Seventh graders chosen for Duke talent program

Three area youths have been named by the University of Kansas for state recognition among about 400 seventh-graders in the Duke University Talent Identification Program, Ross K. Nicklos of St. Francis, Catherine M. Jenkinson of Sharon Springs and Cody W. Pearce of Wallace.

The event will be at 12:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) Sunday at the Lied Center on the Lawrence campus. Marissa Roney, vice provost for student success, will preside. Robert N. Sawyer, founding executive director of the program, will talk to the students, their families and guests.

Selection to the program is based on scores the students get on college-entrance exams while still in middle school.

The top 5 percent are chosen for the program. Students take either the SAT or ACT national achievement tests. The program sponsors 33 state ceremonies in its 16-state talent search.

Each student receives a medallion. The state recognition ceremonies honor seventh graders who have earned scores above the average average of college-bound high school seniors. About 900 students qualified in Kansas, and 400 are expected for the ceremony.
Fil receives $1,000 scholarship

Benjamin Fuentes, son of Benjamin and Laura Fuentes, has been awarded the Pioneer Communications Earl B. Williams Memorial Scholarship in the amount of $1,000. Fuentes, a graduating senior of Satanta High School, will attend the University of Kansas this fall to pursue a degree in Computer Science.

The Earl B. Williams and Joseph B. Chilen Memorial Scholarships are awarded annually to outstanding high school seniors in the Pioneer Communications service area. The scholarships are provided in honor of the memory and service of the cooperative association's former President of the Board of Directors, Earl Williams, and former General Manager, Joseph Chilen.

This year, a total of five $1,000 scholarships were awarded through the program to advance the educational opportunities of youth in southwestern Kansas.
Lawrence, KS - Sarah Beth Leonard and Honey Rose Hooper are among those who have received degrees at the University of Kansas.

Sarah Beth Leonard, daughter of Risa Stevens, received a Bachelor of Science in Journalism. Leonard is a graduate of Sublette High School.

Honey Rose Hooper of Sublette, daughter of Michael Hooper received a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology.

KU's Class of 2007 numbers more than 6,400, including 2,125 who completed degree work in summer and fall 2006. The university's 135th commencement ceremony was held on Sunday, May 20, 2007.
Nothing found after KU search for reported gunman

The Associated Press

LAWRENCE — Police searched buildings at the University of Kansas on Friday 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.
Twenty-one women to compete for 2007 Miss Kansas crown

BY THE NEWS STAFF

The 2007 Miss Kansas Pageant will be Wednesday through Saturday on the campus of Pratt Community College.

Twenty-one contestants will vie for the 2007 crown.

Preliminary shows begin at 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Tickets are $5. Friday night’s show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are $15.

Saturday’s final night of competition begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are $40.

For more information, visit the Web site www.misskansas.org.

Miss Kansas contestants for the 2007 pageant are:

Miss Arkansas Valley, Mandy Ronen, Hutchinson, junior at Wichita State University studying communications. Her platform is autism awareness; her talent will be a vocal performance.

Miss Boot Hill, Samantha Steckloff, Lawrence, graduate of Purdue University, with a bachelor of arts in political science. Her platform is “20/20 Vision Perfect Sight: Youth Involvement in Our Communities,” and her talent will be a vocal performance.

Miss Capital City, Erica Mahan, Neosho Rapids, graduate of Emporia High School. Her platform is “It’s S.A.D.D. that People Drink and Drive,” and her talent is a vocal performance.

Miss Cheney Lake, Jennifer Jones, Salina, junior at the University of Kansas, studying science. Her platform is child abuse prevention; her talent is baton twirling.

Miss Derby, Sarah Murdoch, Derby, freshman at Cowley County Community College, majoring in secondary education. Her platform is promoting Girl Scouting; her talent is tap dancing.

Miss Dodge City, Laura Voran, Cimarron, senior at Fort Hays State University, studying business administration. Her platform is “Let’s Talk Dollars and Sense”; her talent is a classical vocal.

Miss Great Plains, Hannah Leigh Hendricks, El Dorado, graduate of Butler Community College in pre-pharmacy. Her platform is “Everyone Can Be Someone’s Star”; her talent is a color guard dance.

