More Than $184,000 Given To OHS Seniors

BY DUSTIN KASS
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The local scholarship pot grew again this year, and Osawatomie High School seniors reaped the benefits Monday night. Forty-seven seniors garnered more than $184,000 in local scholarships during the Frank Elliott Scholarship and Award Night at OHS. The total soared past last year’s mark of $144,000 in local scholarships distributed.

The seniors also were awarded nearly another $180,000 in college awards and scholarships during the event.

Students who received awards during the banquet were:

**Jake Auten:** Whitaker Brothers of Beagle Scholarship, $4,000 (renewable while enrolled in medical field at University of Kansas); Osawatomie Wrestling Club Scholarship, $250.

**Ethan Bailey:** Rachel Dalton Memorial Scholarship, $500; Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); OHS Science Club Scholarship, $100; Twin Rivers Jazz Band Scholarship, $500; Mike and Rick Stephens Deserving Musician Scholarship, $1,500; Baker University Academic Leadership Scholarship, $1,500; Baker University ACT Scholarship, $5,000; Baker University University Scholarship, $7,000.

**Angel Bartlett:** Ladies Auxiliary of Eagles Scholarship, $100; Osawatomie Lions Club Vocational Scholarship, $300.

**Seth Buckman:** Osawatomie Rotary Archie Parks Scholarship, $500.

**Skye Chester:** Lois Hanna Kinkead Scholarship, $1,000; Craig Powell Memorial Scholarship, $100; William and Nadine Eddy Scholarship, $300; Fort Hays State University Silver Scholarship, $800; Fort Hays State University Award of Excellence Scholarship, $900.

**Alyssa Chisam:** Donald W. Dial Athletic Scholarship, $200; Monica Snyder Memorial Scholarship, $500; Marilyn Winegar Memorial Scholarship, $500; Derrick Jensen Scholarship, $200; Sub Debs Scholarship, $100; Martha Kuder Memorial Food Service Scholarship, $500; S.M. "Mac" Steele Scholarship, $250; Lois Jackson Memorial Scholarship, $2,000; Referees’ Good Sportsmanship Scholarship, $100; MidAmerica Nazarene University Basketball and Track Scholarship, $7,500; MidAmerica Nazarene University Leadership Scholarship, $2,000; MidAmerica Nazarene University Residential Life Scholarship, $1,500; MidAmerica Nazarene University Nazarene Church Scholarship, $1,000.

**Kelsey Cook:** Block Community Ruritan Scholarship, $300; George and Ann Graham Scholarship, $900; Kenneth R. and Helen Johnson Scholarship, $1,000; Simple Simon’s Pizza Scholarship, $200; Goodwill Scholarship, $500; Carter Family Scholarship, $200; Fort Hays State University Bronzo Scholarship, $700; Fort Hays State University Award of Excellence Scholarship, $900.

**Chalene Crouch:** Jason Graddon Memorial Scholarship, $100.

**Blake Davis:** Royce Bray Scholarship, $15,000 (over 5 years); Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); Charles Baker Memorial Scholarship, $100; Beta Sigma Phi Omicron Mu Scholarship, $300; Don’s Barber Shop Scholarship, undisclosed amount; Pittsburg State University Harold W. Compton Scholarship, $1,000; Pittsburg State University Achievement Scholarship, $300.

**Robert Dehart:** OHS Science Club Scholarship, $100.

**Ely Dodson:** Shawna Jo Dodson Scholarship, $300.

**Amanda Brooke Drake:** Jason Graddon Memorial Scholarship, $100; Willis McQueary Memorial Scholarship, $500; Neosho County Community College Softball Scholarship, tuition and book rental.

**Lewis ‘Wes’ Duncan:** Charles Barker Memorial Scholarship, $100; Harold Barnhart County: Miami

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- **Makayla Evans**: Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); John Vasquez Memorial Scholarship, $600; Pepsi Cola Scholarship, $500; OHS Alumni Association Charles McGuire Scholarship, $1,000; Osawatomie High School Faculty Scholarship, $250; OHS Science Club Scholarship, $100; Jason Grandon Memorial Scholarship, $100; Avila University Achievement Scholarship, $7,000.

