May 5, 2008

www.jerrymoran.house.gov

Welcome to “This Week in Congress.” I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Working to Protect Kansas Farmers and Ranchers: Before I came back to Washington, D.C., this week, I stopped in Ellsworth to visit with a few farmers and ranchers about the farm bill. I visited John Thaemert, past President of the National Association of Wheat Growers and stopped at Ellsworth County Co-op, Citizens State Bank and the pharmacy. These discussions were beneficial in preparing for the farm bill meeting that took place later in the week.

As a member of the Farm Bill Conference Committee, I participated in a meeting that began Thursday night and ended early Friday morning. While progress was made, I was disappointed that some Representatives and Senators failed to support a series of amendments that would have helped restore the safety net that has been damaged by negotiations that occurred in closed door meetings. These meetings failed to produce a bill that will respond to the risks faced by farmers and ranchers.

Senator Pat Roberts and I offered amendments during Thursday night’s meeting to restore cuts made to direct payments, both of which failed on party line votes. We also supported an amendment that would have restored cuts to crop insurance, but it also failed on a party line vote.

Meetings next week should bring the conference to a close and a bill to the House and Senate floor. President Bush has been unclear in his intentions of signing or vetoing the farm bill.

Joining Citizens of Greensburg for One Year Anniversary Activities: On Saturday, I joined the citizens of Greensburg to celebrate the community’s progress in recovering from the devastation of the May 4, 2007 tornado. There are also several other communities that were affected by storms that same weekend one year ago. It is good to see Kansans in areas around Macksville, Claflin and Ottawa County also moving forward after the damage from the storms.

An important sign of the recovery in Greensburg is the reopening of the Care and Share Thrift Store. It was an honor to participate in the grand opening and inspiring to know that the first business returning to Main Street is providing an important service to those in need. Thank you to pastors Marx in George, Jerry Mathew and the entire Greensburg Ministerial Alliance. The alliance and the Care and Share board of directors deserve congratulations for further restoring faith and hope to their community.

To stimulate additional growth and reconstruction, the U.S. Economic Development Administration approved $2.3 million to rebuild Main Street infrastructure. It is estimated that this funding will create 30 jobs and leverage approximately $3 million in private investment. I was pleased to take part in this funding announcement, which ensures that the Care and Share Thrift Store is only the first business to return to Greensburg’s Main Street.

I was also able to tour the 5-4-7 Arts Center with Chris Ballard. It was a pleasure to meet Professor Dan Rockhill and his Studio 804 students from the University of Kansas School of Architecture and Urban Planning. For the last 18 weeks, the students have been designing and constructing the arts center in an environmentally sustainable manner.

Thank you to Dr. Rockhill and his talented group of students for donating their time and resources to bringing the arts back to Greensburg.

President Bush also returned to Greensburg this weekend to give remarks during the Greensburg High School graduation on Sunday. The citizens of Greensburg and their neighbors are an inspiration to me and people all across the state and nation. The scope of their accomplishments is amazing given the devastation they suffered just one year ago. Although challenges remain, there is no doubt that Greensburg is on its way to once again becoming a place to call home. Go to my website to view photos from the weekend and read more about Greensburg a year after the tornado.

Remembering the Holocaust: It was an honor to participate in the National Commemoration of the Days of Remembrance put on by the Holocaust Memorial Museum this week. Congress established the Days of Remembrance as our nation’s annual memorial of the victims of the Holocaust. This year, I observed their memory by attending a service honoring their lives and also those
of our service men and women who liberated them from the concentration camps. At the service, I had the privilege of lighting a memorial candle with Susan Taube, a Holocaust survivor. During the Holocaust, Ms. Taube was deported from her homeland of Germany to a ghetto and several concentration camps before being liberated in 1945.

Along with stories like that of Ms. Taube, those in attendance heard passionate pleas for the world to keep its word when it said “never again” to the sort of mass killing that happened under the Nazis. Last year, I had the opportunity to visit Darfur, Sudan, where a similar type of government organized attack on its people is taking place. You can learn more about the Holocaust Memorial Museum’s effort to make sure the Holocaust is never forgotten and not allowed to be repeated in Darfur by visiting its Remembrance site at http://www.ushmm.org/remembrance and Conscience site at http://www.ushmm.org/conscience/.

