As the Kansas economy becomes increasingly global and highly competitive, we must prepare the children of Kansas with the training they need for the economy of the future.

Key to Kansas' ability to succeed in the new technology-driven marketplace will be workers who excel in math, science, technology and engineering; and right now, our students are underperforming compared to their peers around the world. Encouraging more students to focus on these fields and continue their education in math and science will help to ensure that we have the workforce for a prosperous future.

Quality teachers are essential to the success of our students; however, Kansas faces a shortage of math and science teachers. The Kansas State Department of Education recently reported that next year Kansas schools are likely to have over 680 vacancies for math and science teachers, but only 228 new math and science teachers are expected to graduate from Kansas schools.

Teachers have always had significant impact on the lives of their students, but now more so than ever, teachers dictate the future success of our economy as well.

Given the importance of these educators, it is essential the state produce not just more math and science teachers, but more effective math and science teachers. We can do this by encouraging math and science majors to enter the teaching profession and by supporting the development of highly qualified teachers in math and science fields. A new program at the University of Kansas will accomplish those goals.

UKanTeach is an innovative new program that allows students to earn degrees in math or science as well as a teaching license. The program, a collaboration between the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the School of Education, aims to double the number of math and science teachers graduating from KU each year, resulting in an additional 50 new teachers in Kansas classrooms.

Last week the University of Kansas was one of 12 universities nationwide to receive a National Math and Science Initiative grant. The $2.4 million grant funded by the ExxonMobil Corporation will be used to fund the UKanTeach program. We know it works, because this program has been in place at the University of Texas and the results are encouraging.

We are pleased that KU was able to secure one of these competitive grants, and I am confident the UKanTeach program will produce more of the teachers our state needs to help our students thrive in the subjects of math and science. With programs like this and a continued focus on math and science, success in the classroom will no doubt extend to economic success in the future.
University of Kansas to offer photography degree

Professor: It's the only program of its kind in the Midwest

By TERRY ROMBECK

LAWRENCE — Pok Chi Lau has heard the question hundreds of times: Does Kansas University offer a major in photography?

Starting next semester, he can give a new answer. That's because KU is rolling out its new photomedia major in the spring, with a full-blown start in the fall.

"It's been so many years to make this happen," said Lau, a photography professor. "No one in the Midwest has anything close to what we're proposing."

The new major is actually two majors — a Bachelor of Arts in photomedia and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in photomedia. The difference, in part, is that the BA requires a foreign language.

The photomedia program has been a priority for Greg Thomas, who came to KU three years ago as chairman of the design department. He said he found many area high schools that have strong photography programs, and he figures KU is losing out on 10 to 15 students a year from Lawrence's two high schools alone by not offering a photography major.

The response, so far, has been phenomenal. He said the department has done very little promotion, yet 15 to 20 students have signed up already, and alumni are contacting him every day wanting to know how they can help.

"It's kind of one of these, gee, why didn't we do this before?" Thomas said.

He said the largest emphasis in the design department currently is visual communications, which has about 250 students.

"I think this has the potential to be larger than that," Thomas said.

The new major attracted Abbey Saathoff, a junior from Overland Park. She added photomedia to her majors, in addition to art history.

"I actually wanted to go to college for photography, but KU didn't have a program," she said. "I figured I'd major in art history, get all the art stuff and go somewhere else after KU. I was surprised that there weren't any big schools in Kansas with any sort of a photography major. There were a few courses, but nothing beyond that."

Ultimately, she said, she wants to be a fashion photographer.

Julianne Kueffer, a fifth-year student from Prairie Village, also decided to switch majors after hearing KU was offering the photomedia program.

"It's photography with a purpose," Kueffer said. "That interests me. I like to see photography in that light because it's career-worthy."

Thomas said photomedia will incorporate areas of fine art and commercial photography, photojournalism, videography and other derivatives.

