we use is based on past history, and this year is just different."

The university takes a set amount from federal grants received by researchers, usually 44 percent, and combines the money into one account, which is administered by the nonprofit Kansas Center for Research Inc.

The money is divided among such areas as startup funds for new researchers and the chancellor's and provost's offices. Much of it goes to deans, unit directors and the operations of eight designated research centers across campus.

A large portion of the money goes for buildings. For example, the bond payments for the new $40 million Multidisciplinary Research Building will be $1.9 million this year, about 9.5 percent of the total budget of the Kansas Center for Research, and $3.8 million each year from 2008 until 2025.

Kevin Boatright, a spokesman for Roberts' office, said Congress needs to address the stagnant funding for research. Expenditures by the National Institutes of Health, the university's single-largest funding agency, has stayed near $28 billion a year in recent years, after doubling from 1998 to 2003.

"Institutions built their infrastructure expecting perhaps a time where the resources would not be flat as they are now," said Norka Ruiz Bravo, deputy NIH director.

Boatright said if the situation doesn't improve, the research office may have to find new funding, including asking private donors to help pay for buildings or partnering with the Kansas Bioscience Authority.
LAWRENCE — Diana Carlin, dean of the Graduate School and International Programs at the University of Kansas, honored eight students and 10 faculty members for their contributions to graduate education in an April 25 ceremony in the Burge Union.

Graduate teaching assistants received awards totaling more than $6,000 for their dedication and skills. The teaching assistant award winners also will be recognized during commencement on May 20.

Regina Peszat, Goodland doctoral student in French, received the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award. She is daughter of Delbert Rice and Karen Crow. She received a master's degree in French from KU in spring 2005, a bachelor's degree in French from Wichita State University. She graduated from Goodland High School.
Six University of Kansas students with an affinity for solving math problems won cash awards totaling more than $1,500 in the 25th annual KU Mathematics Prize Competition.

The winners received their prizes at the Department of Mathematics' Honors Banquet on Thursday, April 26.

Brian Moehring won the $450 first prize in the senior competition. He won the junior competition in 2005 and 2006. Daniel Hogan won the $300 second prize and Bridget Franklin won the $150 third prize.

In the junior competition, open to all KU undergraduates without senior status. Bowe Isaac Neuenschwander and Nick Tobaben tied for first place. Each won a $300 first place prize.

Neuenschwander, a sophomore in Computer Engineering, is the son of Karl and Marie Neuenschwander and is a graduate of Hoxie High School. Tobaben is a junior in Mechanical Engineering and Mathematics from Topeka.

Winning the third prize of $100 in the junior division was Rachel L. Debes, a junior in Mathematics from Hays. A Hays High School graduate, she is the daughter of Ken and Debbie Debes.

Fifteen KU students participated in the competition, which took place April 16 in Snow Hall. Each student had three hours to solve six problems, which covered all areas of mathematics.
Woman's study shows leadership is crucial

Tona Leiker, daughter of Myron Veh, Norton, and the late Darlene Veh, is the nursing department chair at the Tabor College Division of Adult Professional Studies in Wichita. Mrs. Leiker recently presented her research findings on "Thriving or Surviving: Nursing Home Case Studies of Leadership, Communication and Teamwork Within the Lens of Complexity Theory". She said, "The study is important because, as you know, we're all aging. The aging population is growing tremendously."

Her study used complexity science as a theoretical framework to describe working conditions in four nursing homes: two high-performing homes and two low-performing homes. Her findings showed leadership in the high-performing homes created a clear, coherent organizational mission and identity that fostered a strong connection among staff, a constant flow of information, and the use of diverse mental models to provide resident care.

In contrast, the low-performing homes demonstrated a fragmented mission and identity that eroded trust and relationships between staff members, contributed to poor communication and fostered isolation and a lack of continuity in resident care.

Mrs. Leiker is a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas School of Nursing, concentrating in health professions education. She has held positions on local, state and national boards, including the national Advisory Council for the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, the American Nurses Association Congress of Nursing Practice and the Board of Directors for the Kansas Nurses Assistance Program. She has served as president of the National Nurses Society on Addictions and the Kansas School Nurse Organization.

