KU announces graduates of law enforcement training center

Ryan Warden of Haven was among 57 graduates at the law enforcement training center.

The graduation was held December 21 at ceremonies at the 4-H Encampment Building on the Kansas State Fairgrounds.

The training center is a unit of University of Kansas Continuing Education. Established in 1968 as the central law enforcement training facility for the state, the center is near Yoder.

Ryan graduated as a Deputy Reno County Sheriff officer in Hutchinson.
Stout new member of KU Phi Kappa Phi

The University of Kansas chapter of Phi Kappa Phi honor society recently initiated 188 student members. Among the new members was Kelly J. Stout, daughter of Wayne and Debbie Stout, a senior political science/Spanish major.
Two Derby ROTC students were among more than 90 Air Force, Army, Navy and Marine ROTC members who participated in Veterans Day vigils and campus events Nov. 9-11 at the University of Kansas. Events included the traditional 24-hour vigils at the campus Korean and Vietnam war memorials and “A Tribute to Veterans” at the Dole Institute of Politics.

Derby participants included Tyler Lowell Fry, son of Monte and Carri Fry, Air Force ROTC member and sophomore chemistry major, Color/Honor Guard and Vigil. Ryan James Stanfill, son of Kenneth Stanfill, Air Force ROTC member and senior communication studies major.
LAURENCE, Kan. — A proposal to build an upscale hotel on Mount Oread has stirred up concern about the city's skyline and the preservation of a historic neighborhood at the center of the University of Kansas campus.

The seven-story Oread Inn would be close to the student union and would replace a few rundown buildings and already-closed businesses. The proposal also includes retail businesses.

Some architects and historic preservationists say the hotel's design doesn't fit with the historic neighborhood. They worry that a hotel atop the hill will alter the view of the city.

"People don't understand how big and massive this building is going to be," said Dennis Brown, president of the Lawrence Preservation Alliance. "It is going to change the skyline."

A landmark for settlers traveling west, Mount Oread was a staging area for marauders before the Civil War and it was later the site chosen for the university.

Developers say the Oread Inn would fill an upscale niche that's now unfilled at the campus.

"Of the Big 12 schools, we are the only college community that doesn't have a hotel on campus or within one block of campus," said Nancy Longhurst, general manager of the Eldridge and a member of the Oread Inn project team.

City Commissioner Mike Amyx said the project could be a great fit for Lawrence and the university.

"It's a real positive," Amyx said. "It could be a wonderful project for the city, and it's connected pretty closely to the University of Kansas. It would be great for alumni or visitors to the city."

There are two historic districts near the potential hotel site. The city's Historic Resources Commission, which oversees protection of historic buildings, unanimously voted to reject the hotel project because of its size and design.

City commissioners overruled that decision but did send the project back to the committee when the developers tweaked the design.

The new design had a facade designed to blend better with surrounding buildings and the overall height was reduced by 6 feet.
Aaron Keller Gets Phi Kappa Phi Honors

FOR THE INDEPENDENT

LAWRENCE — The University of Kansas chapter of Phi Kappa Phi honor society recently initiated 188 student members, including one from Halstead.

Don Steeples, vice provost for scholarly support and the Dean A. McGee Distinguished Professor of Applied Geophysics, was the keynote speaker at the Nov. 27 ceremony at Woodruff Auditorium in the Kansas Union.

Initiated was Aaron Keller, son of Cecil and Valerie Keller. He is studying European Studies.

Phi Kappa Phi was founded in 1897 at the University of Maine in Orono and is the nation's oldest and largest all-discipline academic honor society with chapters at about 300 colleges and universities in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Established in 1975, the KU chapter includes members in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and all of the schools of the university.

At KU, only the top 10 percent of seniors, top 7.5 percent of second-semester juniors with more than 72 credit hours and top 10 percent of graduate students are asked to join. Phi Kappa Phi's primary objectives are to promote the pursuit of excellence in all fields of higher education and to recognize outstanding achievement by students, faculty and others by election to membership.
Western Wyandotte County expected to feel effects of growth

by Mary Rupert

What happens when an area explodes with new growth and development?

Area leaders have long been expecting the I-435 corridor in western Wyandotte County to develop. Now that it has grown in the past half-decade, and is expected to continue growing, it may be time to assess performance, according to one expert.

"It is now time to stand back and ask the question, 'Did we do well in everything we did?" said Kirk McClure, associate professor of urban planning at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

According to McClure, the need for road improvements and school improvements are often the first issues communities notice when they are experiencing rapid growth.

McClure, a Wyandotte County native, said he was helping Basehor address these issues of growth a few years ago.

For the most part, McClure said he sees growth as good, and not creating enormous problems. But if someone wanted to be born and die in a rural area, that's probably not going to happen now in western Wyandotte County.

"It's just going to change the character of it," he said.

The downside of growth, he said, is dealing with infrastructure — what to do about the need for roads and the need for additional schools.

Another challenge Wyandotte County may face is learning how to say "no" to further tax subsidies or tax abatements, he said.

