Healing will take time

Greet us then our foster mother,
Noble friend so true,
We will ever sing her praises,
Hail to old KU.

I fondly remember the
powerful emotions I felt as I
sang this song, "Crimson and
the Blue," during both my
undergraduate and master's
commencement ceremonies
at KU. I was surprised at the
power of the emotions that en-
gulfed me as I joined with my
fellow graduates to pay tribute
to the university that has been
my home for most of the past 15
years.

It isn't surprising that the author of this
song would characterize the university as
"our foster mother" or that many of us refer
to our college as our "alma mater," which is a
Latin phrase meaning "nourishing mother."

In the four or five years it takes most of us
to earn a college degree, many of us become
tremendously fond of the particular institu-
tion we attend. We foster lifelong friendships,
create lasting memories and grow in ways
we could never have anticipated in those
exciting and anxious first few days and weeks
on campus.

These institutions, whether in the guise
of a dorm RA, a favorite instructor or trusted
mentor, do often function as
surrogate parents. There is an
implicit, if unacknowledged, trust
your parents place in the college
you choose to attend. A similar
obligation is accepted by that par-
ticular institution: We'll help turn
your son or daughter into an adult.
We'll provide them with not only a
degree, but also an education. As

parents make their difficult and
often messy exit from their child's new world,
they take comfort knowing their children will
be safe and looked after.

In the wake of last Monday's tragic shoot-
ings at Virginia Tech, it feels like the covenant
between parents and universities has been
broken. It feels as though things will never
be the same. As we did with Oklahoma City,
Columbine and 9-11, our nation has lost
another part of its innocence.

One of the truisms about university life is
its alleged isolation from the "real world." Af-
ter this tragedy, we clearly see the real world
is very much a part of campus life.

Our sons and daughters come into college
cloaked with a youthful defiance of mortality
and danger. They seem Indestructible. Death
is a largely foreign concept.

The words of poet Dylan Thomas in his
"Fern Hill" seem appropriate: "Nothing I
cared in the lamb white days, that time would
take me/Up to the swallow thronged loft by
the shadow of my hand."

Though it'll take time, Virginia Tech will
work through this tragedy. However, will I
ever feel as safe on campus as I did before last
Monday? I pray that we won't allow fear to
rule our lives on campus.

Knowledge is what we seek at a university.
We come here seeking answers, we come
here to search for the truth. Despite the
recorded rantings of this troubled assassin,
I doubt we'll ever fully understand this trag-
edy. Acceptance of this fact will certainly be a
most difficult lesson to learn.

Nicolas Shump is a doctoral student
in American studies at The Univer-
sity of Kansas. He can be reached at
Nico1225@sunflower.com.
The Kansas Legislature assemblies Wednesday to complete the annual tug-of-war over power, money and opportunity to take responsibility or assess blame for three months of debate about state government policy.

Outlines of the 2007 edition of the Legislature are already known. The most astonishing action was adoption of the law allowing state-authorized gambling at casinos and racetracks in Kansas. A package of state tax cuts was enacted to lighten the tax burden by $300 million over five years. And, of special interest in Topeka, new restrictions on funeral picketing were imposed.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and leaders of the House and Senate agree substantial decisions were put off to the wrap-up session, which may last anywhere from a few days to two weeks. The main portion of the session ran Jan. 8 to April 4.

"We have a lot of unfinished business," Sebelius said.

The to-do list includes a final version of the $12.3 billion state budget, health care reform, deferred building maintenance at state universities, disaster aid for western Kansas, reimbursement of the federal government for Medicaid overcharges, funding for development of military training facilities and, possibly, tweaking rules on placement of a casino in south-central Kansas.

"There could be an attempt to over-

Please see TO-DO, Page 6A

Continued from Page 1A

ride Sebelius’ veto of a bill blocking cities from imposing ordinances limiting the carrying of concealed weapons beyond state law. It is unclear how the recent massacre of 32 students and faculty at Virginia Tech will influence thinking on the vetoed bill.

Rekindling discussion of controversial proposals unable to get sufficient traction in the regular session — for example, a bill designating English as the state’s official language — could complicate negotiations on issues.