"Anything that's about creating an image, which is pretty broad," he said. "I hope it can be something where they'll be able to go anywhere and adapt. We want to provide tools and resources. We don't want to rubber-stamp people here."

The first class to be offered in the spring semester will be taught by 10 members of the photography department at Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, Mo. It will give the students hands-on experience doing commercial photography.

"When a parent comes in here," Thomas said, "one of the first questions I hear is, 'Is my kid going to be able to make a living?'"

In some ways, Thomas said, the new photomedia major is being introduced at a time of crossroads in photography.

Debates loom over whether traditional film and darkroom photography still should be taught or whether an all-digital approach is better.

"I think you need to learn on that," Thomas said of film. "That's how I was taught."

"It's photography with a purpose," Kueffer said. "That interests me. I like to see photography in that light because it's career-worthy."

While the department may add staff for the new program, Thomas said relying on adjunct professors with real-life experience will help keep students current on technology trends.

"Meanwhile, photography professor Lau said he's hoping the new program focuses more on people than it does gadgetry."

"We don't want a vocational training school," he said. "We want something that will hopefully influence positive human behavior."
City manager Riggs resigns
Riggs: With kids out of the picture, it's time to consider new opportunities

Melissa Smith
Tribune Reporter

This has been a tumultuous year for the city and December is no different. On Tuesday afternoon, City Manager Randy Riggs announced his intention to resign his position, effective in February. Riggs will begin working under the direction of the Newton governing body on March 1, 2008, at a base salary of $106,000.

Riggs said he and his wife decided to make a move now that their children have grown and gone to college.

"We're at the life stage in Chanute, both of our children are now in college and not at home full time, so my wife and I knew that at some point in time, if the right community was available, we'd look into that," Riggs said. "With the kids gone it's time to consider new opportunities."

Riggs said the Newton community has "a lot of positive things going on," which had an impact on the couple's decision to move.

Assistant City Manager Brad Eilts said the new job in Newton will be "a great fit."

"I am so happy for Randy and his family. That job was one of the most sought after in the city manager circles in Kansas."

Newton's mayor, Willis Heck, said Riggs was chosen over other qualified candidates because of his "training and background in leadership development and his interest in working in partnership with other agencies, which is one of our priorities in Newton."

Riggs said he would aid the City Commission in any way he could to ease the transition to new city leadership. Traditionally, a City Commission will hold a meeting to decide what qualities they are looking for in a new city manager before anyone is interviewed.

"Chanute's got a lot of positive things going on. I think that the positive momentum with all the progress that's being made in Chanute is just wonderful and speaks well for the community," Riggs said.

Mayor Tim Fairchild said he regrets Riggs' decision to leave.

"I appreciate everything Randy has done while he's here. He's been good to work with as a commissioner. I want to wish him the best of luck in his new position," he said.

Vice Mayor Terri Orozco said the loss of Riggs is "a sad day for Chanute."

Commissioners Leroy Chard and Ed Cox echoed her sentiments, and regret the loss of his leadership.

"I think Randy has done an exceptional job for us in our community," Cox said. "There's a number of things that have taken place in our community that are directly attributable to him. I wish him the best. Now we have to go out and search and find somebody to fill some pretty good size shoes."

Chard said the city of Chanute has been fortunate to have Riggs as long as it has.

"I think he's done a fantastic job. We've
Riggs: Continued from Page 1

made a lot of progress since he got here. He’s been a real easy city manager to have working under the City Commission,” Chard said. “His idea of Chanute was always a good one. (Newton) will have a super city manager. I considered the entire family a real friend.”

Commissioner Phillip Chaney said he wishes him well and hopes “everything works out for him.”

Fairchild said the next step is for the commission to get together and “map out a strategy to find a new city manager.”

Riggs has been city manager of Chanute since 1999. He previously served as city manager in Sterling and assistant city manager in Lawton, Okla. He has a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Kansas and a bachelor of arts from Ottawa University.