Willing Kansas World War II Veterans to Our Nation’s Capital: This week, I welcomed another group of Kansas World War II veterans to our nation’s capital during their visit to the World War II Memorial created in their honor. I enjoy seeing our veterans in Washington, D.C., and having the opportunity to personally thank them for their sacrifices that we as a country still benefit from. I appreciate the efforts of the Honor Flight program and Bill Patterson of Lyndon for organizing this trip for these Kansas heroes. There were 37 veterans from the eastern half of the state and 13 students from Lyndon High School assisting them during the trip. Go to my website to view photos from the visit.

Participating in National Day of Prayer Event: On Thursday, I joined people of all faiths across the country in observing the National Day of Prayer. Since 1952, Americans from different religious backgrounds have come together on the first Thursday of May to pray for the wellbeing of the United States and those in leadership roles. I marked this year’s holiday by attending a prayer and worship service in our nation’s capital.

Whether in times of uncertainty, grief or joy, prayer has the power to comfort. Prayer has strengthened me many times as I have sought guidance as an elected official. The prayer service brought Members of Congress from both parties together for a time of reverence and reflection.

Speaking to Farm Broadcasters:

I spoke to the National Association of Farm Broadcasters while they were in our nation’s capital this week for the organization’s annual Washington Watch. It was good to see regional and Kansas broadcasters Greg Akagi of WIBW Radio in Topeka, John Jenkinson of Golden Plains Agriculture Network in Lakin and Tom Brand of Eagle Communications in St. Joe, Missouri. Earlier in the week, Senator Pat Roberts and I joined up to provide an update to Kansas media about the farm bill.

Visiting Soldiers at Irwin Army Community Hospital at Fort Riley: On Monday, I visited Fort Riley to visit with the leadership of Irwin Army Community Hospital and the Warrior Transition Battalion. While there, I toured the Soldier and Family Assistance Center and met with several soldiers who are currently recovering from injuries. I wanted to see how things are going at Fort Riley and see the growth since my last visit in September. When I last visited, Fort Riley was serving 75 soldiers in the Warrior Transition Unit. There are now more than 400. Construction on a new complex that will house 200 barracks rooms for the Warrior Unit is scheduled to begin this year.

Thanks to Commanding General Robert Durbin, Colonel Lee Meritt and Colonel Dawn Smith for their time visiting with me and showing me around the facilities. The good work and attention to care by this leadership team and others at Fort Riley is evident when visiting with soldiers and touring the facilities.

Attending Salina Rotary and Visiting Tony’s Pizza in Salina: I visited the Tony’s Pizza plant in Salina this week to learn more about the company and the products they make. Schwan Food Company makes Tony’s Pizza and the Salina plant employs around 1,700 Kansas. Last year, the plant used more than 138 million pounds of flour and 92 million pounds of cheese. Thanks to Al Schwan for the tour.

Before visiting Tony’s Pizza, I attended the Salina Rotary Club noon meeting where Mike Hoppock and North McCarther presented the program. Thanks to Wendell Nickel for hosting me.

Speaking at MidAmerica Nazarene University Commencement: On Sunday, I spoke at the commencement ceremony for the 2008 graduating class of MidAmerica Nazarene College in Olathe. I wish all 217 graduating seniors much continued success and happiness. Thanks to President Edwin Robinson and Reverend Dwight Douglas for the invitation to speak.

In the Office: Dave Fish, Debbie
Gann, Steve Radke, John Frederick, Don McGinty and Scott Schneider of Wichita were in with the Kansas aviation industry to discuss the Air Force Tanker decision and update me on Boeing’s efforts to challenge the contract. The contract’s value is well over $35 billion and would provide numerous employment opportunities for Kansans and other Americans. I think the decision made by the Air Force was flawed and I have joined the Kansas delegation in asking for the contract to be suspended until a review is conducted by the Air Force.

Tim Browder and Corey Peterson of Topeka and Bev Sauerwein of Wichita were in with the Kansas Contractors Association to encourage investment in our nation’s aging infrastructure. Greg Lewis of Osa-watome, Dan Copu of Hope, Marilyn and Paul Boeding of Sedna, Michael Johnson of Courtland, Dale Bradley of Miltonvale, Joe Kennedy of Frankfort, Steve Handke of Everest and Shari Weber of Topeka were in with the Community Bankers Association to discuss legislation that would provide regulatory relief for Kansas banks. Randy Hardy of Salina was in with the American Rental Association to share the challenges rental businesses face with health insurance costs, immigration policies and the estate tax.