- **Jessica French**: Osawatomie Recreation Commission Scholarship, $250; Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); Curtis and Becky Long/Edward Jones Investments Scholarship, $500; Marie Cherry Scholarship, $350; TeamBank Scholarship, $500; John and Arlene Shaw Family Scholarship, $1,000; First United Methodist Church Memorial Scholarship, $250; P.E.O. Scholarship, $500; George and Ann Graham Scholarship, $900; Kansas State University Leadership Scholarship, $3,000.

- **Brandon Garcia**: Ottawa University Tauy Jones Scholarship, $6,000; Ottawa University Cross Country Scholarship, $6,000; Ottawa University Contiguous County Award, $1,000.

- **Garrett Hall**: Carter Family Scholarship, $200; Fort Scott Community College Academic Scholarship, $1,100 ($550 x 2 years).

- **Starla Hardy**: ECKAN Scholarship, $500.

- **Cassandra Hendrickson**: Lone Star Road Scholarship, $1,000 ($500 x 2 years); Osawatomie High School Faculty Scholarship, $250.

- **Rachel Hilliard**: Roy and Teresa Vossler Scholarship, $400.

- **Tyler Keast**: Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); George and Ann Graham Scholarship, $900; First Option Bank Scholarship, $1,000; Bert Binkley Jr. Memorial Scholarship, $500; Partners In Education Scholarship, $500; Kansas State University Achievement Scholarship, $1,500.

- **Mitch Kerr**: Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); John and Arlene Shaw Family Scholarship, $1,000; Harold Barnhart Memorial Scholarship, $1,800; Referees' Good Sportsmanship Scholarship, $100; Pittsburg State University William Brandenburg Family Scholarship, $1,500; Pittsburg State University Achievement Scholarship, $500.

- **Elizabeth Klingenberg**: Olathe Medical Center Health Career Scholarship, $1,000; Osawatomie High School Faculty Scholarship, $250; Frank Elliott Scholarship, $300; Melvin Stockwell Scholarship, $800; Charles Barker Memorial Scholarship, $100; Pittsburg State University Achievement Scholarship, $200.

- **Cassie Long**: OHS Science Club Scholarship, $100.

- **Katelyn Lucas**: Osawatomie Pizza Hut Scholarship, $500; Partners In Education Scholarship, $500; Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); Sub Debs Scholarship, $100; Kansas State University Activity Scholarship, $1,000.

- **Dylan Manchester**: Dellmar Burrows Memorial Scholarship, $500; Martha Kuder Memorial Food Service Scholarship, $500; Osawatomie High School Faculty Scholarship, $250; John and Arlene Shaw Family Scholarship, $1,000; L.M. "Mike" Schwartz Scholarship, $1,000; Henry E. King Memorial Scholarship, $200; Governing Body of Osawatomie Scholarship, $200; Osawatomie Lions Club Vocational Scholarship, $300; Osawatomie Wrestling Club Scholarship, $100.

- **Kendra Mudd**: Ladies Auxiliary of Eagles Scholarship, $100; OHS Science Club Scholarship, $100; Bertha and Irving Walter Scholarship, $250; Auten Pharmacy Scholarship, $1,000; Robert J. Wagers Scholarship, $1,800 ($900 for first year and $900 upon admittance to nursing school); Mary Lou and Harry Cavinee Scholarship, $650 ($325 for first year and $325 for third year).

- **Kelecey Medina**: Business and Professional Women's Scholarship, $300; Beta Sigma Phi Perceptor Gamma Phi Scholarship, $100; Anonymous Donor Scholarship, $200; Osawatomie Recreation Commission Scholarship, $250; OHS Alumni Association Scholarship, $1,000; Ottawa University Alumni Scholarship, $1,000; Ottawa University Track Scholarship, $4,500; Ottawa University Black and Gold Scholarship, $4,000; Ottawa University Contiguous County Scholarship, $1,000.