He is the president-elect of Kansas Municipal Utilities, a statewide association representing 168 municipal electric, natural gas, water and wastewater utilities. In 2006, Riggs won the Buford M. Watson Jr. Award for Excellence in Public Management from the Kansas Association of City/County Management.

Earlier in the year, a petition was circulated in Chanute calling for Riggs’ resignation. The effort was spearheaded by Chanute resident Dean Silvey.

The petition was presented during the public comment forum at a regular City Commission meeting, so city commissioners could not officially vote on it. However, Chard threw his support in with Riggs and the other commissioners agreed with him.

In addition, Citizens for a Cleaner Chanute successfully filed a petition to call a grand jury. Last week three Neosho County District Judges announced the grand jury will be convened on Jan. 30, 2008. County Attorney Melissa Dugan was hesitant to comment on how Riggs’ resignation will affect grand jury proceedings, but did not believe it would affect the outcome.
Associated Press

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She likes the multidisciplinary, liberal arts-based approach to the program.

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Dredging lakes will be expensive

Slowing sediment most cost effective

by Clarke Davis

The cost to dredge Perry Lake once it is filled with sediment has been estimated at $5 billion.

With that kind of staggering price tag, money spent now to slow and delay the process is a bargain.

That was the message by Dr. Jerry deNoyelles Dec. 5 at a meeting of the Delaware River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy in Holton.

The speaker is with the Kansas Biological Survey at the University of Kansas and is now conducting sediment studies on a number of Kansas reservoirs.

Most of the Kansas reservoirs were built in the 1950s and 60s and are about the same age. Which means the problems that will arrive as their life spans run their course will come at about the same time.

Perry Lake, which began impounding water in 1968, was constructed with an expected life span of 100 years, deNoyelles said. It is filling with sediment at a rapid rate, he said. In those 40 years the lake has lost 20 percent of its storage capacity.

The lake has been reduced by more than 1,000 acres of water surface area. Because the upper end has been filled with sedimentation, the lower end will be somewhat protected, as the water drainage will continue to drop most of its sediment load before reaching the lower area.

It’s a certainty that one day it, like all the reservoirs, will fill with sediment and become a marsh or wetland. The dam will still provide flood protection, but gone will be the source of drinking water and the economic benefits of recreation.

What to do? deNoyelles said it is critical that people start investing now in programs like WRAPS that is drawing attention to the problems and finding ways to engage the community in slowing the problem.

To ignore the problem would be unfair to future generations, he said, and raising the dam is not an option. Dredging is the only option left but bring with it numerous complications.

The cost is a major problem with dredging. But so is knowing where to go with the dredged material.

“You can’t go very far with it or the cost increases all the more,” he said.

He said the lake would contain 100 times more sediment that would have to be removed than the amount of dirt that was moved to construct the dam. He arrived at the estimated cost using $3.50 to $5 a cubic yard to dredge it.

These cost figures are now being used to estimate the cost of dredging Mission Lake at Horton, also in the Delaware Watershed.

This 169-acre lake constructed in 1924 has a sediment depth greater than the depth of the water. The Horton residents have approved a $4 million bond issue to restore the lake impoundment to once again provide the community with a source of drinking water. The Kansas Legislature has approved a pilot program and some money from the Clean Drinking Water Fee Fund to help.

“There’s lots to be learned from this project,” deNoyelles said.

There have been 120,000 water impoundment structures built in Kansas ranging in size from less than an acre to 16,000 acres.

Tom Stiles, chief of the watershed planning section for the state Department of Health and Environment, was the other main speaker dealing with nutrient enrichment in the water impoundments.

He talked about the biological response once streams are forced to be lakes and the need to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous that washes into the lakes.

Shallow, stagnant water becomes a green soup. Algae explodes in these conditions and living material grows, dies, and becomes a toxin.

“It’s a widespread issue,” Stiles said, as lakes become shallower and drinking water becomes more threatened.