Bob Page, President and CEO of the University of Kansas Hospital was in along with Kari Bruffett of Kansas City to discuss the importance of a Medicaid drug discount program, stopping Medicare physician cuts and the importance of funding graduate medical education. Ward Loyd of Garden City and Don Chronister of Topeka were in with the Juvenile Justice Authority to share their thoughts about the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. Members of the American Heart Association were in to talk about increased physical fitness education for children and legislation to promote stroke and heart disease research and prevention. Among the group were Sherry Kriegshauser of Alma, Linda DeCoursey and Hasob Swedlund of Topeka, Melody Saxton of Junction City and Kevin Walker of Olathe.

Scott Heidner of Topeka was in with the American Council of Engineering Companies to discuss legislation that would increase the number of H1-B visas available in the U.S. each year. Members of the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center were in to discuss the importance of the Community Choice Act, which helps people with disabilities live in their homes. The group included Dallas and Pat Hathaway, Paul and Jeremiah O’Dell, Christy King, Kevin Siek and Sharon Joseph of Topeka; Larry Burnett, Larry Burnett Jr. and Latonia Burnett of Hutchinson; Toni and Ashley Martin of Emporia; Dick Hosty, Abby Phillips, Colin Olenik and Ben Petrus of Overland Park; Dorothy Standridge, Daryl Lentz, Laura Austin, Marva Meats and Jimmy O’Neal of Wichita; Mike Oxford of Lonester; and Cecil Walker of El Dorado.

Mark Augustine and Trace Walker of Salina and Sean Williams of Ottawa were in with the North American Transportation Services Association to discuss high fuel prices and the upcoming highway reauthorization bill. Garth Strand of Hutchinson was in with the Hutchinson Credit Union to share his thoughts about legislation that would affect how credit unions operate. Members of the Kansas Building Industry Association were in to discuss the current housing situation in Kansas and emphasize the importance of Congress passing a comprehensive housing reform and stimulus package. The group included Leon Greaser, Don Klausmeyer, Mark McKenna, Wess Gaylon, Tom Baalmann Jr., Tim Shigley and Tony Zimbelman of Wichita, Dustin Hawks and Gary Pashman of Topeka, Farrol Brown of Pretty Prairie and Richard Standrich of Derby.

Carrie Newdigger of Macksville and her husband, Glenn, were in to talk with me about Carrie’s 2007 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Carrie is a science teacher at Macksville High School. The couple spent the week in Washington, D.C., and took a tour of the U.S. Capitol building.

Several other Kansans stopped by my Washington, D.C., office to take a tour of the United States Capitol building. Robert and Judy Parsons of Hugoton, Jason and William King of Ulysses, Don and Karen Montgomery of Burlingame and Walter and JoAnn Murray of Atchison took a tour. Also in for a tour were Mary Glenville of Topeka, Andrew Sramek of McDonald, Nadine Sigle of Osborne, Shawna Mitchell of McPherson and Michael Vogt of Marysville. In from Manhattan were Margaret Phillips, James Lindquist and Daryl and Joyce Buchholz.

Contact Me: It is an honor to serve you in Washington, D.C. Please let me know how I can be of assistance. You can send me an email, or contact me through one of my Kansas offices or my Washington, D.C., office.
118 Kansas high schools proved their journalism talents at the Kansas Scholastic Press Association State Contest on May 3. The contest took place at the University of Kansas with a total of 1,059 entries. Shown on the left, Jessica Shogren, senior, earned an honorable mention award in yearbook layout. In addition to her journalism award, her t-shirt design was selected for the state journalism t-shirts sold at contest. Her prize was $50. Jessica also accepted the All-Kansas plaque for last year's Chieftain yearbook during the opening ceremony.
Senators override governor’s veto on coal, but House doesn’t follow suit

John Hanna
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA (AP) — Senators override Gov. Kathleen Sebelius’ veto Wednesday of a bill allowing two coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas, but an effort in the House to follow suit stalled.

House leaders who support the plants worked on a deal to get the last few votes necessary to nullify the veto. That deal offered a share of the new power to Kansas utilities not involved in the plants’ construction.

