Days of safety are gone

The tragic shooting and killings on the Virginia Tech University campus are sure to cause officials at most all American colleges and universities to give added attention to their own campus security systems, as well as to how they would respond if a similar situation occurred at their schools.

In addition to colleges and universities, school administrators at all levels probably are reviewing their security programs, whether it’s at a K-12 school, community college or any other type of teaching center.

Frankly, only so much can be done, but that is no excuse for not examining every possible weakness that might give a deranged individual the opening to commit a violent crime.

All those in the law enforcement business want to do whatever they can to be of help in the post-Virginia Tech period, and, in most every instance, in every city, the police chief, sheriff, school security personnel and university police officials point to measures, such as television monitors or 24-hour patrols, in use at their respective sites to try to curb or lessen the chances of violence.

Here in Lawrence, the individual who should be sought out for advice is Lawrence Police Chief Ron Olin, a highly trained professional in the field of terrorism.

Olin is a valuable asset for the community, both on and off the Kansas University campus.

Olin is recognized by national law enforcement agencies for his skills and knowledge, and those charged with providing security for their schools and campuses should take advantage of his expertise.

There is no room for complacency in believing Lawrence, Kansas, is a secure, safe island in which residents have no need to worry about their safety.

Those days are long gone.

— Lawrence Journal-World
SPORTS IN BRIEF

Local & state: NCAA recognizes three KU programs, one at K-State

Three of the 18 sports programs Kansas fields were recognized Thursday by the NCAA among the top 10 percent nationally for Academic Progress Rate reports. Men’s and women’s cross country, and men’s golf all scored the maximum 1,000 on their three-year APR average.

Kansas State was recognized in the top 10 percent nationally in women’s tennis, one of its 14 sports programs.

KU officials released the Academic Progress Rate report it forwarded to the NCAA on Thursday, which is not due to announce findings for all Division I programs until May 2. All but three of KU’s programs — baseball (902), women’s basketball (913) and football (918) — fell below the acceptable APR threshold of 925, though none are subject to NCAA penalties.

AMANDA COSTNER, of Kansas, the Big 12 women’s golf championships medalist, was named to the All-Big 12 team announced Thursday by the conference. Costner shot a 5-over 221 April 18 to win the Big 12 individual title at Ridgewood Country Club in Waco, Texas.

Texas A&M’s Ashley Knoll, second to Costner at the Big 12 meet, was named the conference golfer of the year for the second straight season. Jeanne Sutherland, of Texas A&M, who guided the Aggies to the Big 12 team title, was named coach of the year.

The complete All-Big 12 women’s golf team is in Scoreboard, Page 4D.

Kassie Humphreys won her 16th and 17th pitching decision of the season, leading the Kansas softball team to 5-3 and 2-1 victories against Nebraska and Creighton, respectively, Thursday in Omaha, Neb. Linescores are in Scoreboard, Page 4D.

TISH WILLIAMS went 6-for-7, hit three home runs with nine RBIs in a 10-4 nightcap victory as the Washburn softball team swept Park University in a doubleheader Thursday.

Williams went 3-for-3 in the Lady Blues 10-2 five-inning victory in game one. Washburn improved to 24-15 on the season. Linescores are in Scoreboard, Page 4D.

KANSAS STATE relief pitcher Daniel Edwards and Wichita State’s Travis Banwart, a pitcher, and Damon Sublett, a utility player, are on the National Collegiate Baseball Writers Association Dick Howser Trophy watch list.

The award honors former Kansas City Royals manager and Florida State shortstop Dick Howser, who died of brain cancer in 1987. The award winner will be announced June 15 at the College World Series.

JOE MOORE finished fourth in the 5,000-meter run for Kansas State on Thursday at the Drake Relays in Des Moines, Iowa. His time was the eighth fastest in school history.
Historical Gas Field Study Released

Production has declined over the past decade at the Hugoton Natural Gas Field in southwest Kansas, but a study released by the Kansas Geological Survey at The University of Kansas may help operators extend its life and more efficiently recover the gas that remains.

The report is based on the most comprehensive investigation ever made of the massive field. Featuring a three-dimensional computer model of the Kansas and Oklahoma portions of the Hugoton field, the report is the result of a two-year study. With the help of 10 industry partners, Kansas Geological Survey scientists tried to determine how much gas is left in the field and where it is located.

Researchers estimate 65 percent of the gas may have been removed since its discovery in 1922. That is 35 trillion cubic feet of gas from about 12,000 wells in both states.

In the 1960s, the field regularly produced 600 billion cubic feet annually. After years of steady decline, however, Hugoton produced less than half of that — just over 250 billion cubic feet — in 2006.

Most of the remaining natural gas is in less permeable rock layers where the gas moves more slowly and can be difficult to produce. “This model is a tool to identify intervals and areas where gas still resides, and the next step is to determine how to do a better job of producing it,” said Martin Dubois, Kansas Geological Survey geologist and one of six co-authors of the report. “It provides information for better reservoir management and a higher ultimate recovery for the field, which is important economically for the state of Kansas.”
Tonganoxie Days organizers prepare for this year’s festival

BY JESS SKINNER
SPECIAL TO THE MIRROR

Preparations are under way for the 22nd annual Tonganoxie Days celebration, which will be June 8 and 9.

Once again Connie Torneden heads the organization activities. Twenty-one years ago, George and Cindy Mills came to Torneden and said, “All these other towns have events, why can’t we?”