Eleven Kansas State University seniors in journalism and mass communications were introduced and gave a short presentation.

The students have spent a semester working to develop a logo, a brochure, and find ways for the WRAPS program to take its environmental awareness campaign to the people in the watershed.


Marlene Bosworth, WRAPS coordinator, said there were seven critical water concerns identified in the watershed after concluding 16
months of public meetings that ended in June.

The meeting focused on sedimentation and nutrient enrichment, the two most critical concerns, she said. The other problems including bacterial and pesticide contamination are closely related to these two.

WRAPS is a project of the Glacial Hills Resource Conservation and Development Region and is funded by a grant through KDHE.

Members of the WRAPS leadership team are co-chairmen David Zeit and William Hill, John Bond, Jennifer Delisle, Mary Fund, Dotti Harris, Gary Keehn, Rita Mathews, Marilyn Snider, Luke Terry, and Pam Wiedner.

Approximately 75 people at-
Scholarships awarded to KU students

More than 5,400 students at the University of Kansas will receive about $26 million in privately funded scholarship support during the 2007-08 academic year. This is a 10.6 percent increase from the 2006-07 school year, in which KU students received $24.3 million in scholarship support.

This year's recipients represent 101 of the 105 counties in Kansas, 44 other states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 50 other countries.

So far, 7,603 scholarships have been awarded for the current academic year. Many students receive more than one scholarship. KU divides many scholarship awards between the fall and spring semesters, and there are some students who receive scholarship support for the summer term as well.

Virtually all scholarships, awards and fellowships awarded by KU come from private contributions to KU Endowment.

Though KU Endowment raises support for scholarships and other student aid, KU determines the distribution of available support. The figure fluctuates each year based on several factors, such as the number of students who apply for and receive them, the investment performance of endowed scholarship funds and new gifts for scholarships.

Those from Jefferson County receiving scholarships are:

McLouth—Sherri Braksick, Medicine MD, Prof I, Lazio K. and Esther L. Chont Scholarship; Lance Lamborn, son of Richard and Lori Lamborn, pre-business freshman, Ellis D. Bever Undergraduate Scholarship; Arielle Laue-Minden, daughter of Gary Minden, pre-business freshman, Coca Cola Scholarships; Lisa Smelser, daughter of David and Jean Smelser, design senior, Vee Flinn Scholarship and Harley S. Nelson Family Scholarship in the Arts; Justin Smith, son of John and Tina Smith, environmental studies, senior, Ruben Zadigan Memorial Scholarship; Andrew Booth, son of Larry and Sara Booth, mechanical engineering, freshman, Fern S. Lapsley Scholarship and Kendall Laughlin Memorial Scholarship.

Meriden—Jessica Roark, daughter of John and Lori Roark, civil engineering, senior, Chancellor's Office Departmental Scholarship and Arthur S. & Helen May Johnson Fund for Women in Engineering.

Nortonville—Stephanie Nichols, daughter of Carl and Cathy Nichols, nursing, senior, Arlene Roberts Schaake Memorial Nursing Scholarship.

Oskaalosa—Jessica Anderson, nursing, graduate, Arthur S. and Leora J. Peck Scholarship; Chantel Bauman, chemical engineering, sophomore, Kansas Athletics Univ. Undergraduate Scholarship and Paul and Virginia Bassett Miller Engineering Scholarship; Kimberly Brey, medicine, Prof I, Peter T. Bohan Student and Cultural Enhancement and Diversity NIH Scholarship; Linda Ottensmeier, daughter of Randy and Darla Ottensmeier, pre-business, freshman, Targeted Scholarships; Amber Peterman, daughter of Deborha Thompson, pre-nursing, freshman, Emily V. Berger Scholarship; Kyle Scrimsher, son of Brian Scrimsher, mechanical engineering, freshman, Patricia Heitzman Scholarship; Stephanie Scurto, English, graduate, Richard and Ruth Spears Scholarship; Claire Willis, daughter of Jeff and Sheree Willis, undecided, Janice Freshman Honor Scholarship and Coca Cola Scholarships; Emma Williž, daughter of Jeff and Sheree Willis, music education, junior, Coca Cola Scholarships and Band Scholarship.