But the deal required the trailer bill. Legislators drafted it quickly, but but senators insisted on considering changes before passing it 27-6. House members decided in the evening that they had waited long enough and adjourned for the day, postponing their override effort until at least Thursday.

“The trailer in the Senate was written wrong. We decided not wait any longer,” said House Majority Leader Ray Merrick, a Stilwell Republican.

Asked if the delay could cost supporters of the plants votes on an override attempt, Merrick said, “We might win some; we might lose some. It depends on who twists arms best.”

The Senate’s vote to override was 32-7, giving supporters five votes more than the two-thirds majority necessary. Supporters always have had more than enough in the Senate but have remained at least one vote short in the House of the needed two-thirds, or 84 of 125 votes.

Sunflower Electric Power Corp. wants to build two 700-megawatt plants outside Holcomb, in Finney County. The project has been blocked by Sebelius’ secretary of health and environment over their potential carbon dioxide emissions, because many scientists link such man-made greenhouse gases to global warming.

“What keeps coming back is minor variations of the original proposal,” Sebelius said during a news conference. “It’s sort of the plan du jour to try and get a couple of legislators to flip their votes.”

Sebelius has vetoed two bills to clear the way for the plants and reduce the secretary of health and environment’s power. Top Republican leaders offered the Democratic governor an alternative, making the plants 14 percent smaller than originally proposed.

She called the GOP leaders’ plan an ultimatum because they said they would try to override her last veto if she rejected it. She met with the leaders Wednesday morning, then held her news conference an hour before lawmakers reconvened after their annual spring break.

The governor has suggested allowing one plant, if Sunflower would commit to investing in new wind farms and starting programs that help its consumers conserve power. The utility rejected her plan, saying it’s unworkable.

Sunflower’s project has bipartisan legislative support, partly because many lawmakers view it as economic development.

“We are heading into a recession, and not having affordable energy exacerbates that,” said Sen. Karin Brownlee, an Olathe Republican. “It’s critical that we override this veto.”

Last week, Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson, the governor’s top adviser on energy issues, told reporters the administration was considering options to continue blocking Sunflower’s project even if legislators override Sebelius’ veto. He wasn’t more specific.

Sebelius said the only option her administration has discussed is the prospect of a third party — such as environmentalists — filing a lawsuit if legislators override the governor’s veto. Sebelius views a lawsuit as likely but said her administration would not be part of it.

Anticipating legislative action, supporters and opponents came to the Statehouse to lobby. Dozens of opponents gathered outside the House, briefly forcing members to walk between them to get to the chamber.

“We need to start factoring in concerns about climate change into decisions about our energy,” said opponent Brian Sifton, a University of Kansas senior from Kansas City, Mo.

But pipe fitters Kirk Miller, of Havensville, and Mike Wolownik, of Frontenac, said they are concerned about CO2 but that Sunflower’s plants would use technology making them perhaps the cleanest in the nation.

Sunflower estimates the cost for building the plants at $3.6 billion, but critics believe it could exceed $5 billion because of rising construction costs.

The new generating capacity, 1,400 megawatts, would be enough to meet the peak demands of 700,000 households, according to one state estimate. Sunflower and a sister utility, Midwest Energy Inc., serve about 400,000 customers in 55 counties.

Of the new capacity, 1,200 megawatts would go to two out-of-state partners helping Sunflower finance the plants. They are Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Inc. of Westminster, Colo., and Golden Spread Electric Cooperative, in Amarillo, Texas.

Sebelius acknowledged Sunflower probably couldn’t finance a single coal-fired plant dedicated to only Kansas customers on its own. But she said another utility could or that several utilities could collaborate.

Earl Watkins Jr., Sunflower’s chief executive officer, said his company doesn’t intend to abandon its partners and that the governor’s plan “doesn’t meet our members’ needs or the participants who have been working with us all this time.”
Earthquakes in Kansas a real threat

By Christine Metz
Lawrence Journal-World (MCT)

At the base of Tuttle Creek Reservoir, a 20-ton clamshell excavator removes giant buckets of earth, making way for huge concrete walls.

The amount of cement in those walls could pave a sidewalk between Tuttle Creek just outside Manhattan, Kan., and Washington, D.C.

This $150 million project is all the proof you need that earthquakes are a real threat in Kansas.

Without these walls, catastrophe could strike, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has decided. Twelve miles east of the dam is the Humboldt Fault Zone, a series of north-south fault lines that run from Oklahoma City to Omaha, Neb.

