University of Kansas will graduate former West Elk student

LAWRENCE — The names of more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at the University of Kansas this spring — representing 95 Kansas counties, 48 other states and the District of Columbia and 44 other countries — have been announced by the University Registrar.

Lacey D. Hedges, of Grenola and West Elk High School graduate, will be among the candidates receiving her degree in Human Biology/Bachelor of General Studies. She is the daughter of Rex and Shirley Hedges, Grenola.

KU’s Class of 2008 numbers more than 7,000, including 2,555 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2007. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these candidates for degrees will return Sunday, May 18, for the university’s 136th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium. More than 4,000 members of the Class of 2008 are expected to participate.

Faculty and candidates for degrees will assemble about 2 p.m. along Memorial Drive for the procession, which begins at 2:30 p.m. The program begins about 3:30 p.m. In case of inclement weather, participants should call KU Info, (785) 864-3506, or listen to local radio and television stations to learn the exact time of the commencement ceremony.

Commencement information and an up-to-date schedule of events are available online at www.commencement.ku.edu.
The topic that seems to have dominated this session is the legislature’s attempt to circumvent the denial by the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) of an air quality permit to build a large expansion of a coal-fired electricity generation station owned by Sunflower Electric Cooperative located in southwest Kansas near Holcomb. Listed here is my brief analysis of the issues involved in the third Holcomb bill. It’s either “3rd try’s the charm” or “3rd strike, you’re out.”

Two bills have already been vetoed by the Governor. Now, at the end of the session, a new bill has hit the scene. This “Mega Eco-Devo Bill” has several main parts, all related to economic development, but will also affect a wide range of business and industry across the state including rural Kansas. Main parts include:

- The Holcomb power plant expansion – Southwest KS.
- The huge inter-modal train and truck freight terminal – Gardner, KS
- A large aircraft industry expansion that we want to keep in Kansas – Wichita, KS.
- An attempt at keeping a Hills Pet Foods expansion in Kansas – Emporia, KS.
- Many known potential industries lured to the state, i.e. - A wind turbine manufacturer.
- A major refinery.
- A major milk processing facility.

All told this will have an impact to the state of tens of billions of dollars.

I have more than a passing interest in this topic as I hold both undergraduate and graduate degrees that are directly related to this. I did graduate research on electric power plant flue gas scrubbers. In committee, I have been directly involved with the hearing of evidence on both sides of this issue. The issue at hand can be divided into the following areas.

**Public Opinion Considerations:**

This session I have received numerous comments about this issue, most of which were from the well-organized opposition from the Lawrence and Kansas City areas. However, the polls that were conducted independently show the majority of Kansans in support of Holcomb. Certainly the vast majority of my own constituents support Holcomb.

**Health & Environment Considerations:**

This project would have the lowest emissions of known pollutants in the world and would be held to the highest standards in the country. The many existing coal-fired power plants in Kansas are a far worse threat. Technology is solving the pollution problems of the past and will continue to improve.

As for global climate change (notice that it has ceased to be called “warming”) we heard conflicting testimony from experts in this field. Two KU professors, who both contributed to the UN’s IPCC study, were in complete disagreement on this topic. There is no consensus, no clearly recognized sci-
cient link between man-made carbon dioxide and climate change. Aside from this supposed link there is no other area in which we consider carbon dioxide to be a pollutant. After all, it's in your Coke. As a matter of fact there are many advantages to increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Half of the tremendous increase in crop yields that we've seen in the last 60 years is attributed to the increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. A slightly warmer climate has always historically been considered a positive.

I have never heard any claim of a health risk caused by carbon dioxide other than suffocation.

**Technology Considerations:**

Based on information that I have seen during this session, coal is the only long term source of electrical energy that has any hope of meeting our needs in the immediate future. Nuclear is coming back into the mix but it faces its own problems. Technology has not yet offered us any other options that will replace these. Renewable energy must be developed but it really does not yet hold promise to replace these older energy sources. It can sometimes replace some of the needed energy, but our economy demands a reliable, continuous energy supply and current renewable technology fails to meet this need. Government may be able to speed up such development, and Kansas has taken the lead in the nation on much of this, but it is economics that drives it and that means higher prices.

We also have nothing, in the near future, to replace oil for transportation fuels. Bio-fuels can offset some oil, but not replace it. We are currently seeing the effects of using food stuffs for fuel.

**Economic Development:**

This present legislation will bring thousands of jobs and billions of dollars to the economy across the state. Our economy runs on energy. It doesn't matter where you use electricity, it has to be generated and the effect of that generation on the environment is felt worldwide. Trucks, trains, YOUR car, all have an environmental impact. Your home, your work place, everything we do has an effect on the world environment. We cannot just shut down the world as we know it.

I have heard experts state that the earth can sustainably support only about 10% of the existing world population. Eliminating nine out of ten people is not an option. Technology must give us the answers to provide the necessary food and energy as well as to take care of our environment.