Ozawkie—Dustin Hothan, son of Matt and Halene Hothan, pharmacy, Prof I, George Guy Hall Memorial Scholarship in Pharmacy; Susan Ann Kary, daughter of Ronald Bruggeman, dietetics and nutrition, Graduate School of Allied Health Scholarships; Wendi Menke, daughter of Tani Ruff, Educ-Curr. and Ins., graduate, Tollefson Scholarship in Science Education; Thomas Sanford, business administration, graduate, Gary D. Irish Endowed Scholarship and Richard R. Riss Sr. Scholarship.

Perry—Erin Easum, business administration, graduate, Clifford J. Goering Business Scholarship; Leah Grady, daughter of Barbara and Gayden Grady, undecided, freshman, Sarah D. Knox Scholarship and KU Scholarships; Jennifer Preston, daughter of John and Janet Preston, social work, graduate, William A. and Monte L. Murphy Social Welfare Scholarship.


ship in Business.
Area Students Awarded KU ‘07-’08 Scholarships

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“Donors understand that without financial support, some deserving students would not be able to attend KU,” said Dale Seuferling, president of KU Endowment. “KU students are benefiting from the financial support provided recently and many generations ago by loyal alumni and friends.”

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Scholarship funds are managed by KU Endowment, the independent, nonprofit organization serving as the official fundraising and fund-management organization for KU. Founded in 1891, KU Endowment is the first foundation of its kind at a U.S. public university.

* Westmoreland Audra Zabel Female - NursingBSN Junior

MAUDE LANDIS SCHOLARSHIP IN NURSING

* Onaga Timothy Joseph Flattery son of Chris and Vicki Flattery Fine Arts/Dance/BA Sophomore Patricia Joyce Ellis Art and Dance Scholarship Onaga High School Onaga

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* Wamego Christy Leanne Artzer daughter of Anthony and Donis Artzer Art - Basic Studies Senior Emily V. Berger Scholarship Wamego High School Wamego

* Wamego Anna Kathleen Bailey daughter of Colleen Riley Pre-Social Welfare Sophomore Jellison Fund Wamego High School Wamego

* Wamego Megan Ashley Brooks daughter of Gary and Marsha Brooks PharmacyPD Junior KU Scholarships Wamego High School Wamego

* Wamego Amy A Lindgren daughter of Cynthia Gareis Social WorkBSW Junior School of Social Welfare Multicultural Scholars Program GED - State of Kansas

* Wamego Jessica Marie Sain-Baird daughter of Janet Sain News and InformationBSJ Junior W. Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Comms. Schol. Wamego High School Wamego

* Wamego Brandon Johnson Tackett son of Robert and Rebecca Tackett BiologyBA Junior Nunemaker College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Scholarship Wamego High School Wamego

Preventing our students from tomorrow's working world.

The following is a column by Governor Kathleen Sebelius

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Key to Kansas' ability to succeed in the new technology-driven marketplace will be workers who excel in math, science, technology and engineering; and right now, our students are underperforming compared to their peers around the world. Encouraging more students to focus on these fields and continue their education in math and science will help to ensure that we have the workforce for a prosperous future.

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KU Awards
Scholarships

More than 5,400 students at the University of Kansas will receive about $26 million in privately funded scholarship support during the 2007-08 academic years. Those receiving from the area are: Kylee Anderson-William Cooper and Kate Avis McPike Scholarship; Jamie Kramer-Bill and Janice Hanna.
Welcome to “This Week in Congress.” I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Working to Increase Access to Renewable Fuels: High gasoline prices continue to affect Kansans. Renewable fuels are a part of the solution and the future of this industry relies on our ability to increase opportunities for consumers to access the fuel. In an effort to increase access to renewable fuels, I joined other Members of Congress this week in asking the President to direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to begin testing higher blends of ethanol in gasoline. While there is an adequate supply of U.S.-produced ethanol, current EPA regulations prevent the use of ethanol in blends greater than 10 percent (E10) in most vehicles. With EPA approval, we can provide more blends of ethanol like E15, E20 or E30 for consumers.