An earthquake in this region -- not much greater than one that shook southern Illinois earlier this month or was felt in Manhattan more than a 140 years ago -- could mean a breach in the dam.

The worst-case scenario? Water pours out at 300,000 cubic feet per second -- five times faster than Kansas River floodwaters in 1993. In two to six hours, water would inundate downstream Manhattan. The local shopping mall would be under 10 feet of water, the levee would fail and water would lap at the outskirts of Kansas State University. In the water's path are 13,000 people and 5,900 homes.

The scene is like something out of a disaster movie and not one all residents believe will happen.

But geologists and engineers say the threat is real.

"They are very possible in the Midwest, and they occur on a regular basis," said Kathleen Lust, the Corps' resident engineer on the Tuttle Creek Dam Safety project.

In the Fault Zone

Just 15 miles from Manhattan is Wamego, home to the first -- and largest -- earthquake ever reported in Kansas. On April 24, 1867, the earth moved as far away as Dubuque, Iowa. In Manhattan, people rushed to the...
Earthquakes in Kansas a real threat

From Page 1

Streets and a two-foot wave was spotted on the Kansas River. Doors and windows rattled in Lawrence. And a Leavenworth man was shaken off a load of hay. The earthquake was estimated at 5.1 on the Richter scale.

More than 25 earthquakes have been felt since.

Many Kansas earthquakes are along the Humboldt Fault Zone. However, Kansas' largest earthquake in the past 50 years -- one that registered around 4 on the Richter scale -- was along a fault line that runs from Wichita to the Black Hills.

"It doesn't matter if you are a native Kansan or not, most people are surprised to find out that there are, from time to time, small earthquakes," Don Steeples said.

Now a vice provost of scholarly support at Kansas University, Steeples has spent a good part of his career as a geophysicist studying earthquakes in Kansas. For 12 years, he worked to record every earthquake along the Humboldt Fault Zone. He found a couple of shakes every year, but nothing more than a magnitude of 2.7 which is almost too small to feel.

However, he believes the Humboldt Fault Zone has the potential to produce earthquakes in the 6 to 6.5 range.

"That's a pretty good-size earthquake," he said. "You know it wouldn't cause widespread devastation to homes. Damage? Yes. But flattening homes, killing lots of people, not a magnitude of 6 or 6.5."

Large structures -- power plants, dams and skyscrapers -- are most at risk, said Rex Buchanan, Kansas Geological Survey deputy director.

"For the most part, these are not issues that affect everyday people," he said. "Yeah, you might feel an earthquake, but it is not exactly something that I lie awake at night worrying about."

Earthquake-proof

Officials were aware of the Humboldt Fault Zone before Tuttle Creek was built in the 1950s. What wasn't as obvious was the threat powerful earthquakes posed to earthen dams.
That changed in 1971, when a 6.7 magnitude shook California’s Lower San Fernando Dam. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, a landslide carried away the dam’s crest and upstream concrete facing, leaving a narrow wall of dirt. Had the dam been at maximum capacity, it would have breached and flooded the valley below. More than 80,000 people were forced to leave the valley.

Beginning in the 1980s, the Corps of Engineers studied Tuttle Creek. It determined an earthquake between 5.7 to 6.6 would cause sand underneath the dam to liquefy into quicksand, causing the dam to spread out and the top to drop up to three feet. While the dam wouldn’t fall below lake level, a large earthquake would cause water to seep through the dam, eroding it internally until it failed.

To solve the problem, the Corps has engineered a project unlike any in the world. More than 350 concrete walls -- 45 feet long, 60 feet deep and 4 feet wide -- are being dug at the base of the dam to replace the earthquake-susceptible sand and stabilize the toe of the dam. The project is on track to finish by September 2010.

If an earthquake were to occur before then, the dam has been fitted with elaborate sensors that can set off an alarm system. Sitting below the dam are six sirens that will sound a warning alerting people to head for high ground.

Dam-hurting earthquakes have a probability of occurring once every 1,800 years, the Corps said. “There are still people that say, we are in Kansas. There are not earthquakes here. It is not going to happen here. I hope they are right,” said Brain McNulty, the Corps’ operation manager at Tuttle Creek. “But I am not willing to take the risk, and the organization is not willing to take the risk to jeopardize that many people downstream.”