- **Samantha Moore**: Roy and Mary McDaniel Memorial Scholarship, $550; Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000; Baker University Academic Leadership Scholarship, $1,500; Baker University ACT Scholarship, $3,500; Baker University Scholarship, $6,000.

- **Jasper Needham**: Mike and Rick Stephens Deserving Medical Student Scholarship, $1,500; Miami County Farm Bureau Scholarship, $500; Olin Church Memorial Scholarship, $100; Martha Kuder Memorial Food Service Scholarship, $500; Swenson Family Scholarship, $500; "Chic" Heckart Memorial Scholarship, $100; Ada Remington Memorial Scholarship, $150; Osawatomie Recreation Commission Scholarship, $250; Allen County Community College Dean's Scholarship, tuition and book rental.

- **Allysha Newton**: Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); OHS Alumni Association Charles McGuire Scholarship, $1,000; University of Kansas Freshman Achievement Scholarship, $3,000; University of Kansas William Allen White School of Journalism Scholarship, $2,000.

- **Thomas O’Barto**: Rachel Dalton Memorial Scholarship, $500; First Baptist Church Glenn Kester Scholarship, $100; D.A.R. Good Citizens Scholarship, $50; Osawatomie Historical Society Scholarship, $250; Fort Scott Community College Academic Scholarship, $1,100 ($550 x 2 years).
**Jon Packard:** Mike and Rick Stephens Deserving Athlete Scholarship, $1,500; Osawatomie Wrestling Club Scholarship, $250; Dakota Wesleyan University Wrestling Scholarship, $50,000 ($50,000 x 2 years).

**Ronnie Pursley:** Royce Bray Scholarship, $15,000; Kayla Blanton Memorial Scholarship, $1,000; Ottawa University Achievement Scholarship, $4,000; Ottawa University Baseball Scholarship, $2,500.

**Mike and Rick Stephens Deserving Athlete Scholarship, $1,500;** Osawatomie Wrestling Club Scholarship, $250; Dakota Wesleyan University Wrestling Scholarship, $50,000 ($50,000 x 2 years).

**Brenda Reynolds:** Carter Family Scholarship, $200.

**Christopher "C.J." Richardson:** OHS Alumni Association Charles McGuire Scholarship, $1,000; Silas and Hattie Whiteford Scholarship, $1,000; Baker University Academic Leadership Scholarship, $1,500; Baker University ACT Scholarship, $5,000; Baker University Band Scholarship, $1,500; Baker University Scholarship, $6,000.

**Danielle Robinson:** Carter Family Scholarship, $200; Cloud County Community College Dean’s Scholarship, $600.

**Derrick "D.J." Smith:** Osawatomie VFW Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship, $200; Joseph and Dorothy Whiteford Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); Freda Miller Memorial Scholarship, $1,000; Olathe Medical Center Health Careers Scholarship, $1,000; OHS Alumni Association Scholarship, $1,000; Beta Sigma Phi Perceptor Gamma Phi Scholarship, $1,000; Jordan Soucie: Noel Golding Scholarship, $200; Mike and Rick Stephens Deserving Athlete Scholarship, $1,500; Richard Buchanan Memorial Scholarship, $500; Bill and Joanne Free Scholarship, $500; Rae Lynn Jones Memorial Scholarship $400 ($100 x 4 years); OHS Alumni Association Charles McGuire Scholarship, $1,000; MidAmerica Nazarene University Basketball Scholarship, $3,000.

**Kelsey Stout:** Sub Debs Scholarship, $100; Miami County Farm Bureau Scholarship, $500; Ada Remington Memorial Scholarship, $150; Sam Walton Community Scholarship, $1,000; John and Arlene Shaw Family Scholarship, $1,000; Ada Saunders Memorial Scholarship, $150; Sam Walton Community Scholarship, $1,000; Ada Saunders Memorial Scholarship, $100; Bertha and Irvin Walter Scholarship, $250; Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); OHS Alumni Association Scholarship, $1,000; Kansas State University Activity Scholarship, $1,000.

