K-State competes in national recycling competition

By Jasmine Wilcoxson
KANSAS STATE COLLEGIAN

K-State is competing in RecycleMania, a 10-week national recycling competition that promotes waste reduction activities in campus communities.

RecycleMania is a nationwide competition designed to familiarize students with their respective campus' environmental programs and instill a lifelong habit of recycling, reducing and reusing. According to the RecycleMania Web site, there are 510 schools participating this year.

Sabrina Martin, member of the K-State recycling committee, said this is K-State's first year to participate. She said she decided to try to get K-State involved in the competition because she saw an opportunity for the school to increase its recycling and see how much recycling the university could generate as opposed to other schools.

"I'm hoping that in publishing our weekly weights, we can increase campus participation," Martin said.

Joe Myers, K-State Grounds Maintenance Department and recycling facilities technician, said he heard about RecycleMania after attending a national recycling coalition in Pittsburgh.

"Other people who attended the conference gave me a hard time about how no Kansas schools have been involved in [the competition]," Myers said.

After the convention, he said he realized the competition would be a perfect fit for K-State.

RecycleMania officially began Jan. 18. However, the first two weeks of the competition are considered trial weeks so universities can get used to reporting their total trash data.

Myers said K-State's trash and recycling is collected, weighed at Howie's Recycling Inc. in Manhattan, and reported to RecycleMania.

All university totals are then separated and ranked into four different categories: the largest amount of recyclables per capita, the largest amount of total recyclables, the least amount of trash per capita and the highest recycling rate.

RecycleMania is also split up into two divisions - the Competition Division and the Benchmark Division. Through the Competition Division, Myers said K-State
RECYCLE | K-State, 5 others participating in Kansas

Continued from Page 1

is participating in the “Per Capita Classic,” which is the basic competition of reporting total weights for paper, cardboard and beverage containers. Myers said the total population of students, faculty and staff is divided into the total number of weight to record a fair and accurate result for each university participating.

“This year to get our feet wet, we’re doing the Per Capita Classic,” he said. “We do recycling anyway, but I think [the competition] is kind of a time where it can be highlighted,” he said.

RecycleMania began in February 2001, according to the Web site, when Ed Newman from Ohio University and Stacy Edmonds Wheeler from Miami University wanted to increase recycling in the residence and dining halls on their campuses. After the two schools competed against each other to see which school could recycle the most, the number of participating schools doubled for each year that followed. By 2004, RecycleMania partnered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s WasteWise Programs to expand the competition.

Myers said he hopes to have K-State participate next year as well, but decided to stick with the “less demanding” competitions for its first year.

“Our goal is just to make K-State more aware of recycling,” he said. “It will give us a [starting point] so we can see where we are and be able to see where we’re going for next year.”

Other Kansas schools that are participating are Baker University (Benchmark Division), Johnson County Community College (Benchmark Division), Labette Community College (Benchmark Division), Southwestern College (Competition Division), and the University of Kansas (Benchmark Division).
Legislative Update

Monday, January 26, 2009

Week two of the 2009-10 Session began much like the first one, with office phones and computers being fine tuned, stationary delivered, desks and file cabinets delivered, meeting schedules posted, and a few minor bill introductions.

The revisor and research staff have been working late into the night digesting the Governor's proposed budget. When delivered in bound book form the document resembles two Sedgwick County phone books and with about the same size print. I opted to receive mine in DVD form. The staff breaks down each department and division list of expenditures and sources of revenue. These budget analysis are then delivered to the various budget committees in each chamber for further review. We begin meeting with the agency leaders and their staff to develop a plan that allows operation but still addresses the horrific shortfall in revenue we are experiencing.

As is the custom at budget time we all see some creative efforts to maintain the status quo with some effort made for additional spending. I would say it is safe to say there will be cuts in budgets that will affect everyone in the state. We had better prepare for the inevitable and work together to arrive at a compromised solution.

Things are not all gloomy, we did receive final approval for locating the Bio-Science facility, valued at over $450 million, in Manhattan that will bring many jobs to the state during construction and provide stable employment for many in the years to come. This facility came to Kansas because of a joint effort between the Legislators, our Kansas delegation in Washington D.C., the community leaders and KSU.