To see more of the Journal-World, or to subscribe to the newspaper, go to http://www.jworld.com/. Copyright (c) 2008, Journal-World. Lawrence, Kan.
Lawrence—For the 11th year, the University of Kansas will sponsor a whirlwind tour of Kansas for more than 40 faculty and staff members, many of whom are new to the state.

The Wheat State Whirlwind Tour will hit the road May 19-23, visiting more than 20 communities and passing through 30 counties while covering in excess of 1,000 miles of roadway. Stops include Topeka, Barnes, Marysville, Concordia, Lucas, Palco, Goodland, Oakley, Ness City, Hudson, Dodge City, Spearville, Hutchinson, Inman, Yoder and Cottonwood Falls.

Participants on this year’s tour are professors, deans and staff members from the Lawrence Campus; KU Medical Center in Kansas City; KU School of Medicine, Wichita; and the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center, a division of KU Continuing Education.

Chancellor Robert Hemenway, who started the Wheat State Whirlwind Tour, said the annual trip is an invaluable experience for the participants.

"Year after year, the tour has proven to be an outstanding way for KU faculty and staff to get out and learn firsthand what makes this great state tick," Hemenway said. "They not only learn about its history, landscape and economy, they get a better understanding of where KU’s students come from and meet some great people along the way."

Hemenway will travel with the tour Monday, May 19. He will join the group in Marysville and depart from Concordia.

Highlights of this year’s tour include the Brown vs. Board of Education Historical Site in Topeka, Landoll Corp. in Marysville, Lake Wilson, the historic African-American pioneer community Nicodemus, a ride with buffalo in Scott County, Fort Larned, the Underground Salt Museum in Hutchinson and the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center near Yoder.

New stops on this year’s tour include an overnight stay in Goodland, a tour of the Ness City bank known as the “Skyscraper of the Plains,” the Spearville Wind Farm and lunch at the Wheatland Cafe in Hudson. A dinner with alumni in northeast Kansas will be held Tuesday, May 20, at the Prairie Castle/Kuhr Ranch in Edson.

Three of the “Eight Wonders of Kansas” are on the itinerary: Monument Rocks in Gove County, the Underground Salt Museum in Hutchinson and the Flint Hills.

Margey Frederick, director of special events and visitor services, said the tour is an opportunity for KU employees to discover Kansas’ hidden treasures and enhance their knowledge while having fun.

“Anyone who has gotten off the beaten path and really explored Kansas can tell you there is enough beauty and history in this state to supply a lifetime of traveling,” she said. “On this week-long tour, our participants get a taste of what Kansas has to offer and at the same time learn new ways they can give back to the state that gives so much to KU.”

Tour stops:
Monday, May 19—Topeka, Manhattan, Barnes, Marysville, Concordia
Tuesday, May 20—Lucas, Palco, Nicodemus, Edson, Goodland
Wednesday, May 21—Oakley, Duff Ranch pasture—Logan
County, Ness City, Dodge City Thursday, May 22—Speareville, Fort Larned, Hudson, Hutchinson, Inman Friday, May 23—Yoder, Ritchie Ranch—Lyon County, Cottonwood Falls

To view daily itineraries, maps of this year's route and photos of previous tours, visit www.wheatstate.ku.edu. During the tour, visit www.ku.edu for a blog detailing the experiences of this year's tour participants, photos from stops and updates on the tour.
Krista Heiser of Ramona recently was named a member of Sigma Alpha Lambda, national leadership and honors organization at the University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Sigma Alpha Lambda is an organization dedicated to promoting and rewarding academic achievement and providing members with opportunities for personal development, and lifelong professional fulfillment.

She is the daughter of Mark and Kathy Heiser of Ramona.
Goo Goo

Students use goo to replicate melting glaciers

KELLI BAMFORTH

STAFF WRITER

Goo resembling melted marshmallows simulated the flow of glaciers in Linda Rizzo’s classroom during Antioch Middle School’s Earth Day celebration April 24. 2008 is International Polar Year, Rizzo said, providing the theme for this year’s Earth Day.

“All classrooms, whether art, math or science, are having activities to make kids think about what is going on in the world,” she said. Ninety-nine percent of our fresh water is sitting frozen in the Antarctic. The glaciers are melting and the oceans are rising, which will impact all life. We are trying to bring this to the students.”