**Political Considerations:**

Putting several bills of the same type together is a common practice at the end of the session. It is done all the time and was done many times this year on various topics, without any outcry. It certainly is consistent with the rules that are in place. Personally, I don't like this technique and, in the past, I have supported a change of this rule, but to no avail. Many feel that this technique is necessary, from a pragmatic viewpoint, just to get everything done. In this particular case even many opponents consider this to be quite politically shrewd.

This does not "hide" legislation, as is evidenced by the many emails that I have received on this. There is always great effort made to disclose all legislation bundled together. You never make friends "slipping something through" and
you get nothing done in the legislature without friends. For better or for worse, this is a common part of the legislative process.

It is plain to me that this is not about environmental issues. KDHE has stopped, by denial of the air quality permit, the building of the cleanest coal-fired power plant in the world because of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere. But, currently KDHE is allowing the renewal of the air quality permits for all existing, much dirtier, coal-fired power plants to continue to operate in Kansas. If they don’t... our electricity costs will skyrocket.

Then what is all this about? - Politics, of course. It is clear to me that this action was taken for political reasons alone.

**Constitutional Separation of Powers:**

Sustaining our present form of government is the most important issue at hand. It is important to remember that one man single-handedly stopped billions of dollars of private investment in this state, investment that will affect all of our lives because we are all so dependent on energy.

Note that no elected governmental body in this nation considers carbon dioxide to be a pollutant. No law has been passed in this nation that regulates carbon dioxide. No regulation in any bureaucratic agency exists that considers carbon dioxide. This was simply one man’s private opinion. Whatever the truth of the claims of the global warming alarmists – government cannot operate this way. We are a nation of law. We have no king, or queen.

Also, in this state and in this country, government does not establish coal-fired power plants, or any industry, by law. Ours is a free enterprise economy. Government only steps in when absolutely necessary for the good of the people as a whole, which is the exception and not the rule.

Please express your views. Email me at knox@house.state.ks.us. Call me at 785 296 7678, or write me at State Capitol, Room 310-S, Topeka, KS 66612.
The names of several area students are listed among more than 4,450 candidates for degrees at Kansas University in Lawrence.

KU's Class of 2008, numbers more than 7,000, including 2,555 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2007. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many of these candidates for degrees will return Sunday, May 18, for the University's 136th commencement procession into Memorial Stadium.

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Area students scheduled for graduation are: Mary Melinda Boren, RN to Nursing BSN Senior Bachelor of Science in Nursing; Meghan R. Weiser, Nursing BSN Senior Bachelor of Science in Nursing, both of Onaga; Randal Joseph Gerstner, Accounting BSB Senior Bachelor of Science in Business/Accounting & Bachelor of Science in Business/Finance of Frankfort; Rachel Ann Feldkamp, Occupational Studies BS Senior Bachelor of Science in Occupational Studies, Carl Alan Nordhus, Biology BS Senior Bachelor of Science in Biology, both of Centralia.
KU announces county graduates

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Those completing degrees from Jefferson County are:

McLouth—Alexis Doane, daughter of Skip and Fran Doan, master of arts/speech-language pathology; Matthew Foster, bachelor’s in journalism; Erek Garcia, son of Stephen Garcia, bachelor of general studies/sociology; Lisa Smelser, daughter of David and Jean Smelser, bachelor of fine arts/design; Justin Smith, son of John and Tina Smith, bachelor of general studies/environmental studies and geography; Tyler Smith, son of Steve and Amy Smith, bachelor’s in electrical engineering; Mandolin Veerkamp, master’s in education.

Nortonville—Stephanie Oxandale, daughter of Carl and Cathy Nichols, bachelor’s in nursing; Ryanna Whaley, daughter of Roger Whaley, bachelor of arts/English.

Oskaloosa—Jessica Anderson, master of science/nursing; Kelly Bell, daughter of Cheryl Bryant, bachelor of arts/biology; Kimberly Brey, doctor of medicine; Patricia Gaines, bachelor of fine arts/history of art; Tammy Gonzales, daughter of Robert and Donna Trainer, bachelor of general studies/speech-language-hearing; Miriam Lee, daughter of Stuart Shafer and Patti Dickinson, bachelor of social work.

Ozawkie—Dustin Hothan, son of Matt and Halene Hothan, doctor of pharmacy; Elle Pottorf, daughter of Rick Pottorf, bachelor’s in education.

Perry—Erin Easum, master of business administration; Kelsey Gowin, master of public administration; Alphilde Rees, daughter of Gretchen Byer, bachelor of arts/English and Slavic lang and minor in literature; Aaron Swaggerty, son of Robert and Marlene Swaggerty, bachelor’s in journalism.

Winchester—Joshua Pannella, son of Jack and Kim Fine, bachelor’s in business/finance; Kimberly Squire, daughter of Glenn and Beverly Herrman, doctor of physical therapy.
More than 165 members of the class of 2008 will be recognized as top scholars during commencement at the University of Kansas on Sunday.

