LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Police searched buildings at the University of Kansas this morning after receiving a report of a man with a rifle near the center of campus, but called off the search when no gunman was found.

The university announced the all-clear on its Web site shortly before 11 a.m.

University spokesman Todd Cohen said the caller reported seeing the man near Wescoe Hall, which houses the school's English Department.

The search involved the university's public safety department as well as officers from Lawrence and Douglas County, Cohen said.

The university was not placed on lockdown, he said, but faculty, staff and students were sent an e-mail shortly after 10 a.m. advising them to stay indoors.
Students make news

Honor graduate

LAWRENCE — The University Honors Program at the University of Kansas commended more than 150 graduating students at a ceremony May 19 at the Crafton-Preyer Theatre in Murphy Hall.

The ceremony recognized KU seniors who have completed the University Honors Program and the University Scholars Program, a mentorship program students participate in during their sophomore years. During the ceremony, students receive gold cords to wear during commencement activities.

Katie Dawn Fisher, the daughter of Vickie Fisher, Pratt, received an honors program cord. She received a Bachelor's Degree in human biology.
After focusing on athletes and military personnel, the Leavenworth High School Alumni Association is now looking to fine arts for inductees to its Hall of Fame.

Nominations are being accepted for what will be the third induction ceremony for the Hall of Fame that honors graduates of the high school.

Members of a committee who will select the inductees are looking for graduates who have been professionally and publicly recognized in performing arts, writing or visual arts.

Performing arts can include music, theater, dance, film, video or television.

Writing can include poetry, novels, short stories or non-fiction. Visual arts can include drawing, painting, printmaking, photography, computer art, architecture and sculpture.

"So it's a very wide net now that we're casting out," said John Tibbetts, chairman of the fine arts Hall of Fame committee.

Tibbetts, a member of the Leavenworth High School class of 1965, is an associate professor with the Department of Theater and Film at the University of Kansas. Lawrence, and has experience in broadcasting.

He said there's a lot of dedication that goes with being an artist, and it's something worth honoring.

Tibbetts said he hopes the committee will receive a "good, vigorous response" in terms of nominations.

Tibbetts said there will be some predictable names such as recording artist Melissa Etheridge, who is from Leavenworth. He said it will be interesting to learn if there are other people in the public eye whom he didn't realize is connected to Leavenworth High School or graduates who unjustly haven't been in the public eye.

"I think there are some wonderful discoveries that we are going to make," said Carol Ayres.

She's the coordinator for the Leavenworth Public Schools Education Foundation. The Leavenworth High School Alumni Association is a branch of the foundation.

Ayres also is serving on the selection committee.

The first induction ceremony for the Hall of Fame was held in 2006. Eighteen people were inducted in recognition of athletic accomplishments.

This year, 16 people were inducted in recognition of military achievements.

Photographs of inductees hang in Main Street, the main hallway of Leavenworth High School.

"The whole issue of a school honoring its own with a Hall of Fame is a great idea," Tibbetts said.

Ayers said she doesn't know how many graduates involved in the fine arts will be inducted into the Hall of Fame. She said this will depend on the nominations.

The committee has set a Sept. 1 deadline for nominations.

Ayers said committee members then will sort through the nominations.

She said an announcement about inductees as well as a ceremony probably will come in January or February.

Tibbetts said he hopes the induction program includes performances or exhibitions of art.

"I think it would be great fun," he said.

A nomination form can be found on the foundation's Web site at www.lvksch.org/1psef.
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Staff Changes Made in Sports, Linn County

New Reporter Joins Graphic After Graduating from the University of Kansas

STAFF REPORT

A new reporter has joined the Graphic staff, and another has taken on a new role.

Nate McGinnis began work at the Graphic last week and will lead the Linn County coverage.

Former Linn County reporter Liz Beggs now will be in charge of sports coverage.

McGinnis graduated in May from the University of Kansas, where he spent one semester as a reporter and another as an editor for the University Daily Kansan.

Also during his time at the university, he worked for tv.ku.edu, the campus television station's Web site, as an online producer and at the campus radio station, KJHK 90.7 FM, as a morning news anchor. He also completed a radio internship in central Mexico last summer and speaks Spanish at a conversational level.

A longtime resident of Overland Park, McGinnis is excited to be working close to home and is sure to be a valuable asset to the Graphic staff.

Beggs has been working for the Graphic for about eight months, covering Linn County. She earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of Kansas in May.

Beggs graduated from Olathe North High School in 1997 and played volleyball, basketball and track and was a member of the swim team. She moved on to Kent State University on a basketball scholarship.

"I look forward to covering sports in Osawatomie and Linn County," she said. "As a former athlete, covering the sports beat will give me a chance to reestablish a relationship with the dirt of a softball diamond and sweaty smell of a basketball court.

"I know I have some big shoes to fill, but I hope to get to know residents and fans over the summer," she said.
PAUL LANTIS

Paul Lantis, Ottawa, received the Arthur J. Boynton Memorial Award at the University of Kansas Department of Economics annual awards banquet May 1 at the Adams Alumni Center.

