The Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — A group of University of Kansas students and their professor will take on a giant task today when they move a community building they constructed to Greensburg.

The project is the students’ contribution to a reconstruction effort for the tornado-ravaged town.

The group of architectural students built the structure in a warehouse on the site of the old Farmland Industries plant. They started in January, gathering wood for the project at the former Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant in De Soto.

Last week they began disassembling their creation to get it ready for the 400-mile trip to Greensburg, which was mostly destroyed when a massive tornado struck the western town last May. The drive to Greensburg is normally only 270 miles, but the journey to transport the building will take longer because the group will go east past Wellsville before heading west to avoid overpasses and narrow roads.

The 22 graduate students will live in southwest Kansas starting today and stay through May 4 — the one-year anniversary of the tornado.
Volunteer work provides alternative spring break for 49 KU students

LAWRENCE — For spring break this year, 49 University of Kansas students took their pick of seven getaway spots — but not exactly for a carefree vacation. Their sandy beach might be a Hurricane Katrina recovery site, and their night on the town could turn into a 48-hour homeless experience.

KU students will work March 15-22 with agencies in Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Washington, D.C. Their roles will include providing volunteer help with issues such as children’s services, conservation, health care, hurricane relief, language and culture acquisition, environmental preservation and people with disabilities. The program costs participants $250 ($210 for site leaders) and covers their transportation, housing and meals.

Mauntell Renee Ford, daughter of Allison Ford Wilson, a freshman pre-business major, will help rebuild housing at Lakeshore, Miss. This small Mississippi town was hit hard by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and still needs help rebuilding more than 5,000 homes in the community. Participants will help rebuild homes for residents who were not covered by insurance. The program is affiliated with a local church but KU students are only expected to assist with recovery efforts of this program. They also will work with volunteers from across the country to help residents repair their homes or distribute food and supplies.

More information about this program is available at the Web site www.rebuildlakeshore.com

The student-run Alternative Breaks program centers on service-learning trips that offer students a unique opportunity to make volunteer efforts part of their educational experience. After students are selected for the program, they are required to attend the Special Projects in the Community course to prepare them for their trips.

An Alternative Spring Break counts as one unit for the University Honors Program, which requires students who want to graduate with honors to complete one or two honors units outside the classroom.

Ben Berning, Shawnee senior, and Ashley Bloom, Hutchinson senior, are Alternative Breaks co-directors. Heidi Pierson, Clay Center junior, and Lake Wooten, Mission Hills senior, spring break site coordinators, selected the sites.

Alternative Breaks was established in 1995 at KU with a spring break trip to El Paso, Texas. Since then it has expanded, with more sites and opportunities to volunteer being added every year. Alternative Breaks works in partnership with KU’s Center for Community Outreach, a student-run and student-funded organization that runs 15 volunteer programs and serves as a coordinating group for KU students interested in volunteer projects.

Administrative advisers for Alternative Breaks are Linda Luckey, assistant to the senior vice provost, and Rueben Perez, director of the Student Involvement and Leadership Center. Perez teaches the Special Projects in the Community course, assisted by Berning, Bloom, Pierson and Wooten.

All KU participants in the Alternative Spring Breaks program are listed by hometown at www.news.ku.edu/2008/february/29/altspring08.shtml.
Silver Lake to send eight journalists to state contest

By Shelby Brokaw

Just like a human body, a journalism staff has different components that contribute to its well being. There's newspaper writing, the mouth of the body; yearbook design, the memory compartment of the brain; photography, the eyes of the face, and even teamwork, the heart and the most central organ of the body. Each of these components is portrayed clearly in the Silver Lake High School journalism staff.

"My favorite aspect of journalism is writing because I like being able to put information about an event and quotes from the people involved in the event into an eye-opening story," said sophomore Shelby Kampsen.

"Photography is my favorite aspect of journalism because I really like taking pictures," junior Heather Herrmann said.

On Feb. 22, Silver Lake Journalism II and Journalism III students were among the hundreds of high schoolers from 42 schools, size 3A to 6A, which poured onto the campus of the University of Kansas. The event: the Kansas Scholastic Press Association Regional Journalism Contest. Silver Lake faced 20 other schools in the 3A-4A division.