**Amanda Troutman:** OHS Science Club Scholarship, $100; OHS Alumni Association Scholarship, $1,000; Dr. O. Appenfeller Scholarship, $500; Pepsi Cola Scholarship, $500; Nadine Weber Schwartz Memorial Scholarship, $500; Silas and Hattie Whiteford Scholarship, $1,000; Partners In Education Scholarship, $500; Baker University Presidential Scholarship, $8,000; Baker University Presidential Scholarship, $8,000.

SCHOLARSHIPS CONTINUES ON AS
University Academic Leadership Scholarship, $1,500; Baker University ACT Incentive Scholarship, $5,000.

**Timothy Walmann**: Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); Elks Most Valuable Student Local Scholarship, $500; Elks Most Valuable Student State Scholarship, $600; Andrew Workman Memorial Scholarship, $500; Architecture and Engineering Scholarship, $3,000 ($1,000 x 3 years); Kansas State University Foundation Scholarship, $3,750 (renewable at $1,250); Kansas State University Engineering Scholarship, $1,500.

**Alec Walters**: Allen County Community College Track Scholarship, tuition and book rental.

**Jenna Wendt**: Rachel Dalton Memorial Scholarship, $500; Freda Miller Memorial Scholarship, $1,000; Coalition Against Substance Abuse Scholarship, $500; Jason Grandon Memorial Scholarship, $100; Lois Jackson Memorial Scholarship, $2,000; Osawatomie NEA Scholarship, $4,000 ($1,000 x 4 years); Allen County Community College Academic Scholarship, $500; Allen County Community College Softball Scholarship, tuition and book rental.

**Tricia Yager**: Moon’s Hometown Market Scholarship, $500; Bradie Ursery Memorial Scholarship, $500; Bessie and Fred Zakoura Scholarship, $1,000; Sub Debs Scholarship, $100; Fort Hays State University Copper Scholarship, $500; Fort Hays State University SRP Scholarship, $400.

**Misty York**: Paul and Ida Trump Scholarship, $4,000 ($2,000 x 2 years); George and Ann Graham Scholarship, $900; TeamBank Scholarship, $500; OHS Alumni Association Charles McGuire Scholarship, $1,000; Sub Debs Scholarship, $100; Ottawa University Achievement Scholarship, $11,000.

**Ryan Zwick**: Osawatomie Rotary Archie Parks Scholarship, $500; OHS Alumni Association Charles McGuire Scholarship, $1,000; Auten Pharmacy Scholarship, $1,000; Silas and Hattie Whiteford Scholarship, $1,000; Emporia State University Achievement Scholarship, $500.
LAWRENCE (AP) — A University of Kansas professor, political blogger and author is scheduled to sit down with Jon Stewart on “The Daily Show” to discuss his latest book.

Journalism professor David Perlmutter is booked to be a guest Thursday night on Stewart’s popular Comedy Central show.

They’ll discuss political blogging and Perlmutter’s new book “Blogwars: The New Political Battleground.”

The book is an examination of the history of blogs and their effect on politics.

Perlmutter writes his own blog at policybyblog.squarespace.com.

He’s also associate dean for graduate studies and research at Kansas.
On May 1, the National Day of Prayer was once again celebrated. The ceremony was held at the State Capitol honoring the National Day of Prayer, in which prayers were offered for our nation, military, state government, city, churches, media, youth and families.

The National Day of Prayer was first proclaimed April 17, 1952, when President Harry Truman signed a bill establishing a National Day of Prayer. In 1972, the National Prayer Committee was formed for the purpose of coordinating National Day of Prayer events, a duty which it continues to fulfill today. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed a bill into law declaring the National Day of Prayer should be held the first Thursday in May.

As the veto session enters full swing, it is worth noting that a veto override attempt must be presented first in the chamber in which the bill originated.

On Thursday, May 1, SB 148, the second bill concerning the construction of coal-fired power plants in Holcomb, Kan., failed to achieve the two-thirds majority in the House necessary to override the governor’s veto.

The House voted 80-45 to override the bill, falling four votes short of the necessary two-thirds. The Senate earlier had overridden the veto 32-7.