House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls, said lawmakers shouldn’t get any ideas about going on an uncontrolled spending spree upon returning to Topeka.

"Although there is still some heavy lifting to do, I am confident we will remain true to our goals of passing sound public policy and holding the line on increased spending," Neufeld said.

On this point, the House and Senate are far apart on a plan for addressing a backlog of building repairs at KU, Kansas State University and other schools under direction of the Kansas Board of Regents.

The regents’ repair list carries a $660 million price tag. The Senate Ways and Means Committee endorsed a five-year, $525 million repair plan, including $93 million in the next budget year. The House Republican leadership proposed a plan providing $152 million next year for maintenance.

Sen. Laura Kelly, D-Topeka, said completing action on health care initiatives in Senate Bill 11 would create a framework for improving access and affordability of health insurance. About 300,000 Kansans are uninsured.

"We can’t leave here this year without laying the foundation of health care reform," she said.

On the gambling front, there is interest in a "trailer" bill to correct technical errors in the bill authorizing construction of a casino in each of four zones — Ford County, Wyandotte County, Cherokee or Crawford counties, and Sedgwick or Sumner counties. The bill also permits up to 2,800 slot machines at three dog or horse racetracks in Wichita, Frontenac and Kansas City, Kan.

The Senate budget committee approved a plan to grant the Kansas National Guard $12.6 million in bonding authority next year to begin construction of a training hub near Salina for use by state and local emergency responders and guard soldiers.

The Great Plains Joint Training Center would complement four new training facilities in each quarter of the state. The project is expected to cost at least $32 million over three years.

The House budget panel prefers to draw the $12.6 million from a contingency fund rather than borrow the money.
Former senator blends humor, history

By Tim Carpenter
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

LAWRENCE — Former U.S. Sens. Howard Baker and Nancy Kassebaum Baker view the current presidential campaign through the lens of a lifetime in politics.

It just so happens this husband and wife duo are bringing a different focus to the race.

Baker is behind the effort to draft former U.S. Sen. Fred Thompson, of Tennessee, into the Republican thicket while Kassebaum Baker, who represented Kansas in Washington, is backing U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz.

There was no place in the wedding ceremony that we had to support the same person for president,” Baker joked Sunday night during an appearance at The University of Kansas.

Baker spoke to more about 750 people at the Lied Center about his political life — Senate leader, White House chief of staff and ambassador to Japan — while in Lawrence to accept the Dole Leadership Prize. The award is named for former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kan., and is presented annually to someone who promotes politics as an honorable profession.

Baker, who ran for president in 1980, said it was too early to tell how the 2008 campaign would unfold. There are so many candidates and intense scrutiny will be applied to each person who stays in the race for the duration, he said.

“Anybody who says they can tell you how the election is going to turn out is not realistic,” he said. “I’m going to try to get a Republican to win.”

Baker said he believes humor should be injected more frequently into political dialogue, much as Dole did to amuse supporters and deflect critics.

Baker recalled his first date with Kassebaum Baker, whom he asked out long after the death of his first wife. Kassebaum Baker accepted an invitation to dinner. When Baker arrived to pick her up, he admitted feeling like a youngster on a first date.

“I stood on one foot and then the other and she came to the door. I said, ‘I feel like a 12 year old.’ She said, ‘You don’t look like a 12 year old!”

The couple married in 1996, and Baker said their relationship was “one of the great things that’s happened in my life.”

On other topics, Baker looked back with pride on his role as the ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate Committee. He said he initially underestimated the seriousness of wrongdoing by President Nixon.

He cherished his 18 years at the Senate and his time as the chamber’s majority leader. The job, which he called the second most powerful in Washington, gave him authority to set the policy agenda for the Senate. He decided not to seek a third term in the Senate and retired in 1985.

Baker said he would have laughed off predictions he would be recalled to Washington in 1987 to serve as President Ronald Reagan’s chief of staff. Nor, he said, did he expect to be appointed ambassador to Japan by the current president.

Baker is active in development of the Baker Center at the University of Tennessee. The facility is under construction and will be dedicated to bipartisan political dialogue. He donated to the center his large collection of personal photographs, which serve as a diary of his nearly 40 years in public life.