The glacier goo captured students’ interest in the melting polar caps, Rizzo said, because “they have something to play with and manipulate.”

Students soon began having a race to see which glacier moved the fastest.

The University of Kansas’ Cheri Hamilton, K-12 outreach coordinator, brought the activity to Antioch.

“The activity is designed to teach kids how glaciers flow and what they are,” Hamilton said.

Hamilton works at KU’s Center for Remote Sensing of Ice Sheets, a science and technology center with the mission of developing technologies and models to measure and predict the response of sea level change to the mass balance of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica. The center is a partnership among six U.S. universities.

Other Earth Day festivities at Antioch, 8200 W. 71ST St., Overland Park, included activities and presentations about the Inuit culture, penguins, polar bears, reindeer, the aurora borealis and how to reduce your carbon footprint.

Staff and parents also designed a waste-free cookout.

“It’s just one day, but we’re going to show how much trash we saved by not throwing anything away,” Rizzo said. “Imagine what a difference that will make.”

Mary English, a “green-collar” worker trained by former Vice President Al Gore, talked to students about climate change and the growing levels of CO2 emissions in the atmosphere.

“I hope to convince you that climate change is indeed happening,” English told the students, “and what we can do to save the planet.”

Her presentation served as a slimmed-down version of Gore’s award-winning documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth.”

“There are lots of folks who say humans are so small and living on the planet such a short time that we couldn’t possibly have a real influence, or that the Earth goes through natural periods of heating and cooling,” she said. “But CO2 rising like this is not a natural thing. Not once have CO2 levels been on the decline ... as it rises so does our temperature, and we are getting warmer.”

Rising temperatures have melted more than one-third of the glaciers at Glacier National Park in Montana, English said.

“During the last 100 years the temperature shot up exponentially,” she said. “Before that the temperature was actually below normal.”

Middle-schoolers also got a look at electric and hybrid cars on display from members of the Mid-America Electric Auto Association.

Steve Werts, owner of an electric Volkswagen Beetle, told students electric cars help make the

MIDDLE SCHOOL CELEBRATES EARTH DAY, 2B

GET GOOEY

Glacier Goo Recipe
Ingredients:
¼ cup warm water
2 teaspoons Borax powder
1 quart plastic zip-lock bag
Blue food coloring (optional)
One 20-ounce cup
¼ cup warm water
1 cup white glue
One 8-ounce cup
Two stirring sticks
Directions:
In a large cup, add ¼ cup warm water and 1 cup glue. For color, add six or more drops of food coloring. Stir until well mixed.

In the smaller cup, measure ¼ cup warm water. Add 2 teaspoons of Borax powder. Stir until powder is dissolved.

Pour the powder mix into the glue mix. Stir until a glob forms and most of the water is mixed in. This happens quickly. Knead the mix for two or three minutes. Place the glacier goo in the zip-lock bag.

The mixture will store for a few months; rework the liquid when ready to use.
TO SEE HOW glaciers float on salt and fresh water, eighth-grader Adriana Pena, 14, Shawnee, drops an ice cube into a cup of water April 24 at Antioch Middle School, 8200 W. 71st St., Overland Park.
Institute honors planning director

KATRINA SEGERS
STAFF WRITER

For he's a good planning fellow.

The American Institute of Certified Planners inducted Dean C. Palos, Johnson County planning director, into the institute's College of Fellows Sunday at the American Planning Association's national conference in Las Vegas.

"It's just wonderful to be recognized by your peers for the work that I've done over the last 35 years since I started working as a planner," Palos said. "I really feel honored about it."

Institute President Graham Billingsly said in a press release the College of Fellows recognizes individuals who've made exceptional contributions to the planning profession, "devoted their careers to excellence in planning," and "set the highest standards for professional planners."

Assistant County Manager Bernice Duletski said induction is "really the highest award in the planning profession."

"I'm very proud of (Palos), proud of what he has accomplished," Duletski said, "and that I'm working with someone of that caliber in the profession."

Palos said "it's very important to be a bottom-up planner."

"It's very important to have input from people who are going to be affected by your plans early on," he said. "To get their opinions and get them involved because I've learned over the last 35 years there's lots of different ideas and I don't always have the best one for how to make things better."

He said he enjoys feeling his work benefits the community. One example he cited is downtown Lawrence, which he persuaded the city to preserve during his eight years there.