Lindsay Brooke Abbott, Silver Lake, daughter of Scott and Patty Abbott, psychology and Spanish senior, has earned an Endowment Meritorious Scholarship. This scholarship provides $500 to $2,500 a year for four years to high-achieving students who enhance the diversity of the student body.

Graduates from the spring 2008 and summer and fall 2007 terms will take part in commencement, beginning at 2:30 p.m. at Memorial Stadium.
Local H&R Block scholarship winners for this year are Megan Lueger, St. Marys High School, Shane Heslet, Rossville High School, and Amanda Pfannenstiel, Silver Lake High.

Lueger has chosen nursing as her career field, with the goal of becoming a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant. Heslet has his sights set on becoming a high school English teacher and has been accepted by the University of Kansas.

Pfannenstiel is also choosing the medical profession as her life work. She will study pre-medicine at the University of Kansas.
Silver Lake valedictorian salutatorian announced

By Alex Hawkins

Recently, two aspiring students received honors that they will carry with them throughout their lives. Sara Wetzel and Josh Baden were named Silver Lake's valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, for 2008.

Baden has a 4.165 grade point average and has experienced much academic success during high school. He credits many of his accomplishments to his inspirations.

"My mom and my brother motivated me," he said. "My brother had to try so hard for good grades, and I don't have to try so hard, so I might as well give it my all."

Baden's family members weren't the only people who helped him achieve his goals.

"Mr. Cunningham probably helped me out in high school most because he has a lot of funny jokes and has life lessons," Baden said. "I really liked shop classes but I'd have to say that Mr. Cunningham's math classes were my favorite."

Not all high school course work came that easily for Baden, though.

"I think that Bollig's classes were most difficult because there's no set plan for physics even though he says there is, and there's just a lot of equations," he added.

Baden said new students shouldn't be frightened by high school; they should merely start exerting themselves early.

"My advice for new students is to start working hard from the get-go because most people, when they get done, wish that they would have worked harder," he said.

Baden has settled on majoring in genetics at the University of Kansas.

Wetzel has raced up about a 4.25 grade point average throughout her high school years at Silver Lake. Her encouragements come not only from those around her but also come from her desire.

"My parents have been one motivation for me because they always push me to do my best," she said. "My motivation comes mostly from my personality which pushes me to always do the best that I can in anything and doesn't allow me to slack off."

All of Silver Lake's faculty members have played a key role in Wetzel's successes during high school and her preparation for college.

"They're all good teachers. They all taught me different things that I needed to know and will help me in college," Wetzel said.

She did enjoy one class in particular.

"My favorite class was pre-calculus because we had seven people in our class which was amazing and AC is fun," Wetzel said. "I also like math, so I enjoyed the class."

New high school students can benefit from high school successes if they live by Wetzel's motto.

"Work your hardest in everything because it really does pay off in the end," she explained.

Wetzel will attend Washburn University for her first two years while majoring in pre-pharmacy. She was attracted to Washburn because of its location and size.

"I chose it because of the smaller classes and the ability to live at home while I go there," Wetzel explained.

She plans to transfer to the University of Kansas to complete her pharmacy degree.

— Alex Hawkins is a student at Silver Lake High School.
Farmers, ranchers need protection in ag bill, lawmaker says

By Congressman Jerry Moran

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.

Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., 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 Ellsworth, 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 Marvin George, Terry Mayhew 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.

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.
Journalism students compete at state

Beloit High School journalism students Ethan Michels, senior, Dylan Nuzum, sophomore, Ashley Wiles, sophomore, and Brittany Berndt, senior, qualified for this year’s Kansas Scholastic Press Association State Contest. The students are staff members of the school newspaper, the Trojan Times. To qualify for state competition, they competed at the Manhattan Regional Contest in February where Michels placed second in sports writing; Nuzum placed second in cutline writing; Wiles received honorable mention in cutline writing; and Berndt placed first in editorial writing. State competition was held May 3 on the University of Kansas campus. Michels placed third at state in the 3A/4A sports writing category.
Hartman named Peer Advisor at KU

LAWRENCE — Twenty University of Kansas students have been chosen as members of the 2008 Peer Adviser Team.

Peer advisers will work throughout the summer to assist new, transfer and readmitted students with their transitions to KU, particularly with the advising and enrollment process. Five of the students are returning for their second year as a peer adviser, and one student, Ann Giessel of Larned, is returning for her third summer.

The Peer Adviser Team will assist faculty, staff, students, parents and guests with the advising and enrollment processes; act as a resource for incoming students; assist with placement testing during new student orientation; and help prepare materials and provide other help as needed for the success of orientation activities.

In addition to strong knowledge of their own and other academic areas and demonstrated leadership and communication skills, Peer advisers complete more than 70 hours of training to help prepare them to work with incoming students, parents and KU faculty and staff.

Peer advisers include Jena Hartman, senior in geography, daughter of Steve and Cheryl Hartman graduate of Beloit Jr-Sr High School.