Eight students qualified to represent Silver Lake at the state level: Freshman Chloe Austin achieved honorable mention in Newspaper Sports Writing, sophomore Shelby Brokaw attained second in Headline Writing and third in Newspaper Design, sophomore Samie Darling earned honorable mention in Theme/Graphics, junior Heather Herrmann secured second in Yearbook Copy Writing and honorable mention in Feature Writing, sophomore Shelby Kampsen acquired honorable mention in Feature Writing, sophomore Chelsea Reid collected honorable mention in Theme/Graphics, Jessica Schaefer received honorable mention in Cutline Writing, and junior Jessica Stadler captured honorable mention in News Writing.

Other competitors at the regional tournament included Chelsea Anderson, Kayla Augustine, Jerod Barker, Katie Barnes, Karlee Brunner, Kerry Dick, Cortney Immenshuh, Colby Killinger, Autumn Runyan, Lindsay Taylor and Jenna Yoder.

Video production students in Kansas were unable to compete at the regional level, but may compete at the state tournament, which will be held May 3, also at KU.

The staff, which took second place at state last year and third place the three years prior, has high expectations for the state competition.

"I hope that as a journalism staff we place at state," Herrmann said. "I hope we do better than we did last year."

For the Silver Lake journalism staff, which will be working as a single unit, doing better means taking home the long-craded first-place state trophy.

— Shelby Brokaw is a student at Silver Lake High School.
The 24th annual Parkinson's symposium for health care workers, Parkinson's patients and their caregivers will take place from 9 a.m. to noon April 12 in the Polsky Theatre of the Carlsen Center at Johnson County Community College. The college is at 12345 College Blvd. in Overland Park.

The symposium will address the treatment and management of Parkinson's disease and its symptoms. Featured speakers will include Dr. Katherine Widnell, director of the Wichita Parkinson's Center; Dr. J. David Garnett, associate professor of otolaryngology at the University of Kansas Medical Center; and Dr. Julé Nazzaro, associate professor of neurosurgery and director of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

The program is approved for contact hours for registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, social workers, registered dietitians, counselors and others. For more information or to register, call 469-2323.

— The Olathe News staff
House tentatively OKs budget

By James Carlson
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

House members on Wednesday gave tentative approval to a $13.4 billion state budget that funds a third year of the K-12 school financing plan and provides money for disaster assistance related to the December ice storms.

But the budget left some bigger issues to be settled when the Legislature does further budget work in May.

The measure increases state spending by $272 million, a 2.1 percent bump from last year. Those numbers, however, don’t include the May budget work to be done, and the possibility of less-than-expected new revenue numbers coming in April worried some.

“I just hope we have the money to be able to fund those highest priorities, but right now, we don’t have the revenue to fund a lot of things,” said Rep. Sharon Schwartz, R-Washington, chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee.

Representatives will take final action on the bill today.

The House included $50.5 million to aid in disaster recovery, primarily for the December ice storms. The Kansas Division of Emergency Management on Wednesday estimated damage to the 65 affected Kansas counties had climbed to $381 million.

Another big-ticket item was $3.8 billion for K-12 education, a 5.2 percent increase over last year’s funding.

But other major funding decisions were delayed until near the end of the session in May.

The bill left until later the entire $21 million budget funding for the Commission on Veterans Affairs, $18 million for an early childhood block grant, and $15 million for home- and community-based services.

Rep. Tom Sawyer, D-Wichita, worried the state’s April consensus revenue numbers could affect those programs.

“Unless the April numbers come in much higher, most of that won’t be funded,” he said.

But Rep. Lee Tafanelli, R-Ozawkie, a member of the appropriations panel, called the budget a “solid first step.”

The proposed budget also:
- Deletes $6.4 million from Gov. Kathleen Sebelius’ proposed Kansas Public Employees Retirement System budget, which would have given state retirees a 1 percent cost-of-living increase.
- Deletes money for the governor’s proposed three-year phase in of all-day kindergarten.
- Requires the Division of Legislative Post Audit to produce a report on the economic impact to the state of illegal immigration.
- Includes $1 million to help plan for the expansion of the School of Pharmacy at the University of Kansas.