I mentioned last week about a new idea in property tax assessment and this past week I attended several briefings on the concept. "Proposition K" was developed by Dr. Art Hall PhD. Dr. Hall is the Executive Director at the Center for Applied Economics, at KU school of Business.
The property tax is a wealth tax, which is an inferior tax policy because it taxes assets instead of income. The appraised value of an asset may rise and cause a tax increase, but the taxpayer’s income may not have risen sufficiently to pay the increased tax. Also the appraisal of assets is imprecise and the practical need for mass appraisal can amplify the imprecision. Butler County has close to 40,000 parcels that are on the tax rolls.

Most Kansas homeowners have experienced these harmful effects. Over the last decade, the appraisal value of homes has grown faster than income in counties representing 98 percent of the population; in fact, 84 percent of Kansans live in counties where residential values have grown at least 30 percent faster than their income. (Source: KS, Dept of Revenue, Adjusted Gross Income from the IRS and the July 2007 population estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau.)

The current Kansas property tax system has two moving parts: (1) The appraised value of the property and (2) tax rates (Mill Levy). Property tax increases are driven by the changes in these two parts.

Statewide total property taxes have

See Grange, page 6
increased 83 percent over the last 10 years; tax rates have gone up slightly but most of the damage has been caused by the 66 percent escalation in appraisal values. The changes are even worse for residential property, where runaway appraisals drove a 119 percent increase.

Elected officials should have lowered property tax rates to at least keep tax revenue from exceeding inflationary growth; instead we raise rates slightly and allowed the "stealth" affect of escalating appraisals push tax collections up 83 percent. There is simply no justification for these huge property tax increases over the last decade. It's not driven by a need to provide services to more people; our population is only up 7 percent. It is not driven by inflation: property taxes overall have increased by nearly three times the rate of inflation.


Hiring is frozen

LAWRENCE — State budget woes aren't just affecting Kansas University's main campus — officials are feeling the effects at the KU Medical Center, too.

A 90-day waiting period is in effect for all new job offers at KUMC, and many open positions are being frozen.

Top KUMC officials, though, warn that the worst is likely yet to come as the Legislature continues to work out the budget.

Through the 90-day hiring delay and with the frozen positions, KUMC has been able to satisfy cuts of 3 percent in the current fiscal year, said Ed Phillips, vice chancellor for administration at KUMC.

For more cuts, KUMC has asked its deans and vice chancellors to review their budgets to look for additional savings for anticipated cuts in upcoming fiscal years.

"We are, quite frankly, just in the middle of that process," Phillips said.

About 300 positions are vacant, he said, but did not know a detailed breakdown of how many would be filled and how many would be held open.

— The Lawrence Journal World

www.ljworld.com
LEADERS SIGN PACT TO CHASE CANCER INSTITUTE

The Associated Press

TOPEKA — State higher education officials signed an agreement Tuesday to work together to earn National Cancer Institute designation for the University of Kansas Cancer Center.

The agreement, signed by Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway and Kansas State University President Jon Wefald, states that researchers and administrators at the two campuses will work closely on the state's development of the Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The National Cancer Institute designation would mean additional clinical trials on new drugs and treatment and cancer research for Kansas. The deadline for the application for designation is 2011.

"This opportunity can provide our state with new financial resources for research that can save, extend and enhance the lives of Kansans diagnosed with cancer," Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, in whose office the agreement was signed.

Wefald and Hemenway, who both plan to retire retire at the end of the academic year, said faculty and scientists already share their work on cancer research in Lawrence and Manhattan.

Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson said there were 60 National Cancer Institute sites across the United States but none in Kansas, meaning that only people with the financial means often have the ability to access certain treatments.

Over the past three years, the two universities were part of a public-private consortium that pursued a federal contract to conduct research on deadly animal and zoological diseases.

The Department of Homeland Security announced this month that a site near Kansas State had been selected for a new National Bio and Agro-defense Facility to replace an aging facility at Plum Island, N.Y.

That facility, which could be worth as much as $650 million based on DHS estimates for construction, is expected to be operating by 2015. It will bring some 300 to 500 scientists and researchers to Kansas, with a total economic impact on the animal health industry in the region in the billions of dollars over the next several decades.

