University of Kansas students participated in the 58th annual Rock Chalk Revue.

Considered one of the top student philanthropies in the United States, Rock Chalk Revue includes three nights of performances plus months of volunteering for area organizations.

Four students at the University of Kansas in Lawrence participated in this year's event. They include Ryan Michael Bogner, the son of Michael and Cheryl Bogner, and a graduate of Immaculata High School; and Andrew Hartley Winetroub, the son of Elizabeth Winetroub, and a graduate of Leavenworth High School.

Rock Chalk Revue is a student-run show that mixes song and dance with pop culture parody and campus satire, staged its 58th annual production March 8, 9 and 10 at the Lied Center at KU. KU students wrote, produced and acted in each of the five original skits that comprised the show, crafting different stories and settings to portray the "Hawk Wild" theme. They competed for individual and group prizes announced during the show that recognized noteworthy student philanthropy as well as outstanding performances, videos, interpretation of theme and other creative achievements.

This year, KU students contributed 12,222.46 volunteer hours to about 30 United Way agencies as part of their Rock Chalk Revue activities.

Winning 11 of the top 14 awards, "'Til Dance Do Us Part" was voted by a panel of judges as best overall show for Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Beta Theta Pi fraternity. The show also won top group awards for best production number, best use of costumes, best original song, best script, best choreography and best vocal performance by a chorus and the top four individual awards, including best actor and actress and best supporting actor and actress.
The public is cordially invited to the Abilene Bible Baptist Church to hear guest musician, Dr. Dan Forrest, in the 10:30 a.m. service Sunday.

Forrest has recently completed a D.M.A. in composition at the University of Kansas, and will return to teaching theory and composition at Bob Jones University in fall 2007. He has published sacred music with nine different publishers and regularly receives commissions for both choral and instrumental works from churches and performing groups. His sacred works have received favorable review in the ACDA Choral Journal and won multiple Editor's Choice designations from Pepper Music and Creator Magazine. His catalog of concert music includes choral, instrumental, orchestral, and wind band works. His music is performed frequently across the United States and abroad.
MANHATTAN (AP) — 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.

Campus repairs represent the biggest unresolved issue legislators will face when they reconvene Wednesday 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.

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 shrunk 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 on campus 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 awhile, 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.”

And 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’ annual maintenance needs, funds

TOPEKA (AP) — A comparison of state universities’ projected annual funding needs for building maintenance and repairs, compared with the dollars they receive from the state’s special property tax for educational buildings.

Figures are in millions.

<table>
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<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
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<th>AMT</th>
<th>GAP</th>
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<tr>
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The projected need is 2 percent of the estimated cost of replacing each university's buildings. Officials generally say that annual maintenance expenditures should be 2 percent to 4 percent of a building’s replacement cost.

The tax levy for educational buildings is $1 for every $1,000 of a property’s appraised value.

Source: Kansas Board of Regents.
Funding slowdown hurting research at KU

LAWRENCE (AP) — The University of Kansas is cutting some corners in response to an unexpected drop in the amount of money it recoups from research grants for overhead costs.

The money, called facilities and administration dollars, will be about $19.9 million this year, less than the $22.2 million the university had anticipated.

That reduction has left 35 vacant jobs unfilled on the university’s Lawrence campus and delayed such plans as installing a chiller at a research building.

Jim Roberts, the university’s vice provost for research, said the federal government has kept the total amount of money earmarked for research stagnant in recent years.

The university takes a set amount from federal grants received by researchers, usually 44 percent, and combines the money into one account, which is administered by the nonprofit Kansas Center for Research Inc.

The money is divided among such areas as startup funds for new researchers and the chancellor’s and provost’s offices.

Much of it goes to deans, unit directors and the operations of eight designated research centers across campus.

A large portion of the money goes for buildings. For example, the bond payments for the new $40 million Multidisciplinary Research Building will be $1.9 million this year, about 9.5 percent of the total budget of the Kansas Center for Research, and $3.8 million each year from 2008 until 2025.

Kevin Boatright, a spokesman for Roberts’ office, said Congress needs to address the stagnant funding for research. Expenditures by the National Institutes of Health, the university’s single-largest funding agency, has stayed near $28 billion a year in recent years, after doubling from 1998 to 2003.

“Instiutions built their infrastructure expecting perhaps a time where the resources would not be flat as they are now,” said Norka Ruiz Bravo, deputy NIH director.