SB 389, the Comprehensive Abortion Reform Act (CARA), failed to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary to override the governor’s veto. The Senate voted 25-14 to override the bill, falling two votes short of the necessary majority. CARA would have prohibited coercing a woman into having an abortion, as well as providing the opportunity for the woman to have an ultrasound prior to an abortion.

Also this week, on Friday, May 2, the University of Kansas football, basketball and debate teams were honored in the Senate. The 2007-2008 University of Kansas football team won the Orange Bowl this year, while the basketball team secured the NCAA College Basketball Championship.

The University of Kansas Debate Team was also recognized for achieving first place at the National Championship for the second time in three years, defeating second place Emory University and third place, Harvard.

It is a rarity that any one college should achieve three such prestigious titles in the same year, and as such, I am honored to have had the privilege to share in congratulating the University of Kansas on these remarkable accomplishments.

I hope you have enjoyed this edition of The Pyle File. Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving you in Topeka. Please feel free to contact my office on these or any other issues.

You can reach me at: Senator Dennis Pyle, State Capitol, Rm. 120 S, Topeka, KS 66612, 785-296-7379 or pyle@senate.state.ks.us.
KU announces top scholars

Class of 2008 scholars will be recognized during commencement at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, at 2:10 p.m., Sunday, May 18, at Memorial Stadium.

Gregory M. Brunin, son of Dave and Kathy Brunin, St. Marys, Biochemistry BA, senior, is a Solon E. Summerfield Scholar. He is a St. Marys High School graduate.

Lindsay Brooke Abbott, daughter of Scott and Patty Abbott, Silver Lake, Psychology BA DECL, senior, is an Endowment Merit Scholar. She is a Silver Lake Junior/Senior High School graduate.
KU prof to be on ‘Daily Show’

LAWRENCE — A University of Kansas journalism professor and author will be on the hot seat today when he sits down with Jon Stewart on “The Daily Show” to discuss his new book about political blogging.

David Perlmutter, associate dean for graduate and research studies and professor of journalism at KU, will be a guest on Stewart’s Comedy Central show. The show will air locally at 10 p.m. today. Perlmutter is the author of “Blogwars,” an examination of the history of blogs and their effect on politics.
LAURENCE (AP) — During a break in classes at the University of Kansas, Charles Rombold has his cell phone ready for texting. The junior acknowledges he sometimes even messages friends while driving.

Of course, the 20-year-old from Junction City is not alone, with 255 million cell phones nationwide and nearly three-quarters of their owners reporting that they're in use while driving.

Texting while driving has become so common that legislatures in 23 states, including Kansas, have proposals to restrict it, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

“It’s a bad habit,” Rombold said. “There are times when I’ve had a close call and I go back and finish the message. I’ve never had an accident but I know I shouldn’t push my luck.”

Yet, while people curse drivers distracted by cell phones and even the people who text while driving know it’s bad, only Washington and New Jersey ban the practice.

“There’s a lot of agreement that cell phones are distracting in the car, but no consensus on whether cell phones are distracting enough to warrant legislation,” said NCSL transportation analyst Matt Sundeen. “There is genuinely a mixed feeling among the public on restrictions on cell phone use.”

Texting continues to grow quickly in popularity. Last year, some 363 billion text messages were sent — more than double the 158 billion sent the year before, according to the CTIA-The Wireless Association, the industry’s trade group.

“Regardless of what you think about talking on a cell phone while driving, many legislators think that texting while driving goes beyond what is appropriate behind a wheel,” Sundeen said.

There’s no way to measure how many text messages came from drivers, but clearly it’s become a concern, and the trade group doesn’t oppose such legislation.

“We don’t think anyone should be text messaging and driving, period,” said CTIA spokesman Joe Farren.

The NCSL counts at least 112 bills under consideration in 30 states dealing with driver distraction such as cell phones and texting.

In 13 states, cell phones can’t be used while driving a school bus and another 18 prohibit cell phone use by drivers under age 18 or those with a restricted license.