Judicial cuts

The Kansas judicial branch wants to offset proposed budget cuts by raising docket fees and is asking the Legislature to end a ban on such fees.

The request is a reaction to a 3.4 percent across-the-board cut that a Senate committee has suggested to plug a deficit in the current state budget. The proposal would mean a nearly $4 million cut for the courts.

Unlike other areas of state government, about 98 percent of the judicial budget is for salaries.

The Senate Judiciary Committee plans a Feb. 5 hearing on legislation to eliminate the fee ban.

Committee Chairman Tim Owens said he thinks it's a good idea. He said the alternative would be furloughing court employees throughout the state which would create a backlog in cases.

Under the dome

Tuesday was the 16th day of the 2009 session, out of 90 scheduled.

... The Museum of the Kansas National Guard at Topeka's Forbes Field holds a symposium Saturday on economic, military and technological threats facing the United States. ... Rep. Todd Tiahrt, a Republican representing Kansas' 4th congressional district, announced the members of his steering committee for his bid to replace U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, who is retiring in 2010.
University collaboration to advance Cancer Center

Governor Kathleen Sebelius announced that the University of Kansas and Kansas State University are joining forces in pursuit of a shared statewide goal: National Cancer Institute (NCI) designation for the University of Kansas Cancer Center as a Comprehensive Cancer Center.

"The NBAF initiative proved that Kansans can achieve great things when they unite behind a common goal—NCI designation is such a goal," Sebelius said. "This opportunity can provide our state with new financial resources for research that can save, extend and enhance the lives of Kansans diagnosed with cancer," Sebelius said.

Joining the Governor in making the announcement were Chancellor Robert Hemenway of the University of Kansas and President John Wefald of Kansas State University. Under the terms of a new agreement, cancer researchers at both institutions will combine their strengths, share their resources and collaborate in every way possible in the push toward NCI designation.

Also present were Lt. Governor Mark Parkinson, Regent and Tom Thornton, president and CEO of the Kansas Bioscience Authority. "NCI designation will benefit the entire state and region," Parkinson said. "Close collaboration between our two largest research universities is key to the success of the whole initiative. Today's announcement marks an extraordinary commitment on their part toward a common objective."

In her State of the State Address, the Governor strongly endorsed the Comprehensive Cancer Center initiative. She noted that "Cancer has affected many Kansas families," and "The personal toll in lost lives and unrealized potential cannot be calculated."
LCC community tea

Labette Community College will host a community tea from 4 to 6 p.m. Feb. 4 in Conference Room No. 1 on the second floor of the Student Union of the Main Campus in Parsons. The event will help the community learn more about what LCC has to offer.

LCC staff will answer any questions regarding classes that will be offered through the University of Kansas' Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, as well as the different community service and lifelong learning classes that will be offered, such as the home horticulture class and a course about herbal remedies.

Finger foods and refreshments will be served and door prizes will be given away.

Anyone wanting more information can contact Sara Harris at 421-6700, ext. 1255.
By Jack Weinstein
jweinstein@theolathe.com

Bob Krause will lead the fundraising efforts at Kansas State University’s campus at the Kansas Bioscience Park in Olathe as its director of development.

Krause, a 23-year veteran of K-State, has served as the university’s athletics director since last April. He will step down to assume his new role, effective March 31.

The campus, dubbed the K-State Innovation Campus — dedicated to food safety and animal health research — is one of the three components of the Johnson County Education and Research Triangle. The other two are the University of Kansas Edwards Campus in Overland Park and the KU Cancer Center proposed for Fairway.

The campus will occupy 38 of the 92 acres at the park — a collaboration among K-State, Olathe and the Kansas Bioscience Authority — located at College Boulevard and Valley Road.

“Getting the K-State Innovation Campus in Olathe and Johnson County is of the highest priority for the whole University,” K-State President John Wefald said in a statement released Tuesday.

Wefald said it was time to step up the campus’ fundraising efforts.

He said the relationships Krause has developed over the years with Olathe Mayor Mike Copeland, City Manager Michael Wilkes and the Olathe Chamber of Commerce, would be beneficial to him in his new role.