Current ethanol production capacity in the United States is approximately 6.5 billion gallons per year. The availability of additional ethanol blends will move our country closer to energy independence, provide jobs and maintain an important market for our farmers. Agreement Allows Farm Bill Debate to Resume in the Senate: Farmers and ranchers are heading into the winter months with the usual uncertainties that come with this risky profession, but this year Kansas producers and their bankers have additional concerns about what farm programs will be in place next year as they await action in the Senate on the 2007 Farm Bill. Senators finally agreed this week to limit the amount of amendments that can be offered during debate of the farm bill and will hopefully soon pass a bill. Unfortunately, the delayed action means Congress will not send a farm bill to the President until next year. For this reason, it has become even more evident that a short-term extension of the current farm bill is necessary to avoid a lapse in farm policy.

Anouncing Water Conservation Program: Based upon an agreement with the State of Kansas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced this week that it will be making 20,000 acres of irrigated and non-irrigated cropland in the Kansas Upper Arkansas River project area eligible for enrollment into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This will be the first acreage enrolled in CREP in the State of Kansas. The program in Kansas is focused specifically on utilizing CREP in areas where groundwater and surface water shortages are an issue. CREP is a natural resources conservation program in which participants receive payments from USDA to remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation. The Upper Arkansas River CREP project area includes all or parts of Barton, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Gray, Hamilton, Kearny, Pawnee, Stafford and Rice counties.

I believe this is an appropriate step in trying to sustain water for future generations. However, I continue to believe we must modify this program. In its current form, CREP pays agriculture producers to leave land idle and not irrigate in order to conserve water resources. Doing so keeps land capable of producing non-irrigated crops out of production. Earlier this year, I successfully added an amendment to the House-passed version of the 2007 Farm Bill to allow dryland crop production and grazing on CREP acres where the program is aimed at reducing water usage. My amendment allows dryland farming on these acres instead of simply idling them and allows agriculture producers to continue farming and supporting the agriculture businesses that are critical to the survival of rural communities. A balance must be had that allows economic activity in the form of production agriculture to continue in an environmentally sensitive way while reducing the usage of water. I will continue working to modify farm bill provisions to allow dryland farming activities on CREP acres to better preserve economic activity in rural areas in Kansas.

Eligibility requirements for the Upper Arkansas River CREP will be announced by the Farm Service Agency, which administers the program. More information about this project can be found at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSA/ File/kscrep07.pdf.

House Considers Energy Legislation: I have long said the United States needs to diversify its energy supply and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. As a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have been actively involved in crafting legislation that prioritizes energy security, reduces our vulnerabilities to foreign oil and reduces the cost of energy for the American consumer. This week the House passed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, which creates a comprehensive strategy to increase energy security, reduce foreign oil imports, and ensure a clean and sustainable energy future. The legislation includes a number of provisions that will modernize our electric grid, improve energy efficiency, accelerate deployment of advanced renewable energy technologies, and conserve energy.

December 10, 2007
www.jerrymoran.house.gov

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Current ethanol production capacity in the United States is approximately 6.5 billion gallons per year. The availability of additional ethanol blends will move our country closer to energy independence, provide jobs and maintain an important market for our farmers. Agreement Allows Farm Bill Debate to Resume in the Senate: Farmers and ranchers are heading into the winter months with the usual uncertainties that come with this risky profession, but this year Kansas producers and their bankers have additional concerns about what farm programs will be in place next year as they await action in the Senate on the 2007 Farm Bill. Senators finally agreed this week to limit the amount of amendments that can be offered during debate of the farm bill and will hopefully soon pass a bill. Unfortunately, the delayed action means Congress will not send a farm bill to the President until next year. For this reason, it has become even more evident that a short-term extension of the current farm bill is necessary to avoid a lapse in farm policy.