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Consultant: Pick a direction for the city

By Tim Hrenchir
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

It is up to the Topeka City Council to decide what it wants to do now in terms of strategic planning, a consultant told the council Tuesday night.

"We’re not trying to drive this bus any further," said Charles Jones, director of the KU Public Management Center.

The city paid $2,500 for Jones and Jonathan Morris, an instructor at the public management center, to preside over a retreat last month in which council members discussed the city's long-range needs.

The council identified areas of concern that included crime reduction, improving deteriorating neighborhoods, expanding public transportation and providing more opportunities for youths.

Several council members said afterward they thought the retreat was productive.

Jones, who also is a Douglas County commissioner, appeared before the council Tuesday at a work session preceding its regular meeting. He suggested the council needs to engage in a deeper discussion about growth, which he says is one issue the city needs to address.

Jones also told council members they need to determine a direction for the city "without us telling you."

"This is the end of what we do," he said.

City manager Norton Bonaparte asked council members near the end of Tuesday's session whether they wanted to continue developing a long-range strategic plan and how they would want to proceed.

Deputy Mayor Brett Blackburn, who was running the work session, replied that the council would address those questions later.

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By Jan Biles
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

LAWRENCE — University of Kansas architecture students weathered drenching rain and lightning Monday morning as they secured sections of a modular building they had constructed to the beds of seven semitrailers parked at the old Farmland Industries plant east of Lawrence.

The 1,600-square-foot sustainable prototype was headed to tornado-ravaged Greensburg, where it will be reassembled on a concrete foundation and finished in the next two months for use as an arts center.

The trip was expected to take most of the day, with the convoy traveling a 325-mile route plotted by the Kansas Department of Transportation to ensure clearance of bridges and overpasses.

"It's been rewarding to see the building take shape over the last few weeks and see our work from the beginning of the semester come to life," said Jenny Kivett, a graduate student from Victoria. "There is still a tremendous amount of work to be done, and we are at the point where we are excited to move to the next step in the process and see the project through to completion."

The modular building was designed and constructed by 22 graduate students enrolled this semester in Studio 804, a design/build program at KU's School of Architecture and Urban Planning led by professor Dan Rockhill.

Since its origin 12 years ago, Rockhill said, Studio 804 has built prefabricated houses for community development corporations in Lawrence and the Kansas City area.

"This year we felt the calling to Greensburg was not to be ignored," he said.

The KU students will bunk at Pratt Community College and commute about 30 miles to Greensburg each day to finish the arts center. They will return to Lawrence in mid-May to participate in their graduation ceremonies.

Kivett said the building isn't being donated to the city of Greensburg. She and the other Studio 804 students were hired to design and build the arts center for a client.

"The agreement was to deliver a $600,000 building for as little as $200,000," Rockhill said.

The students reclaimed planks of Douglas fir from a decommissioned building at the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant near Lawrence for the building's exterior and are donating the labor for the project.

They also collected cash donations and secured seed money from the Kansas Housing Resources Corporation and American Institute of Architects to help offset the building's cost, Rockhill said.

Greensburg is the first community in the United States to pass a resolution to certify all city-owned buildings as LEED Platinum, the U.S. Green Building Council's highest rating for environmental sustainability.

This is the first year Studio 804 students will participate in the LEED process.

"The LEED (certification) was a big thing," Kivett said. "It's a lot of documentation."

When completed, 5.4.7 Arts Center — named for May 4, 2007, the day the F-5 tornado leveled Greensburg — will feature solar panels, wind turbines, geothermal heating, thermal massing and other Earth-friendly systems.

An open house for the new arts center has been scheduled for May 4.

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Seven oversize load trucks leave in the rain and darkness Monday morning from Lawrence on their way to Greensburg. The trucks were loaded with a prefabricated, environmentally sustainable arts center to be reassembled in Greensburg. The building is a project of Studio 804, a design/build program for graduate students at The University of Kansas School of Architecture and Urban Planning.