In the statement, Krause said the one-eighth cent sales tax approved by county voters last November to generate $15 million annually for the research triangle will fund the construction of the first building at the Olathe campus.

“There is, however, a gap in securing the private funding and investment by corporate partners in building the rest of the campus, and I enthusiastically look forward to this new assignment,” he said.

Before his tenure as athletics director, Krause was the university’s vice president for institutional advancement, focusing on student attraction and retention economic development and promoting the university as a teaching and research institution.
Gov. Kathleen Sebelius recently appointed Dan Biles to the Kansas Supreme Court, showing once more what an unusually secretive and clubby process our state uses to select its highest judges.

Biles is the law partner of the Kansas Democratic Party's chairman, and the governor, is, of course, a Democrat. Sebelius said that she and Biles have been friends for more than three decades, and he has made campaign contributions to her.

Importantly, Biles is a member of the former Kansas Trial Lawyers Association, now called the Kansas Association for Justice. Sebelius used to be state director of that group of lawyers who most aggressively push to increase lawsuits and expand liability.

People can decide for themselves whether that is the direction they want for Kansas courts, but what is unusual about Kansas is how little the people's views matter. All the power in selecting the justices of the Supreme Court belongs to the governor and the bar (the state's lawyers). So if the governor and bar want to push the state's courts in a particular direction, there are no checks and balances in the judicial-selection process to stop them.

After Kansas justices have gained the advantages of incumbency, they are subject to retention elections. But these "elections" lack rival candidates and thus rarely include any public debate over the direction of the courts. In fact, a retention election is nearly always a rubber stamp, and no Kansas justice has ever lost one. With these judges so entrenched once they are on the court, the process for initially selecting them is all the more decisive.

Kansas is unusual in limiting Supreme Court selection to the governor and the bar.

By contrast, when a federal judge is nominated, a Senate confirmation process allows citizens and their representatives to learn about the nominee and play more of a role in selecting judges.

Many states around the country use that process, too. But in Kansas the governor and the bar get all the power, and they exercise that power through a commission's secret vote. There is no public record of who voted which way.

This secrecy prevents journalists and other citizens from learning about crucial decisions in the selection of our highest judges. In this closed process, a small group of insiders (members of the Kansas bar) have an extremely high level of control.

In fact, Kansas is the only state in which the bar selects a majority of the Supreme Court nominating commission. Why does the division of power between lawyers and nonlawyers lean further toward the lawyers in Kansas than in any of the other 49 states?

The Kansas bar defends this with the claim that the bar keeps judicial selection from being "political." But when the process results in a governor appointing one of her own friends and campaign contributors, you have to wonder what kind of politics goes on behind closed doors or at trial lawyers' cocktail parties.

Politics are inevitable when it comes to picking judges. The question is whether the politics will remain largely confined to
the bar or become more open to the public and its elected representatives.
— Stephen J. Ware is a professor at the University of Kansas School of Law in Lawrence.
KU announces grads

LAWRENCE — The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2008 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of the Registrar.

Graduate and undergraduate degrees are conferred in December based on work completed during the fall semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall or summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill and into Memorial Stadium on Sunday, May 17, 2009.

Five of KU's 13 colleges and schools conducted recognition programs or hooding ceremonies last month to honor those planning to graduate at the end of the semester: the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the School of Engineering, the School of Law and the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Those graduating from Sumner County are:

Clearwater
Megan M. Mills

Mulvane
Jessica Rae Dunn
Lucas B. Weller
KU considers cutting private plane use

LAWRENCE (AP) — In another tough budget year, University of Kansas officials are considering cutting back on using their private air flights.

The university owns a Citation Bravo jet and has 50 percent ownership in a 1999 King Air C90B turbo prop through Executive AirShares, both purchased with private funds.

KU says it spends almost $700,000 per year to keep the aircraft going.

University spokeswoman Lynn Bretz says most of that is taken from state funds, except maintenance costs, most of which are paid by the users.

She says departments may have to cut back on flights because of budget cuts.

Bretz says the majority of flights are logged by the KU Medical Center’s medical outreach program serving rural Kansans but the planes are also used by the athletics department, the provost and the chancellor.