Lantis is a senior economics major. He plans to attend law school.

He graduated from Ottawa High School.

He is the son of Cal and Carol Lantis, Ottawa.
Nothing found after search for reported gunman at University of Kansas

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Challenges bring questions

Kansas attorney general launches pre-emptive strike

By CHRIS GREEN
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — State officials won’t wait for someone to mount challenges against two significant laws passed in this year’s Legislature.

As a result, lawyers from state Attorney General Paul Morrison’s office could be headed to court in the near future for pre-emptive tests of whether the new laws are constitutional.

Those efforts would prevent someone else from seeking to strike down new restrictions on funeral picketing or a law authorizing new state-owned casinos and slot machines at racetracks.

However, Morrison doesn’t oppose the crux of the laws he’s challenging. As a result, the approach raises questions about whether it will be appropriate or effective, two state legal experts say.

The legal maneuvering began last month when Morrison filed a lawsuit with the state Supreme Court regarding the funeral privacy act, signed by the governor in April.

Lawmakers passed the legislation in response to the activities of Topeka anti-gay preacher Fred Phelps and his family’s Westboro Baptist Church, who have been protesting the funerals of soldiers killed in Iraq. The Phelps claim the deaths are God’s punishment for the nation’s tolerance of homosexuality.

In all, 38 states have passed funeral-picketing restrictions. The Kansas law keeps protesters at least 150 feet away from funerals and prevents

See COURT, Page 10
COURT: Two lawsuits are unusual as test cases brought by the attorney general them from blocking public streets and sidewalks. It also enables families to sue if they feel protesters defamed their deceased relatives.

Lawmakers required that the law be challenged in court before it could take effect, and asked the attorney general to test it, apparently to keep the Phelps from successfully challenging the law and winning attorney's fees.

In the filing with the high court, though, Morrison only asks justices to strike down the mandate that his office file a lawsuit and urges them to let the picketing restrictions be enforced.

"Obviously we want a ruling so we can have an enforceable funeral picketing law," Morrison spokeswoman Ashley Anstaett said of the suit against the law.

Morrison could also sue over an expansion of gambling in the state, an approach suggested by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius as a way of providing certainty for developers investing millions of dollars in casinos.

Anstaett said it's unclear how much the challenges would cost, since attorneys work on numerous cases and do not track their time by case. Anstaett said no outside counsel has been employed to work on the funeral privacy act challenge.

The two suits would be unusual in that they're test cases brought by the state's attorney general and not by someone with an interest in seeing the laws overturned, University of Kansas law professor Richard E. Levy said.

Levy, whose focus is on constitutional and public law, said the nation's legal process typically pits adversaries against each other to focus issues and bring out the best arguments on both sides in the situation.

"You kind of just have to wonder how vigorously the attorney general is going to make the case against a law," Levy said.

Bill Rich, the interim dean of Washburn University's law school, also questions the value of such rulings in the case of the funeral picketing law.

"Even though it would be possible, it is unlikely that a federal court would ultimately disturb that judgment," said Schmidt, who believes the law is constitutional.

"There will only be a limited degree of protection in getting a Kansas Supreme Court opinion about constitutionality," Rich said.

But Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt, R-Independence, who came up with the idea of seeking a court ruling, said he's fairly confident federal courts would honor a state ruling, provided it attempted to settle First Amendment questions associated with the law.

"It's unusual for other branches of state government to challenge laws before the state Supreme Court, but it's not unprecedented," Rich said.

In years past, the court has been asked to rule on the constitutionality of Indian gaming compacts signed during Gov. Joan Finney's administration and on a line-item veto challenge in the 1980s, he said.

In addition, the state Constitution requires that the attorney general petition the state Supreme Court to determine the validity of a new redistricting plan passed by the Legislature every decade.

But Keefover said Morrison's challenge of the funeral privacy act appears to be unusual.
KU police search for gunman

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Kansans wanting to show their support for breast cancer research and outreach can now commit to purchasing a new "Driven to Cure" state license plate for their vehicles.

Lawmakers authorized the plate this past session at the behest of state Sen. Barbara Allen, R-Overland Park, who survived breast cancer. To obtain the plate, individuals must pay a $50 annual fee in addition to their typical auto registration costs.

The plates will be available Jan. 1. But before the plates can be produced, however, at least 500 people must commit to buying them. An application form can be found at http://www.kumc.edu/Pulse/DriventoCure.pdf.

The funds raised will support a statewide coordinator for the Midwest Cancer Alliance at the University of Kansas Cancer Center. The coordinator will work with health officials to distribute information about cancer.

The KU Cancer Center must also raise $10,000 in other donations for the effort, which could help the center obtain a National Cancer Institute designation as a Comprehensive Cancer Center. Those wishing to donate can call (913) 568-7544.

"I am confident the specialty plate will be a significant and permanent source of funding for breast cancer research and outreach for years to come," Allen said.