“When I leave this mortal coil, I may have no money, I may have no reputation, but I’ll have a lot of good pictures,” he said.

Tim Carpenter can be reached at (785) 296-3005 or timothy.carpenter@cjonline.com
Maintenance decision ahead

Kansas House, Senate plans rely to some extent on revenue from expanded gambling.

By JIM SULLINGER
The Star’s Topeka correspondent

When lawmakers reconvene Wednesday in Topeka they must weigh competing plans for solving a $727 million maintenance backlog at the state’s six universities.

Both rely to some extent on projected revenue from expanded gambling approved last month.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee crafted a plan last week that won the praise of the Kansas Board of Regents, which oversees the state’s university system.

The proposal endorsed by the more conservative House Appropriations Committee wasn’t received with as much enthusiasm, but was called a good start.

State Sen. Roger Reitz, a Manhattan Republican, sees tough negotiations ahead between the two chambers.

“They are worlds apart,” he said.

The House proposal includes $293 million from gambling revenue for next year, which is projected to increase to $773 million by 2013.

In all, the House plan proposed to make $152.3 million available next year to apply to the deferred maintenance problem. That amount is expected to be $135.4 million in 2013.

But the House plan also contains a controversial provision that would allow eight counties with state universities to levy a 1/48th-cent sales tax to help pay for facilities or infrastructure needs at those state institutions. Included would be Wyandotte County, home of the University of Kansas Medical Center.

The Board of Regents made it clear a few weeks ago that they don’t like that idea. It hasn’t found much support among local officials, either.

“The city of Lawrence has opposed the Legislature’s attempt to abandon their responsibility to take care of their institutions, including the University of Kansas,” said David Corliss, Lawrence city manager. “Shawnee County residents don’t pay extra for the renovation of the state Capitol. Lansing residents don’t pay for the upkeep of the state penitentiary.”

State Rep. Lee Tafanelli, a Republican from Ozawkie and an architect of the House plan, said it creates a partnership between the state, the universities and the communities that gain economic benefits from the location of university facilities.

The Legislature already has passed a bill this session allowing a local tax in Johnson County to help construct a university research hub for the University of Kansas and Kansas State University.

Local dollars aren’t a part of the Senate plan.

It would provide $93.5 million for next year but adds as much as $525 million over the next five years. Regents chair-

man Nelson Galle called it “a substantial and creative solution.”

From 2013 and years afterward, the Senate plan would dedicate $119.5 million annually to the maintenance of higher education facilities.

To reach Jim Sullinger, call 1-(785) 354-1388.
Gov. Kathleen Sebelius agreed Monday to sign a $12.3 billion budget bill while vetoing the Legislature's prescription for approving affiliations between The University of Kansas Medical Center and other health care providers.

The governor deleted the provision giving KU Hospital, which was split off from the Medical Center in the 1990s, power to void educational or research agreements between the Medical Center and St. Luke's Hospital in Kansas City, Mo. KU Hospital and St. Luke's are competitors.

Sebelius said the final agreement would be reviewed by the Kansas Board of Regents. Adding KU Hospital to the approval process triggers unnecessary "micromanagement" of the Medical Center, she said.

"There is already a more-than-sufficient level of oversight provided by current law," Sebelius said.

The budget proviso was inserted into the spending bill at the request of House Republicans.

House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls, said the governor's line-item veto didn't quell concern among legislators the affiliation could undermine KU medical education programs in Wichita and Kansas City, Kan.

Reggie Robinson, president and chief executive officer of the Board of Regents, said Neufeld's interpretation of the Board of Regents' involvement was flawed.

"Of course," Robinson said, "the board doesn't accept that characterization of its engagement on this issue."

Please see HOSPITAL, Page 2B
Hospital: Sebelius signs budget bill

Continued from Page 1B

He said the Board of Regents was closely monitoring negotiations.

Sebelius said there was no evidence the proposed affiliation would harm health providers in Kansas. A linkage could help the Medical Center attain designation as a national cancer research center and bolster bioscience research, she said.