Boatright said if the situation doesn’t improve, the research office may have to find new funding, including asking private donors to help pay for buildings or partnering with the Kansas Bioscience Authority.
More than 4,540 undergraduate students at the University of Kansas earned honor roll distinction for the fall 2006 semester.

Honor rolls vary among the university's academic units. Some schools honor the top 10 percent of students, some establish a minimum grade-point average and others raise the minimum GPA for each year students are in school. Students must complete a minimum number of credit hours.

Students named to the fall list include:


From St. Paul: Darin William Triebel, Pharmacy Professional.
KU freshman to work at national spelling bee

LAWRENCE — A University of Kansas freshman is headed to Washington, D.C., to attend the Scripps National Spelling Bee, this time as a crew member instead of a competitor.

Scott Toland, a journalism major from Iola, was the Kansas state spelling bee champ twice, in 2001 and 2002, earning him two bids to the national bee. Although he didn’t take the crown either year (he misspelled paroemia, a rhetorical proverb — one year), he looks back fondly on his time with his fellow spellers.

"Being at the spelling bee is the best experience I've ever had," said Toland.

This year’s national bee takes place May 30 and 31 in the nation’s capital.

Paige Kimble, director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, said crew members are primarily there to serve the families of the 286 spellers participating in the bee.

It’s a competitive process to earn a spot on the crew. Toland applied last fall and was interviewed by Kimble and her staff. He found out in late February that he had been selected.

Before he heads to Washington, Toland will finish his first year at KU, where he is involved in Student Senate and writes for the student newspaper. Toland hopes to pursue a career in sports writing.
A partnership to advance bioscience research and education in Kansas is now a possibility thanks to a bill signed by Governor Kathleen Sebelius.

Sebelius was at the University of Kansas’ Edwards Campus to sign the bill authorizing the Johnson County Education Research Triangle, a partnership supporting bioscience research and education at existing and planned KU and Kansas State University facilities in the county.

“Bioscience research has an amazing potential for new treatments and cures. We want those cures to be discovered here in Kansas. That’s why we’ve made the recruitment of bioscience companies a top priority and why we’ve invested in bioscience research and education at our universities,” Sebelius said.

“There are also good jobs created by bioscience research, so there’s an economic benefit as well. The triangle will help bring cutting-edge research to this area, which will then benefit the entire state,” Sebelius said.

The bill, SB 115, authorizes Johnson County to establish the Johnson County Education Research Triangle Authority (JCERTA). The authority would only be established if the county commission puts the question to a countywide vote. The vote would be to authorize up to a 0.2-cent sales tax, a property tax of up to 2 mills or a combination of the two.

The board governing the authority would have seven members appointed as follows: one each by the Governor, the Kansas Board of Regents, the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees, the Johnson County Commission and the President of Kansas State University. The Chancellor of the University of Kansas would have two appointees.

The JCERTA would be required to disperse funds in equal shares to the KU Edwards Campus, a proposed K-State food security research facility in Johnson County and the KU Medical Center’s Johnson County locations.

The bill also expands the local sales tax authority for Franklin, Miami, Linn, Wabaunsee, Jefferson and Riley counties for a variety of purposes.

This bill was among eight signed by the Governor, with several of the other bills lowering income taxes, property taxes, sales taxes and the franchise tax.

The total number of bills signed during the 2007 Legislative Session now stands at 159, with three bills having been vetoed. Signed bills go into effect upon their publication in the statute book unless otherwise noted.

Senate Sub. for HB 2031 expands the state earned income tax credit from 15 to 17 percent and exempts Social Security benefits received by Kansans with Federal Adjusted Gross Income (FAGI) of $50,000 or less from the Kansas income tax. For tax year 2008 and thereafter, taxpayers with incomes of $75,000 or less will be exempt from any state tax on their Social Security benefits. It also clarifies withholding requirements for certain partnerships and authorizes the Secretary of Revenue to waive an electronic-filing requirement for withholding tax information.

Senate Sub. for HB 2476 increases the refunds available to homeowners under the Homestead Property Tax Refund Act from the current $600 to $700 beginning in tax year 2007. Additionally, 50 percent of Social Security benefits will be excluded from the definition of income for the purposes of qualifying for the program, resulting in additional property tax relief for seniors.

Under the bill, the statutory assumption that renters effective property tax burden is equivalent to 20 percent of their total rent is reduced to 15 percent. A new residential valuation ceiling also prohibits any homeowner with a residence valued at $350,000 or more from participating in the program. A longstanding prohibition against persons with delinquent homestead property taxes participating in the program is repealed and replaced with language that will automatically pay any refunds for such persons to county treasurers for delinquent taxes; and subsequently to any other homestead taxes currently due.

