Governor signs final budget bill of session.

TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has finished her bill-signing duties for the year, approving most of the final budget bill that legislators sent her. Altogether, the governor signed 183 bills and vetoed seven others, including three allowing two coal-fired power plants in western Kansas. She also vetoed a bill allowing Kansans to own machine guns, other fully automatic weapons, sawed-off shotguns and silencers.

The bill she signed Thursday amounts to $33 million and brings total spending to $13.6 billion for the budget year starting July 1. Overall spending would increase $391 million, or about 3 percent, during that time. The governor kept the $750,000 for road improvements outside the soon-to-be closed Parsons Army Ammunition Plant. It was a project, dubbed "the road to nowhere" by its critics that created the biggest controversy in passing the budget bill. Parsons officials want to turn the plant into an industrial park and view the project as vital. The plant is in the district of Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dwayne Umbarger. Critics derided it as a pet project for the Thayer Republican.

Sebelius did veto from the spending bill a section earmarking portions of gambling revenue for the state property tax relief fund, state infrastructure reserve fund and debt reduction. Legislators were counting on money from state-owned and operated casinos that will be built if the Kansas Supreme Court upholds the law creating them.

The governor said the law already sets out how gambling money should be spent and that creating additional stipulations would limit future legislatures from targeting such money where it's most needed.

The debate over the spending bill was contentious because House members said various proposals, including the Parsons project, were wasteful spending.

Senate leaders said the real dispute was about how much to spend. The House wanted to add $86 million while the Senate shifted money around without any overall increase.

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SENATOR RETIRING: Sen. Barbara Allen, an Overland Park Republican, is retiring after two decades in the Legislature.

Allen said she won't seek re-election so that she can pursue a master's degree in public health. She said she decided to seek the degree after surviving breast cancer. She was diagnosed in 2005.

Allen is chairwoman of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee. She also serves on the Education and Judiciary committees.

Now 47, Allen was elected to the House in 1988. She served there until 2000, when she won the first of two Senate terms.

She enrolled in the master's of public health program at the University of Kansas School of Medicine last fall. She plans to start full-time studies this fall.

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FEE INCREASE: Fees will increase by $4 to register a vehicle in the state under a bill signed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

The increase begins in January and will last four years, raising the cost to about $40 to register a personal vehicle. About $10 million more a year would go to upgrade the Vehicle Information Processing System at the Department of Revenue.

Secretary of Revenue Joan Wagonn says the current system is about 20 years old and needs to be replaced to provide law enforcement with more information more quickly.

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CREDIT OR DEBIT: Kansans will be able to pay their bills from the city or town where they live by credit or debit card starting in July because of a bill signed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. It allows the cards to be used for paying taxes, utility bills and other municipal services. The Department of Revenue already allows credit cards to be used to pay personal income taxes and most business taxes.
Benedict receives KU journalism scholarship

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas has announced recipients of annual awards and scholarships totaling about $300,000.

The Roger N. Wooldridge Journalism Scholarship was received by a former Columbus Unified High school student who is now a Junior at KU Journalism school, majoring in Strategic Communications. BSJ. Nicholas Jay Benedict, son of John and Debbie Benedict, Scammon.

Students from 30 Kansas counties, twelve other states and four other countries earned awards and scholarships in writing, editing, reporting, broadcasting, strategic communication and media management. The awards presented totaled more than $11,000.
Lawrence mulls fee for false fire alarms

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Lawrence may start charging fees for false fire alarms, one of several ways city commissioners are considering to help pay for new fire trucks.

Fire Chief Mark Bradford estimated Wednesday that if the city charged $25 per false alarm for fires and medical calls, the fees could raise about $18,000 per year. He said the city had about 700 false fire alarms in 2007.

But that amount is a small fraction of the $2.1 million that the city estimates it would need to replace two fire trucks and a rescue truck.

Up to $185,000 could be collected if the city required the University of Kansas and Haskell Indiana Nations University to pay $500 for nonmedical emergency calls to the campuses.

The city will study the issues as it puts together a 2009 budget, which will be tighter than in previous years.
KU honors 15 area students

Fifteen students from five area high schools were honored for their academic achievements in April by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment.