Anouncing Water Conservation Program: Based upon an agreement with the State of Kansas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced this week that it will be making 20,000 acres of irrigated and non-irrigated cropland in the Kansas Upper Arkansas River project area eligible for enrollment into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This will be the first acreage enrolled in CREP in the State of Kansas. The program in Kansas is focused specifically on utilizing CREP in areas where groundwater and surface water shortages are an issue. CREP is a natural resources conservation program in which participants receive payments from USDA to remove cropland and marginal pastureland from agricultural production and convert the land to native grasses, trees and other vegetation. The Upper Arkansas River CREP project area includes all or parts of Barton, Edwards, Finney, Ford, Gray, Hamilton, Kearny, Pawnee, Stafford and Rice counties.

I believe this is an appropriate step in trying to sustain water for future generations. However, I continue to believe we must modify this program. In its current form, CREP pays agriculture producers to leave land idle and not irrigate in order to conserve water resources. Doing so keeps land capable of producing non-irrigated crops out of production. Earlier this year, I successfully added an amendment to the House-passed version of the 2007 Farm Bill to allow dryland crop production and grazing on CREP acres where the program is aimed at reducing water usage. My amendment allows dryland farming on these acres instead of simply idling them and allows agriculture producers to continue farming and supporting the agriculture businesses that are critical to the survival of rural communities. A balance must be had that allows economic activity in the form of production agriculture to continue in an environmentally sensitive way while reducing the usage of water. I will continue working to modify farm bill provisions to allow dryland farming activities on CREP acres to better preserve economic activity in rural areas in Kansas.

Eligibility requirements for the Upper Arkansas River CREP will be announced by the Farm Service Agency, which administers the program. More information about this project can be found at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSA/File/kscrep07.pdf.

House Considers Energy Legislation: I have long said the United States needs to diversify its energy supply and reduce our dependence on foreign oil. As a member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have been actively involved in crafting legislation that prioritizes energy security, reduces foreign oil imports, and ensure a clean and sustainable energy future. This week the House passed the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007, which creates a comprehensive strategy to increase energy security, reduce foreign oil imports, and ensure a clean and sustainable energy future. The legislation includes a number of provisions that will modernize our electric grid, improve energy efficiency, accelerate deployment of advanced renewable energy technologies, and conserve energy.
States must move aggressively toward energy independence. Being energy independent will provide stability in our economy and enhance national security. To achieve this goal we must consider all domestically produced forms of energy. In addition, an energy policy must be crafted so that it does not further increase the cost of energy for American consumers.

The energy bill the House considered this week took several steps in the right direction toward energy independence. Importantly, the bill contained provisions to make cars more fuel efficient by increasing the corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standard that auto manufacturers must adhere to. If implemented, it would help reduce fuel usage in the U.S. The extension of the wind and solar energy tax credits contained in the bill are also needed and would continue incentives for both individual property owners and power generation companies.

While the bill does some good things, there were aspects that I was uncomfortable with that ultimately made me unable to support it. The legislation not only raised taxes, but I believe it will increase the cost of electricity. As a result, it will adversely impact middle and lower income Kansans currently struggling to keep pace with rising energy costs.

Negotiation of an energy bill will continue and I hope that a majority of Congress can find a solution that will increase all forms of domestic energy production and not further burden consumers.

**Torsten Energy Announces Plans to Build Biodiesel Plant in Greensburg:** On Monday, I was in Greensburg for an announcement that Torsten Energy L.L.C, which is based in Wright, plans to build a biodiesel plant in Kiowa County. Upon completion, Greensburg will be home to the second largest biodiesel production facility in Kansas. The plant is expected to create 20-25 jobs and produce 30-40 million gallons of biodiesel each year.