S. Sub. for HB 2264 phases out the corporation franchise tax over five years. Beginning in tax year 2007, the exemption threshold will be increased from $100,000 of net worth to $1 million of net worth. The rate will be subsequently reduced from the current $1.25 per $1,000 of shareholder equity or net worth to $0.9375 in tax year 2008, $0.625 in tax year 2009, and $0.3125 in tax year 2010. The tax will be repealed altogether effective in tax year 2011.

“In January I proposed assisting small businesses by raising the floor for the franchise tax to $1 million. This would lower taxes for more than 16,000 small businesses. While I continue to support this tax relief for small employers, who are the backbone of the Kansas econo-
my. I am concerned that the phased-in total elimination of the franchise tax, which will ultimately benefit only the largest businesses, some of whom pay no other Kansas taxes, will jeopardize our ability to fund future commitments to our schools and communities. We must remain vigilant to ensure these investments in a skilled workforce and other key priorities are not threatened in future years.

"As we move forward with this multi-year proposal. I intend to continue to urge the Legislature to reconsider the out-years of this tax cut. and instead to substitute other business tax relief measures which could result in increasing jobs and growing the economy. We cannot afford to continue the erosion of our tax base, as was done in the early 1990’s, so we have to make choices.

"I’m also aware of concerns raised regarding the implementation date of HB 2264. While the Legislative intent was clearly to provide tax relief beginning in 2007, the language in the bill could lead to confusion and costly litigation. I intend to ask legislative leaders to work with me to clarify this language in the remaining days of the session."

S. Sub. for House Sub. for HB 2171 creates a number of new sales tax exemptions, including an exemption for the purchase of property and services by contractors for constructing, equipping, reconstructing, maintaining, repairing, enlarging, furnishing or remodeling state correctional institutions, as well as privately constructed correctional institutions contracted for state use and ownership.

This bill exempts a number of not-for-profit groups from paying sales tax, including the Dream Factory, Jazz in the Woods, Ottawa Suzuki Strings, Lions Clubs, Johnson County Young Matrons, the Frontenac Educational Foundation, the Booth Theatre Foundation, TLC Charities, the American Cancer Society, Victory in the Valley, the Angel Babies Association, the Community Center of Shawnee and purchases made by the Rotary Club of Shawnee Foun-

dation.

This bill also expands the sales tax exemption for farm machinery and equipment to include precision farming equipment that is either portable, installed or purchased to be installed on farm machinery and equipment. Finally, it codifies a number of changes in sales tax refund procedures currently in rules and regulations, modifies various statutory definitions, implements other changes necessary to maintain compliance with the multi-state Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement and authorizes the suspension of sales tax registration certificates for certain taxpayers in default.

HB 2044 amends the secondary distribution formula for property taxation, which relates to the amounts that county treasurers distribute to each taxing subdivision, to be based directly upon the amount of reduced property taxes from commercial and industrial machinery and equipment within each subdivision.

This bill also clarifies that the amount of current property taxes attributable to property abated or exempted prior to July 1, 2006, will not count against counties for the purpose of qualifying for replacement revenue payments from the state.

Additionally, this bill authorizes boards of county commissioners of two or more counties to enter into interlocal cooperation agreements for the purpose of promoting economic development at any location within the boundaries of the participating counties.

This bill includes a property tax exemption for certain storage structures designed and predominantly used for the storage of cellulose matter or other related agriculturally derived material to be used in the production of cellulosic alcohol and co-products.

Finally, it stipulates that certain property held, used or operated for educational and research purposes at the Kansas State University Olathe Innovation Campus will be exempt.

Continued to Page 5B
from property tax. Additional provisions renew for tax year 2007 and 2008 the mandatory school district general fund property tax levy at its current level of 20 mills and this bill extends, for those same two tax years, the $20,000 residential exemption from that levy.

Senate Sub. for HB 2405 increases the existing income tax credit program to 30 percent beginning in FY 2007 for certain expenditures associated with qualified historic structures. This bill enacts an alternative tax credit program for certain contributions to state-owned historic sites and not-for-profit organizations that own and operate such sites.

This tax credit will equal 50 percent of certain gifts, contributions or donations to state owned historic sites and will be effective from FY 2007 to 2011. This bill also places a cap on the credit, both individually and statewide. This bill authorizes the State Historical Society to develop a program of competitive grants for partnership historic sites. Finally, it authorizes the appointment of a partnership historic grant committee to recommend awarding of the grants.