Palos said in past years celebrations took place on the University of Kansas campus, but this year's celebration of KU's national basketball title focused on Lawrence's downtown.

Ochsner Hare Hare President Ralph Ochsner said Palos, who worked for him after college, has "always been a high achiever and Lawrence hired Palos after Ochsner's firm completed a project for the city."

"I'm very pleased for Dean. I think he deserves it for the quality of work that he's done over the years," Ochsner said. "To his credit he's not been burned out by dealing with the public. Dean is kind of the ultimate people person. He's simply excellent at working with people."

Palos said he is also proud of his work in redeveloping the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant area and his part in the Comprehensive Arterial Road Network Plan for the county.

"They're being implemented and it's great to feel like you've contributed to the quality of life in the community. You're making the community better."

Palos also helps shape the minds of future planners as an instructor at KU and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

"I give the students the benefit of my experience of what I know works and what I know doesn't work."

Institute honors planning director

KATRINA SEGERS
STAFF WRITER
Tracy Russo, associate professor of Communication Studies, presents "Generational Differences" as part of the Professional Edge 2008 Breakfast Series at 8 a.m. in Room 165, Regnier Hall, KU Edwards Campus, 12600 Quivira Road, Overland Park. The event is free. For details, call 897-8400 or go to http://edwardscampusku.edu/speaker.
The medical/pharmaceutical professions are scrambling to accommodate aging baby boomers, the huge post-World War II generation that is beginning to confront health issues and, inevitably, the need for stepped-up medical attention and prescription drugs.

It is the latter – the pharmaceutical piece – that is challenging Kansas at the moment. The rub is this: There is a severe shortage of pharmacists to dispense the drugs.

Some call it a crisis.

The education of pharmacists is at the heart of the problem. Currently the pharmacy school at the University of Kansas, the only one in the state, does not have the capacity to graduate nearly enough students to meet Kansas' needs.

Like many of society's problems, this one has landed at the Kansas Legislature and on the desk of Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. They are working on a plan for a new pharmacy school building at KU and adding teaching facilities at the university's medical school in Wichita.

The governor recommended, and the 2008 Legislature approved, an appropriation of $50 million for the initiative. Though both Sebelius and legislators strongly support it, they are at odds over the method of financing.

A solution is expected during the Legislature's wrap-up session that opens today in Topeka.

State Rep. Don Hill, R-Emporia, who is a pharmacist, outlined the situation in an interview last week. While the number of people in need of drugs is on the rise, the number of available pharmacists is not keeping up, in Kansas or nationally.

To make matters worse, the pharmacy profession is aging. By one estimate, a third of pharmacists in Kansas are 50 or older and the average age of independent pharmacy owners is 54.

Right now the sparsely populated areas of the state are bearing the brunt of the shortfall, but Hill said the demand for pharmacists is high in all parts of the state.

The pharmacist said six or seven of Kansas’ 105 counties do not have a pharmacy and some 30 have only one.

"We've been managing by importing pharmacists from Missouri, Oklahoma and Nebraska, all of which have at least two pharmacy schools," Hill commented, "but (the shortage) continues to grow worse."

There is no shortage of young people who want a career in pharmacy, he continued. More than four apply for every one of the 105 openings at KU each year. The school is housed in Malott Hall, an older, outmoded structure that has accommodated several expansions. It no longer has the space needed to increase
the number of graduates.

The $50 million appropriation would finance construction of a new building, on KU’s West Campus, that would include classrooms, laboratories and library space. It would nearly double the school’s capacity, to 150 on the Lawrence campus, and create 40 places at a pharmacy school satellite at the medical school in Wichita.

Hill said the plan also includes the private funding of additional pharmaceutical research facilities in connection with the school. He noted that the KU pharmacy school is among the top institutions of its type in the United States in attracting research grants and in recognition of its achievements.

The new school would be highly valuable for another reason, Hill said. It would be a positive factor in the university’s ongoing attempt to obtain a National Cancer Institute designation as a Comprehensive Cancer Center in Kansas.

The center would offer many benefits, among them enhanced access to advanced cancer care and therapies, and having these programs closer to home for Kansas families.

Hill said he thought the differences over funding, which involve whether to use bonding or cash payment, could be resolved.

“We’re not far apart,” he said, adding that it helps that both sides want to move the project forward.

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