The honorees include:

Dighton High School — Marit Ehmke, Corey Moomaw

Greeley County High School — Ethan Schiegel, Kaman Schneider

Healy High School — Shelby Applegarth

Scott Community High School — Miles Doherty, Ethan Gechter, Tyrel George, Ian Huck, Trace Kendrick, Cole Pearson, Tawnia Smith

Wichita County High School — Erin Gerstberger, Gage Ridder, Aubrey Williams

The Kansas Honors Program began in 1971 and has honored more than 100,000 students. Scholars rank in the top 10 percent of their high school senior classes and are selected regardless of curricula, majors, occupational plans or higher education goals, according to KU.
The Santa Fe Trail
Kansas Chapter of the
University of Kansas
Alumni organization
will welcome students
to the Jayhawk family
and help them get a
head start on their
KU experience at a
Jayhawk Generations
Welcome Picnic at
6:30 p.m. June 5 at
Lakeside Cabin.

Chapter leaders in
the area, University
representatives and
Association staff
members will provide
useful insight and in-
formation about KU.
It's also an opportu-
ness to meet students
who will become
'Hawks in the fall.
Alumni are encour-
aged to show new stu-
dents — both
freshmen and transfer
— what it means to be
a Jayhawk.

The Association
will provide compli-
mentary food and be-
verages.

To RSVP, call or e-
mail Sarah Blaney at
800-584-2957 or ling-
eman@kualumni.org.
KU announces degree candidates

Kansas University held its formal commencement on Sunday, May 18, 2008. Two from the Chapman area were included in the 7,000 candidates who were to receive their degrees. Lauren B. Markward, daughter of Jerry and Debbie Major, received a Master of Arts in Communication Studies. Tammy M. Gleason received a Pharmacy PD, in Doctor of Pharmacy. This year marked the university's 136th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium. More than 4,000 members of the Class of 2008 were expected to participate.
Students commended in KU honors program

LAWRENCE — The University Honors Program at the University of Kansas commended more than 150 graduating students at a ceremony on Saturday, May 17, at the Crafon-Preyer Theatre in Murphy Hall. A reception in the courtyard of Murphy Hall followed.

The ceremony recognizes KU seniors who have completed the University Honors Program and the University Scholars Program, in which students participate during their sophomore year. During the ceremony, students received gold cords to wear during commencement activities.

Area students recognized include:

Marli Ann Smoot, Chanute High School graduate, daughter of Debra Smoot, Latin American Studies BA and Spanish BA Fall 2007. Gold cord graduate.

Andrew Stark, Yates Center, son of Ronald and Judith Stark, East Asian Lang and Cultures BA. Senior. Gold cord graduate.
Join's Mortar Board at KU

LAWRENCE — John Babcock, a graduate of Holton High School currently attending the University of Kansas, is among 48 KU students recently initiated into Mortar Board, a senior honor society.

Babcock, son of Paul and Debbie Babcock, formerly of Holton, recently completed his junior year at KU. He is pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in music and fine arts.

Initiation ceremonies were held in April for the Mortar Board, members of which are selected based on distinguished ability and achievement in scholarship, leadership and service. Students must have a 3.0 grade-point average and hold senior status during some or all of the academic year.

What became KU's Mortar Board chapter was founded in 1912 as the Torch senior women's honor society. In 1924, it affiliated with the national Mortar Board women's honor society. Mortar Board opened membership to men in 1975. This year, 85 students applied for membership at KU.

This year, the KU chapter initiated its first honorary members, Chancellor Robert Hemenway and Vice Provost for Student Success Marlesa Roney.
KU honors Iolans

The William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas has announced the following recipients of annual awards and scholarships:

Nathan A. Gill received an Angelo Scott News Reporting Award for outstanding reporting on the University Daily Kansan, and Scott Robert Toland received a John P. Kaiser Scholarship. Gill and Toland are both from Iola.

Dean Ann Brill announced the 130 award and scholarship recipients during an April 29 ceremony in the Kansas Union. Funds for these awards and scholarships were made possible by private donations to KU Endowment. Angelo Scott was the former publisher of The Iola Register.
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