"I think (former) Mayor (Carol) Marinovich made some very smart moves in the early going by providing incentives," he said. "Now the problem is saying 'no.' Retail is not something we ought to be subsidizing."

The Unified Government doesn't need to subsidize projects such as the Schlitterbahn and Wal-Mart now that the Kansas Speedway is in place; new developments should pay the full costs, he said. Sales tax revenue bonds, in which sales
taxes go to pay off the bonds, have been used for many of the new projects. The new developments pay property taxes.

McClure said he is concerned about a government subsidizing or abating taxes for a business, such as the Schlitterbahn, that may be in competition with existing businesses such as Oceans of Fun. A population of 2 million is needed for a park of that type, and if the Kansas City area includes St. Joseph, Lawrence and Topeka, in the count, then it would have enough population for one park of that kind, but not two of them, he said.

By providing tax breaks for the Schlitterbahn, he asks, are local leaders subsidizing the financial ruin of Oceans of Fun?

“I'm not personally opposed to the Schlitterbahn, but could there have been other things we could have done to bring in tourist dollars?” he asked.

The amount of money governments collect from property taxes on homes does not pay all they need to provide services to them, he said. Governments rely on business, industry and taxes, and it's important not to give away too much for too long.

The next big project in western Wyandotte County is likely to be a destination casino. While he personally doesn't like gambling and thinks it is a tax on the poor, McClure said that he understands why Kansas passed legislation allowing it. A third of the cars in the Missouri casinos' parking lots typically come from Kansas, so there's Kansas money flowing into another state, he said.

While he said he understands the financial issues, he also believes there's a lot of social disorder that comes with gambling.

Retail expansion has its own set of problems, too.

“In the Kansas City area, we are building more shopping malls than the area can support,” he said. “The population of Kansas City is growing a little over 1 percent a year.”

Retail space is growing at twice that rate, which means that older malls will die, he said. It makes no sense to build more than an area can support, he added.

“Each community thinks, if I build them, I'll have more tax dollars, and sadly, that's not true,” McClure said.
KU sees 2008 as quieter

JONATHAN KEALING
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If 2007 was a tumultuous, yet productive, year for Kansas University, 2008 is shaping up to be a bit more productive and perhaps a bit less tumultuous.

KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway has said curing cancer is the university’s top priority. To do that, KU leaders said they needed a new affiliation agreement with KU Hospital and broader affiliations with other hospitals, such as St. Luke’s in Kansas City, Mo.

That affiliation process finally came to an end last month with the approval of the new KU Hospital-KU Medical Center agreement. But that conclusion brings KU to 2008 with a major challenge: implementation.

“Think we’ll really be able to build stronger, better clinical and research programs together,” KUMC Executive Vice Chancellor Barbara Atkinson said.

In addition to getting more money for research from both KU Hospital and St. Luke’s, KUMC and KU Hospital will embark on construction of a medical office building. With groundbreaking scheduled no later than Jan. 1, 2009, 2008 will be filled with site prep and planning for the new building.

Atkinson had said getting that building was her first priority when she became dean of the School of Medicine five years ago.

While the hospitals provide a good portion of the funds for KUMC, the state legislature still provides a large chunk of the funds for KU as a whole. And KU, along with the other state universities, has an ambitious request for more money before the legislature.

All told, the state higher education sector is seeking $150 million more in 2008 than in 2007.

Last year, the state universities secured a down payment on the $600-million-plus backlog of building maintenance projects. However 2008 will see the universities looking to take another bite out of the backlog.

KU was also successful in getting two new programs on the regents’ list of programs worthy of state investment: U Kan Teach, which produces secondary math and science teachers, and an expansion of the School of Pharmacy.

If funding for those projects is approved by the legislature in 2008, pharmacy expansion could begin mid-year, when the university’s new budget year starts. The U Kan Teach program has already started with funding from private sources, but would be benefited by more state money.
The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2007 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of the Registrar.

Graduates from Gardner include: Jason Allen Carman, master of business administration; Sara Brooke Kendall, bachelor of science in business/accounting; Elizabeth Ana Rivera, master of science in education; Matthew John Schouwink, master of civil engineering; and Natalya G Steinke, master of business administration.

Graduates from Spring Hill include: Holly Renee Gault, bachelor of general studies/human biology; Trisha Tatum Morillo, master of arts/education; Morgan Suzanne Pritchett, bachelor of arts/political science; and Alexander J Waller, master of science/mechanical engineering.
Kansas University announced candidates who are eligible to receive degrees completed during the fall 2007 semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall and summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill May 18.

Kathleen Meneely and Matthew Say, both of De Soto, are eligible to receive their degrees.
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Additionally, the universities are asking for an overall increase in legislative funding equal to the rate of inflation plus 1.6 percent. That money would be used to defray future tuition increases, while still bringing up faculty pay and other expenses in line with peer institutions.

“In talking to several legislators, they’re very concerned at the increase in tuition,” regent Dan Lykins said. “It’s greater than the cost of living.”