But only five — Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Utah and Washington state — ban hand-held cell phones by drivers, though California joins the list in July. All allow drivers to use hand-free cell phones and exempt emergency calls.

Like people everywhere, Kansans regularly complain about people who use their cell phones while driving. Yet the issue has never prompted a law for the Sunflower State.

A bill requiring teens to wait longer to drive — Kansans can get a learner’s permit at 14 — also would ban anyone under age 18 from using a cell phone while driving. It passed
the Senate this year but got stuck in the House Transportation Committee.

And a bill banning texting while driving doesn’t have any traction.

“It seemed to be a no-brainer bill but it never got a hearing,” Rep. Louis Ruiz, a Kansas City Democrat, said of his texting bill. “To me, when you are driving you should be focused on the road.”

Other issues seemed to take priority: abortion, illegal immigration, health care and the fate of two proposed coal-fired power plants in western Kansas. Yet, House Speaker Melvin Neufeld agreed that texting while driving should be addressed.

“Actually I have been amazed at the amount of comments I have been getting from my district about wanting to do something about this issue,” said the Ingalls Republican. “They are particularly concerned about teenagers driving around doing this.”

A survey by Nationwide Mutual Insurance released last year showed 37 percent of those between ages 18-27 admitted texting or instant messaging while driving. It also showed 73 percent of all ages said they used a cell phone while driving.

Sundeen said 29 states, including Kansas, collect crash data related to cell phone involvement.

In Kansas, cell phones were considered a factor in 1,100 accidents from 2003 through 2006. They included nine with fatalities and 388 with injuries. Sixty-four percent of the accidents involved drivers 29 or younger.

At the University of Kansas, Leah Hoffman, a 20-year-old sophomore and frequent texter from Kansas City, Mo., recalled driving by a traffic accident last summer and hearing that texting was involved.

“It was the final thing,” she said. “If I ever wanted to do it, I didn’t after seeing that.”
Masons reach $15 million pledge

Kansas Masons are understandably proud as they celebrate their accomplishment of having reached and exceeded their pledge of $15 million to the University of Kansas Cancer Center for cancer research. Not only did they reach their goal but they did it nearly one year early.

Jeff Sowder, president the Kansas Masonic Foundation and chair of the campaign, announced to Kansas Masons through their annual mailing last sent last week that, with the recent $2 million gift from the Mark and Bette Morris Family Foundation, their total gifts to the KU Cancer Center have reached to more than $15.2 million.

"The Masons of Kansas have made a great impact on the KU Cancer Center," said KMF President Jeff Sowder. "We are extremely proud of the success of our Partnership for Life Campaign. Kansas Masons and friends have been generous in their giving. I told the Masons in my letter that our campaign has concluded, but our partnership with the KU Cancer Center is lifelong, and we will continue our efforts until there is a cure for this dreaded disease. We must keep the gifts coming!"
BLOG WARS — KU j-school professor David Perlmutter's long-awaited book, "Blog Wars: The New American Political Battleground," came out March 26 from Oxford University Press, and it's gotten good critical notices. He was scheduled to be a guest on "The Daily Show" with Jon Stewart Thursday, May 8.

As he put it in an e-mail Tuesday: "Everyone's first piece of advice for me about being a good guest: don't try to be funny. I think I can manage that."
The National Center for Science Education has established ExpelledExposed.com, a Web site to counter Ben Stein’s new pseudo-documentary film, “Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed.” In a similar vein, Josh Rosenau, a Jewish blogger and doctoral student at Kansas (Thoughts from Kansas — Scienceblogs.com/tfk), rips the film and Stein’s recent stupid comments about the Holocaust in a May 2 Yom HaShoah post. The film’s title refers to the supposed banishment of “intelligent design” from public education by “Big Science.” The film, like Stein in a recent interview, alleges a connection between Darwinism and Nazism’s Final Solution. Rosenau says Stein “is taking … a horrific moment in human history, and twisting it for his petty goals.” At ExpelledExposed, you can click on “The Truth Behind the Fiction” and then “Hitler & Eugenics” to read this: “Expelled’s inflammatory implication that Darwin and the science of evolution ‘led to’ eugenics, Nazis and Stalinism is deeply offensive and detrimental to public discussion and understanding of science, religion and history.”
Governor names panel on carbon dioxide