The Legislature returns Wednesday for the wrap-up portion of the 2007 session.

Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka, said it was possible Neufeld would instigate an effort to override Sebelius’ veto. A two-thirds majority in both chambers is required to reverse the governor’s action. If the House secures this margin, Hensley said he would work against Senate concurrence on an override.

“We don’t need to be in the business of micromanaging the KU Med Center,” Hensley said.

“We need to basically have these issues dealt with by people who have the expertise. We don’t.”

The budget bill signed into law by Sebelius contains hundreds of millions of dollars for education of children from preschool to college. It includes the second installment of a three-year finance package for K-12 public schools adopted by the 2006 Legislature under pressure from the Kansas Supreme Court.

“This budget keeps the commitment we made to our children last year, and builds on it,” Sebelius said.

House Bill 2368 also contains $11.5 million for biofuels research and production in Kansas, $1 million to plan placement of electricity transmission lines to bring power from wind farms to consumers and creation of a state Office of Rural Opportunity to help communities attract families and businesses.

Tim Carpenter can be reached at (785) 296-3005 or timothy.carpenter@cjonline.com.
The Topeka Jazz Workshop Inc. presented $6,000 worth of college tuition scholarships Monday at the Topeka Community Foundation's annual scholarship awards event. The 2007 scholarship recipients are:

- Mary McCauley, daughter of Peggy and Tony McCauley, who received the Jim Monroe Scholarship for $2,000. An early graduate of Washburn Rural High School, McCauley is pursuing a degree in percussion performance at the University of Kansas.

- Erina McKinney, whose parents are Craig and Akimi McKinney, received the $1,500 Roy Duffens Scholarship. She has played piano in various Topeka High School bands and the TJW youth band, in addition to singing with school vocal groups. McKinney plans to attend KU.

- Josh Heaslet, son of Joanna Heaslet, will use his $1,500 Dick Wright Scholarship to attend Washburn University. Heaslet played lead trumpet five of his six years at Rock Creek Junior/Senior High School in St. George. He also performed with the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra.

- Christine Hobelman earned the Jim Grimes Scholarship in the amount of $1,000 to use at Kansas State University, where she intends to apply her trombone skills to K-State jazz combos and the marching band. The daughter of Dee and John Hobelman played trombone and bass trombone in Washburn Rural bands.
Health care is about to become a hot topic as the 2008 presidential race gets under way. Yet now is the time to direct your attention as the reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program is being debated in Congress. SCHIP, funded through the federal government, provides low-income children the ability to access health care.

Children desperately need the support of a state that cares about a healthy future. In Kansas, the SCHIP, Healthwave 21, provides health care for children living at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty line. It was found that in 2004, 9 percent of the children in this state, who live in households earning less than 200 percent of the federal poverty line, were still uninsured. These children should qualify and be enrolled in the Healthwave 21 program.

As Kansans, let's step forward and show our support for the reauthorization of SCHIP.

PATRICIA SYLVESTER for The University of Kansas BSW Health Policy Group, Lawrence
University maintenance can be a real Monster

‘Frankenstein Room’ shows need of repairs; legislators debate

By JOHN HANNA
The Associated Press

MANHATTAN — Enough electricity lingers in the air of the “Frankenstein Room” that a voltage tester held more than a foot away from its bank of big, copper switches lights up, as if it had been stuck into a live wall socket.

Electricity for more than two dozen buildings at Kansas State University flows through vintage-1923 equipment in the room at the power plant. The room, as long and wide as a mobile home, has unfinished limestone-and-mortar walls reminiscent of an old home’s musty basement. Workers don’t make repairs without donning insulated suits to protect against electrocution.

Nationally, universities struggle to keep buildings from deteriorating. And with officials saying Kansas institutions are desperately short of maintenance money, the Frankenstein Room in Kansas State’s power plant has become a symbol of what’s wrong.

Biggest issue facing legislators

Campus repairs represent the biggest unresolved issue legislators will face when they reconvene today to wrap up their business for the year. Higher education officials estimate the backlog of university repair projects at $663 million and believe they need nearly $69 million more a year to keep it from growing, although some lawmakers dispute the figures.