This development is great news for Kiowa County farmers and another step forward in the rebuilding of Greensburg. My thanks to Dennis McKinney, Kansas House Minority Leader; Patrick Stein, Vice President of Torsten Energy; John Janssen, Greensburg Mayor; and Don Richards, Kiowa County Commissioner, for helping make this announcement possible.

The decision to build a biodiesel plant in Greensburg was not made because of some action taken in Washington, D.C. It was made because the citizens of Greensburg are committed to their community and its recovery. It also demonstrates that Kansans are willing to create a place to call home.

**Learning about Republic County High School's Welding Program:** After my tour stop in Belleville, I visited Republic County High School to meet with Principal Daryl Moore, Superintendent Troy Damman, Agriculture Education Instructor Dan Stiehlik and officials with Reinke Manufacturing, including Doug Wilkinson. Reinke Manufacturing produces irrigation systems and has provided welding equipment to establish a specialized program at Republic County High School to train students in advanced-level welding courses. This will prepare students for certification and employment upon graduation from high school if they so wish. There are plenty of businesses in the area, but not enough welders and skilled workers.

It is good to see the collaboration between private industry and school and community leaders to address the shortage of trained workers. I was able to watch three students work on welding projects while there. They are able to gain skills in the classroom that they can one day use to earn a paycheck. I appreciated the school and Reinke officials taking time to visit with me about this partnership. Thanks also to Paul Haase for helping coordinate my visit.

**Touring Mid America Nazarene University:** On my return to Washington, D.C., I visited Mid America Nazarene University in Olathe. Kansas students are fortunate to have such a beautiful and well-designed campus available to them. Dwight Douglas, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, was kind enough to show me several of the new facilities. I was impressed with the realistic hospital setting used for nursing education and appreciative of their efforts to develop nursing programs for underserved areas in western Kansas. I also toured the new Bell Cultural Events Center.

Dr. Dennis Crocker explained the unique acoustical-engineering of the building, which makes it a great venue for students to perform and to bring in noteworthy performers from across the country.

**Listening Tour Continues:** My Big First Listening Tour continued this week with stops in Dodge City in Ford County, Waterville in Marshall County and Belleville in Republic County.

**In the Office:** Keith Yehle, Director of Government Relations at the University of Kansas, was in to explain provisions in the Higher Education Act and the effect it will have on colleges and universities in our state. Some Middie of Tuesday we
in to introduce herself and explain her new role with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas. Mark Farr of Nickerson and Verlean Brown of Wichita were in with the Kansas National Education Association to discuss reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Pat Morse of Dodge City was in to talk about Universal Service Fund reform. Representatives of Wesley Rehabilitation Hospital in Wichita were in to talk about Medicare patients accessing rehabilitation services. In with the group were CEO Pam Stanberry, Dr. Blake Veenis and Dr. Xavier NG.

Several Kansans visited my Washington, D.C. office this week for a tour of the United States Capitol building. Kendal Krug, Brandy Kirmer, Gail Brack and Chandra Pfeifer of Hays came by, as did Lanay Metter of Salina with her grandson, Jacob Conner of Hutchinson. Lindsay Henderson of Salina and David Owens of Wichita were also in for a tour.

Many Kansas legislators were in our nation’s capital this week. Representative Forrest Knox and his wife, Paula, of Altoona; Representatives Steve Brunk and his wife, Billie, of Bel Aire; Representative Gary Haylett of Lakin; Representatives Richard Carlson and his wife, Cheryl, of St. Marys; Representative Ray Merrick and his wife, Phyllis, of Stilwell; Representative Elaine Bowers of Concordia; Representative Kevin Yoder of Overland Park; and Representative Ty Masterson of Andover all stopped by for a tour of the U.S. Capitol.

Contact Me: It is an honor to serve you in Washington, D.C. Please let me know how I can be of assistance.