Miss KC Metro, Felicia Helena Fairley, Overland Park, a junior at the University of Kansas, majoring in communication and theater arts. Her platform is encouraging abstinence by advocating right decisions right now; her talent is a liturgical dance performance.

Lawrence, senior at the University of Kansas, studying liberal arts. Her platform is fine arts education, and her talent will be a vocal performance.

Miss Boot Hill, Samantha Steckloff, Lawrence, graduate of Purdue University, with a bachelor of arts in political science. Her platform is “20/20 Vision Perfect Sight: Youth Involvement in Our Communities,” and her talent will be a vocal performance.

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Miss Kansas River Valley, Carol Toland, Iola, second-year law student at the University of Kansas School of Law. Her platform is positive living; her talent is classical piano.

Miss Leavenworth County, Paula Prosser, Tonganoxie, freshman at the University of Kansas, studying music education with emphasis on music therapy. Her platform is music for wellness; her talent is a country vocal.

Miss Liberal, Shameem Joan Kaufman, Liberal, graduate of Liberal High School. Her platform is “Keeping Children Active”; her talent is a lyrical dance.

Miss Northeast, Danielle Coffman, Topeka, junior at Washburn University, majoring in administration with marketing and finance emphasis. Her platform is promotion of youth literacy; her talent is a vocal performance.

Miss Paradise Valley, Cassidy Reimer, Ulysses, graduate of Ulysses High School. Her platform is positive mentoring through youth involvement; her talent is a jazz dance.

Miss Sedgwick County, Alyssa Ann George, Minneapolis, graduate of University of Kansas. Her platform is “Bullying: The Rutherford Effect.”
Miss South Central, Megan Ensley, Topeka, sophomore at Wichita State University, majoring in vocal music education and communications. Her platform is "Mentoring: Everyone Counts"; her talent is a vocal performance.

Miss Southwest, Alexandra Blasi, Topeka, senior at Washburn University, majoring in business administration, management and economics, and vocal music. Her platform is youth volunteerism; her talent is classical singing.

Miss Sunflower, Belinda Tina Post, Topeka, junior at Kansas State University, majoring in dance. Her platform is "Right Decisions Right Now Through Community Service"; her talent will be a tap dance.

Miss Topeka, Alexandra Miller, Derby, graduate of Derby High School. Her platform is protecting "YourSpace: Youth Internet Safety Awareness"; her talent will be a jazz dance.

Miss Wheat Capital, Laura Blasi, Topeka, junior at Washburn University, majoring in biology, business, music. Her platform is "Health: A Life Skill," and her talent is classical singing.

Miss Wooded Hills, Lindsay Hoover, Anthony, graduate of Kansas State University, with a bachelor's degree in communications. Her platform is "Lead for Life"; her talent is baton twirling.
The Alpha chapter of Phi Beta Kappa academic honor society at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, has inducted 103 new members into the chapter. Area inductees include Andrew Payne, Garden City, Jacqueline Austin, Newton, and Ashley Bloom, Hutchinson.
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Visit us online at www.bladeempire.com
Alumni group honors students

Seniors from five southwest Kansas high schools were honored last month by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and the KU Endowment.

Dighton High School — Megan Prather, Krysten Fraley

Greeley County High School — Levi Schlegel, Shancee Howell, Beth Zerr, Celine Govert

Healy High School — Matthew Pollock, Chris Butler

Scott Community High School — Kandace Wiechman, Miranda Appel, Baylee Hess, Amy Williams, Rachel Williams, Mindy Richmeier, Cody Amack, Kelsey Tankersley

Wichita County High School — Matthew Baker, Danielle Dirks, Ashley Wagner-Berning
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Court challenges raise questions on effectiveness

Test cases: Suits unusual in that they're brought by state's AG.

By CHRIS GREEN
cgreen@dailynews.net

TOPEKA (HNS) — 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 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.

But he said it's fair to question whether challenges by a state's top law enforcement officer would accomplish that objective.

"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.

Because the regulations involve First Amendment issues, a legal action could also be brought at the federal level, where the courts wouldn't have to abide by a state court decision.