SB 112 grants Johnson County the authorization to levy a 0.25 percent sales tax to finance the construction costs of certain public safety projects. Voter approval will be required prior to the imposition or extension of any such tax, and the county will share the money with cities based on the current statutory distribution formula unique to Johnson County. Any such tax imposed will be required to sunset in 10 years or less, but can be extended for additional periods of 10 years or less.
LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Political dialogue needs a little more humor like what Bob Dole used to disarm critics and amuse supporters, Howard Baker told a Lied Center audience Sunday night.

Baker, a former U.S. senator, presidential candidate and President Ronald Reagan's chief of staff, was in Lawrence to receive the Dole Leadership Award. It is named for Dole, a former U.S. senator from Kansas, and is presented annually to someone who promotes politics as an honorable profession.


"There was no place in the wedding ceremony that said we had to support the same person for president," Baker told a University of Kansas crowd of about 750 Sunday night.

But it's too early for anyone to really know how the 2008 campaign will unfold, said Baker, who ran for president in 1980. There are so many candidates, he said, and each one who stays in the race for the duration will be under intense scrutiny.

"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 recalls feeling like a youngster before his first date with Kassebaum Baker, long after the death of his first wife.

"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 two were married in 1996, and Baker called their relationship "one of the great things that's happened in my life."

Baker told the audience he was proud of his role as ranking Republican on the Senate Watergate Committee. Initially, he said, he underestimated the seriousness of President Nixon's transgressions.

Baker retired from the Senate in 1985, but was recalled to Washington in 1987 to serve as Reagan's chief of staff. Later he was appointed by George W. Bush as ambassador to Japan.

Construction is under way at the University of Tennessee of the Baker Center, which will be dedicated to bipartisan political dialogue. He has donated a large collection of photographs that 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.
KU students honor Va. Tech victims

LAWRENCE (AP) — More than 700 athletes, coaches, trainers and staff from the University of Kansas will honor the victims of the Virginia Tech shootings on Friday by wearing orange and maroon Virginia Tech T-shirts during the day.

The idea was brought to Athletic Director Lew Perkins by women's basketball coach Bonnie Henrickson, who coached at Virginia Tech before coming to Kansas.

“It’s something small that we can do when you feel like you can’t do anything,” Henrickson said. “Our players have come in and been watching everything, and it’s upsetting. No one will ever understand why it happened. It was tragic.”

The school announced that 500 shirts would be distributed, but Henrickson estimated that the number will grow to over 700 because others, including janitors, have asked to wear a shirt.
TOPEKA (AP) — Gov. Kathleen Sebelius signed a series of bills Thursday designed to cut the tax burden of businesses and some Kansans by about $32 million in the coming fiscal year.

The largest of the eight new laws phases out over five years the tax businesses pay for the privilege of operating in Kansas, a cumulative savings of $135 million. Other cuts would help seniors by exempting Social Security benefits from state taxes, increase a property tax refund for homeowners 55 and older and increase a tax credit for the working poor.

Legislators approved the cuts in early April before taking their three-week spring break. They also have approved a $12.3 billion budget that covers the bulk of the state's spending for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Sebelius sought to raise the threshold at which businesses pay the franchise tax so that it applied to firms with a net worth of $1 million or more. But legislators maintained that eliminating it altogether would improve the business climate and create more jobs.

In signing the bill, Sebelius cautioned that eliminating the tax could create revenue problems in future years.

"As we move forward with this multiyear proposal, I intend to continue to urge the Legislature to reconsider the out years of this tax cut, and instead substitute other business tax relief measures which could result in increasing jobs and growing the economy," she said in a statement.

Sebelius said the state cannot afford to erode its tax base, "so we have to make choices." Legislators were pleased with Sebelius's decision to sign the bills. House Speaker Melvin Neufeld said legislators were right to return some of the state's unanticipated revenue growth to taxpayers, while still funding state government.

"We will stimulate much more in job and revenue growth in Kansas by returning unexpected revenue back into our economy than if we increase state spending," said Neufeld, R-Ingalls.

Sebelius also signed a bill that would establish the Johnson County Education Research Triangle, allowing local officials to raise property and sales taxes to fund development of bioscience facilities. Revenue generated by the taxes, if approved by voters, would go for the construction of research centers for the University of Kansas and Kansas State University in Johnson County.