Last year, she received the Sigma Theta Tau International Epsilon Gamma Chapter-at-Large Exemplar Award for her leadership in nursing over the last 28 years. She received the 2004 Patricia A. Devine Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse Award from the Kansas State Nurses Association for excellence in psychiatric-mental health nursing. She also received the Joyce W. Markendorf Excellence in School Mental Health Award in 2001 and was a 1992 recipient of the Nursing: The Heart of Healthcare Award from the University of Kansas. She also received the Midwest Nursing Research Society's Doctoral Research Scholarship in March to support dissemination of the research.
Six University of Kansas students with an affinity for solving math problems won cash awards totaling more than $1,500 in the 25th annual KU Mathematics Prize Competition.

The winners will receive their prizes at the Department of Mathematics Honors Banquet on Thursday, April 24.

Brian Moehring won the $450 first prize in the competition. He won the junior competition in 2005 and 2006. Daniel Hogan won the $300 second prize, and Bridget Franklin won the $150 third prize.

In the junior competition, open to all KU undergraduates without senior status, Bowe Neuenschwander and Nick Tobaben tied for first place. Each won a $300 first-place prize. Rachel Debes won the $100 third prize.

Fifteen KU students participated in the competition, which took place April 16 in Snow Hall. Each student had three hours to solve six problems, which covered all areas of mathematics. Examples of problems can be viewed at www.math. ku.edu/~jmartin/competition/2007.html.

Among those winners was Bowe Neuenschwander, sophomore in computer engineering, son of Karl and Lu Neuenschwander; Hoxie High School.

Wanda Russell inducted into National Technical Honor Society

The Northwest Kansas Technical College of Goodland, KS, is proud to announce the inductions of Wanda Russell, Hoxie, KS, into the National Technical Honor Society. Wanda is a student in the Medical Assistant Program.

The purpose of the National Technical Honor Society is to reward excellence in work force education, to develop self-esteem and pride, and to encourage students to reach for higher levels of achievement. NTHS promotes business and industry’s critical work place values: honesty, responsibility, initiative, teamwork, productivity, leadership, and citizenship.

Students inducted into the NTHS must have a grade point average 3.0 or above, good academic standing, good attendance, eligibility for graduation in current school year, and faculty recommendation. Qualifications further include, but are not limited to, the desire to pursue a career in their field of study, dependability, and leadership within the department.
MOBILE MUSEUM SHOWS WORLD'S LARGEST THINGS

By LISA SANDMEYER
The Topeka Capital-Journal


It certainly should count among the world's most unusual occupations. And that's what it is for Erika Nelson, who makes her living taking her art on the road from Lucas in north-central Kansas.

"I'm going to blame it all on Dad," Nelson said. "It was ingrained early on that you always look at the fun stuff."

"I think she can take credit herself," Dwight Nelson, her father, said.

Erika's father lives in California, Mo., 12 miles from the World's Largest 8-Ball, a spherical water tower in Tipton, Mo., painted in honor of a local company that made pool tables. He grew up with Paul Bunyan (18 feet tall) and Babe the Blue Ox at Bemidji, Minn.

"We just assumed that all towns had something like that," he said. "There was a big duck up the road."

Blackduck, Minn., has three large duck statues, and Ashby, Minn., has a big coot.

Though not all towns have biggest things, Erika Nelson has been to most of them that do.

"I don't make the world's smallest version until I've seen the world's largest thing," she said.

Then her smallest version goes into the collection in the traveling show, a Ford Econoline van.

Though painted like a billboard for a sideshow, the van is the main attraction.

Its passenger side windows are a display case of tiny replicas of such attractions as Babe the Blue Ox and the World's Largest Can of Spinach. Inside, she has photographs showing her smallest versions sitting with their originals and a library of books on roadside attractions.

The miniatures are made by hand.

Nelson sometimes starts from scratch and sometimes converts an existing piece. The world's largest otter, for example, started from a figurine of a wiener dog, which was cut and stretched then painted.

The creation of large things seems to be a New World phenomenon. Canada and Australia are the two other countries that have big things. The attitude, Nelson said, seems to be: "We may not have a lot of history, but we can build a big chicken."

Nelson said she started making miniatures while she was teaching three-dimensional art at The University of Kansas.

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