At Kansas State, maintenance manager Ed Heptig hopes an emergency, such as a broken steam pipe, doesn’t force him to postpone plans to replace a couple of the leakiest roofs. The Frankenstein Room must wait, because replacing its equipment and the attendant campus wiring would cost $18 million.

“The emergency kind of overrules the necessity that you’re trying to fix,” Heptig said.

...The backlog of projects at the nation’s colleges and universities, public and private, is an estimated $36 billion, according to a report last year by the APPA, formerly the Association of Physical Plant Administrators.

North Carolina voters tackled that state’s problems in 2000 by approving $3.1 billion in bonds. In 2005, Oklahoma legislators approved $500 million in bonds, the largest program for higher education there.

Alabama lawmakers are considering $850 million in bonds for education projects, with no more than one-third going to universities. In Oregon, lawmakers this year cut the governor’s proposed $352 million in borrowing for higher ed projects to $50 million.

See MONSTER, Page A8
An electric current tester glows as Kansas State University director of facilities maintenance Ed Heptig holds it in proximity of a row of 80-year-old electrical switches at the campus power plant Thursday in Manhattan. Campus repairs remain the biggest unresolved issue as legislators reconvene today to wrap up their business for the year.

Rain water leaking through a roof is diverted into a trash can in the corner of a classroom on the Kansas State University campus Thursday in Manhattan.
In Kansas, proposals include using low-interest loans from the state to the universities, imposing new sales taxes in university communities and simply providing some funds. Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' proposal to issue $300 million in bonds and pay them off by raising Kansas Turnpike tolls received little support.

Last year, the Board of Regents estimated the repair backlog at $727 million, but the figure shrank after some legislators and others complained that repairs to athletic facilities and presidents' residences were on the list. The Kansas Taxpayers Network cited such "dubious" projects in arguing last week that the universities could tap their private endowment funds.

Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, like others, contends the universities should have made maintenance a higher priority in the past.

House Speaker Melvin Neufeld suggested news coverage helped create the perception of a big problem.

"The universities decided to make it their issue this year, and that's all they talked about and got you guys to think it was a big issue," Neufeld, R-Ingalls, said during a news conference. "And so it became a big issue."

The regents have discussed their repair needs in past years, but other budget issues seemed more pressing to legislators. In 2002 and 2003, state government faced financial problems. Later, lawmakers wrestled with funding for schools, hoping to end a lawsuit.

"We understand that we're living in a political environment and an environment where it's difficult to obtain the kind of political support we need to make progress on this issue," said Reggie Robinson, the regents' chief executive officer. "Resources are tight, even though the economy's doing better."

Problems certainly catch students' attention.

At Kansas State, skylights leak over the first-floor atrium in McCain Auditorium, home to the music department, and students dodge falling icicles inside during the winter.

In Room 325, a small, windowless classroom, a hose hooked up to a pan above the ceiling drains rainwater into a big trash can. Heptig hopes to replace McCain's roof this year.

"After a while, you kind of get used to it," said C.J. Longabaugh, a freshman studying music education, who spends most of his day in McCain.

Harvey Kaiser, a Syracuse, N.Y., author and consultant, said states often fail to provide enough money for maintenance problems.

"It's human nature to focus on building rather than repairing," Kaiser said. "It's not unusual for us to skip painting the wood trim and getting the car repair done until something breaks down."

Terry Ruprecht, director of energy conservation for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, said deferred projects tend to be medium-sized — not as big as new construction requiring bonds or large private donations, not small enough to be covered by annual budgets geared toward janitorial services and "light-duty" repairs.

Every campus has its Frankenstein Room, he said, kept in operation because it still works, although less efficiently than before.

"The problem has to get big enough or visible enough that all of a sudden it mandates action," said Ruprecht, who's co-writing a book on the subject.
A look at universities' maintenance backlogs

Associated Press

TOPEKA — The estimated cost of eliminating the backlog of maintenance projects on state university campuses, in millions of dollars.