By SARAH KESSINGER
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TOPEKA (HNS) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius named a lineup of business and industry leaders Thursday along with scientists who specialize in climate change to begin planning the state’s approach to an expected federal carbon tax. Sebelius announced the new Kansas Energy and Environmental Policy Advisory Group just as the Legislature concluded a session that centered heavily on whether to allow construction of two coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas.

The debate centered on the carbon emissions expected from the two plants. Carbon dioxide, considered a contributor to global climate change, is also the target of debate at the federal level. Dozens of proposals on how to limit its emission from power plants and automobiles are under consideration by Congress.

Sebelius said in a statement issued by her office that experts agree Congress is likely to introduce a tax on CO2 emissions in coming years, which could raise the price on energy made by burning fossil fuels. The new advisory panel will focus on that challenge in particular, she said Thursday.

“By taking steps to prepare now, we better position our state for potential costs in the future,” Sebelius said. “This group will recommend ways we can reduce our greenhouse gas emissions while continuing to grow our economy.”

Environmentalists have called on state and national leaders to develop a strategy for addressing the rising CO2 levels in the atmosphere.

“Coal’s already 75 percent of our energy production in Kansas. Let’s see,” said Tom Thompson, Sierra Club lobbyist, as the legislative session concluded earlier this week.

“People need to sit down at a table and look at ways to get energy to people in the cleanest, most affordable way,” he said. “We need energy efficiency, we need wind (energy), we need all kinds of things that don’t add more carbon. People need to sit down and figure out what’s the overall plan.”

The group will be led by Jack Pelton, president and chief executive at Cessna Aircraft in Wichita.

The governor’s new advisory panel will work with the Center for Climate Strategies, a Pennsylvania consulting firm that assists states in establishing climate action plans.

“I am confident that the combined expertise of this group will lead to innovative solutions across all sectors of Kansas industry, which helps every corner of our state,” Sebelius said.

More members will be named to the panel, she said, as soon as legislative leaders make some appointments. The group will meet for the first time on May 20 in Wichita.

Members of the new Kansas Energy and Environmental Policy Advisory Group:

- Steven Baccus, Kansas Farm Bureau president
- Amy Blankenbiller, Kansas Chamber of Commerce president and chief executive
- Jim Boone, NorthStar Comfort Systems Inc. president
- David Braaten, University of Kansas geography professor
- Casey Cassius, Berkebile Nelson Immenschuh McDowell Architects
- Yvonne Cather, Kansas chapter of the Sierra Club council delegate
- Patty Clark, Kansas Leadership Center director of operations
- Johannes Feddema, KU geography professor
- Ashok Gupta, Natural Resources Defense Council, director of air and energy program
- Colin Hansen, Kansas Municipal Utilities executive director
- Nancy Jackson, Land Institute, Climate and Energy Project executive director
- Mike Kelley, YRC Worldwide vice president
- Mark Knight, owner of Knight Feedlots, Inc.
- Rep. Annie Kuethe, D-Topeka
- Stuart Lowry, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, executive vice president
- William Moore, Westar Energy president and chief executive
- Emil Ramirez, United Steel Workers District 11 assistant director
- Charles Rice, Kansas State University agronomy professor
- Bruce Sneed, Kansas State...
University extension program specialist

John Wong, Wichita State University urban and public affairs interim director

Ex officio members:

Rod Bremby, secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Ken Frahm, Kansas Energy Council co-chairman

Mike Hayden, secretary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

David Kerr, secretary of the Kansas Department of Commerce

Deb Miller, secretary of the Kansas Department of Transportation

Mark Parkinson, lieutenant governor

Adrian Polansky, secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture

Tracy Streeter, Kansas Water Office executive director

Tom Wright, Kansas Corporation Commission chairman