The average and oldest are for buildings on campus, in years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
<th>BACKLOG</th>
<th>AVG</th>
<th>OLDEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas State</td>
<td>$234.4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Univ. of Kansas</td>
<td>$180.6</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KU Medical Center</td>
<td>$71.7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburg State</td>
<td>$57.7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emporia State</td>
<td>$41.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Hays State</td>
<td>$39.6</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wichita State</td>
<td>$38.5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$653.7</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Backlog figures are for “mission critical” buildings, excluding athletic facilities and presidents' residences.
KU medical audits ordered

Members of legislative panel bicker over concerns about committee's integrity

By Tim Carpenter
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

The Legislature's audit committee Tuesday engaged in a round of partisan finger-pointing before approving a massive financial investigation of the University of Kansas Medical Center and the University of Kansas Hospital.

The three-month probe by the Legislative Division of Post Audit will dovetail with exasperation expressed by some legislators with negotiations by the medical center to form cooperative research and teaching agreements with the St. Luke's Hospital system in Kansas City, Mo.

The Legislative Post Audit Committee, which includes House and Senate members, agreed to merge three studies sought by Republicans and two requested by Democrats with work expected to be completed by the fall.

The review will focus on the financial soundness of the medical center and the KU hospital, which are separate institutions but share a campus in Kansas City, Kan.

"If there are questions about decisions being made at the medical center, there should be questions about KU hospital," said Senate Minority Leader Anthony Hensley, D-Topeka.

The joint committee stumbled through an untoward debate about the proposed affiliation. At one point, several committee members admitted the discussion was so muddled it was unclear whether they had formally approved the audit or simply endorsed the idea of moving in that direction.

Rep. Tom Burroughs, D-Kansas City, joined with Hensley in accusing the committee's chairwoman, Rep. Peggy Mast, R-Emporia, of jeopardizing the joint committee's integrity by pursuing political audits.

"I have great concerns as to the direction of this committee," Burroughs said.

"I would have to say that during this year we have had some contentious issues," Mast replied. "I don't know if we should look at them as partisan or not."

Sen. Nick Jordan, R-Shawnee, urged fellow committee members of both political parties to get behind a nonpartisan examination of the medical affiliation initiative.

"We've got audit requests that point fingers," he said. "I'd like to see a balanced approach."

GOP legislators have been among the harshest critics of the affiliation sought by the medical center, expressing concern the deal with St. Luke's could undermine the financial future of the KU hospital, which competes with St. Luke's.

Democrats, including Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, have generally praised efforts to broaden the medical center's reach. From the beginning, proponents of an affiliation have labeled the GOP's involvement as unnecessary micromanagement and a hindrance to bioscience and cancer research.

The joint committee agreed to audit the financial ledger of the medical center, which includes the School of Medicine. This involves assessment of whether the medical center seeks to affiliate with St. Luke's because of insufficient cash to cover millions of dollars in commitments to staff members. Auditors will look into how the medical center spends its operating grant from the Legislature, especially how money is distributed to medical school campuses in Kansas City and Wichita.

Sen. Chris Steinegger, D-Kansas City, inserted into the audit evaluation of the medical center's method of calculating the value of indigent care provided to patients. He said the amount reported by the medical center might be inflated.

Continued from Page 1A

Hensley also received approval for examination of reports the KU hospital is buying an electronic medical records system from a Wisconsin firm for millions of dollars more than the amount bid by Kansas City-based Cerner Corp.

At Hensley's request, auditors will determine if the KU hospital is meeting obligations to the state. Attention will be placed on discussion of awarding a $1.7 million severance to KU hospital chief executive officer Irene Cumming when she resigns in June. She is a critic of the proposed affiliation with St. Luke's.

"I think it's a buy-off," Hensley said. "That's my political opinion. What we need is an audit to ascertain the facts."

Hensley also received approval for examination of reports the KU hospital is buying an electronic medical records system from a Wisconsin firm for millions of dollars more than the amount bid by Kansas City-based Cerner Corp.

Sen. Chris Steinegger, D-Kansas City, inserted into the audit evaluation of the medical center's method of calculating the value of indigent care provided to patients. He said the amount reported by the medical center might be inflated.

Tim Carpenter can be reached at (785) 296-3005 or timothy.carpenter@cjonline.com.