Since that time, Torneden, a lifelong Tonganoxie resident, has taken the lead and hasn’t looked back. Tonganoxie Days continues to be a hometown favorite event.

“People just enjoy getting out and seeing all the arts and crafts and (they) enjoy the downtown area,” Torneden said. “It is a nice place to have it and to have people get together.”

This year, organizers say goodbye to the car show but are welcoming some new activities in its place. There is an antique tractor show and bridal display in the works. The biggest new attraction will be a live radio broadcast. Country Legends 106.9 from Topeka will be broadcasting from the festivities.

“I am kind of excited about the radio station coming,” Torneden said. “They say they have listeners that follow their van around, and that’s good. We’ll get some new people who have never seen Tonganoxie.”

The radio station isn’t the only draw to the event, there will be a variety of activities and entertainment to suit everyone’s fancy. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Friends of the Library Run. Other events include: train rides, a vintage quilt show and the Sacred Heart Quilt Show, historical society activities, and the annual barbecue cook-off.

The Tonganoxie Day organizers are working to solidify entertainment and the two-day schedule of events. Community members interested in participating can attend the next meeting at noon May 3 at the old Ratliff Drug Store.

— Jess Skinner is a Kansas University student whose work will appear this semester in The Mirror.
The House and Senate on Thursday passed different versions of budget bills after lengthy debate. Above at right, Alan Conroy, director of the Legislative Research Department, explains a budget item to Sen. Dwayne Limberger, R-Thayer.

**House doesn’t include money for Regents upkeep**

Deferred maintenance at state universities continued to be one of the stickiest items for legislators to resolve Thursday as the House and Senate passed their final budgets on the second day of the Legislature’s wrap-up session.

Plans to address repairs at state schools accounted for much of the $50 million difference between the two proposals.

The Senate budget included $70 million for the next fiscal year to chip away at what the Kansas Board of Regents has said is a $668 million problem. The House version didn’t include any money, but its budget committee is scheduled to meet today to discuss possibilities.

The omnibus bills are meant to include funding not included in the $12.3 billion budget the Legislature passed earlier this month.

The Senate added approximately $350 million to the earlier-passed budget, while the House put in $306 million. A conference committee with members of both chambers will meet over the next few days to hammer out a compromise.

**Maintenance**

Deferred maintenance was one of the biggest issues when lawmakers started the session in January, and by the time Thursday’s debate rolled around, Rep. Bill Feuerborn, D-Garnett, was tired of waiting for action.

"We know it’s not going away," he said of the backlog. "We know it’s going to grow." He then attempted to attach $50 million to the bill as a "first step."

That brought cries from Republicans who said the state already was spending too much money in the bill. Rep. Lance Klinzer, R-Olathe, said with the addition of the $50 million, the state would spend nearly a billion dollars more than it did two years ago.

"Are we acting restrained?" he asked. "Are we acting fiscally responsible?"

Another lawmaker just didn’t think the...
money was necessary. Rep. Bill Otto, R-LeRoy, said the smaller community colleges had been keeping up with their maintenance unlike The University of Kansas and Kansas State University.

"So I don't have any sympathies," Otto said as he voted against the amendment.

The vote for the funds was 61-61, but a tie fails in House rules.

The House Appropriations Committee is meeting today to develop a plan.

Renovation

In the Senate, what was called a "simple amendment" ended in an hourlong debate over the Statehouse renovation.

Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, wanted the Legislature to ask for the first estimated cost of the construction, the current estimated end cost and an explanation for the difference.

"I don't know why we would continue on a project unless we know how much we're going to spend," he said.

Early reports put the cost at $120 million, but the price has already surpassed $170 million with two more phases to complete.

Sen. Greta Goodwin, D-Winfield, said Huelskamp could know everything he wants if he just came to the oversight meetings. Goodwin, a member of the Capitol Restoration Committee, said the builders have come to the panel with reasonable requests for cost overruns.

Digging under the Capitol, for instance, crews had to completely redo some rudimentary bathrooms, she said.

"Did we want a hole in the ground to use as our restroom?" Goodwin asked.

The amendment failed. Unlike in the Senate, however, House members landed their punches at the restoration process.

Speaker Melvin Neufeld, R-Ingalls, said concern among legislators about construction required an external layer of oversight for the project. So far, the renovation has been the exclusive jurisdiction of the Legislature.

Neufeld's successful amendment would spread responsibility to an advisory board created several years ago to monitor the state's investment in bioscience construction projects at three universities.

"We have an opportunity to have a more quality project," he said, and "save us quite a bit of money."

New life


In previous debates, Sawyer opposed a statewide vote on the Republican and Democratic contenders.

On Thursday, Sawyer led the charge for a state-financed $1.6 million primary on Saturday, Feb. 2. That places the vote in Kansas ahead of February primaries in New Hampshire and Iowa.

"I want to make sure it's relevant," Sawyer said.

Rep. Richard Kelsey, R-Goddard, who opposed the primary, was puzzled by Sawyer's change of heart.

"That's a lot of money that could be used elsewhere," he said.

Another old bill also got some new life Thursday.

At the urging of Rep. Mario Golo, R-Wichita, the House approved $500,000 for adult English education programs at community colleges as part of a measure designating English as the state's official language. The Senate had thwarted efforts by the House to get the official language bill adopted this session.

Spend and save

Other amendments on the House floor added money to the budget, while one proposal stripped funds.

House members agreed to allocate $6.6 million to hire more medical residents at The University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita. Some said emergency rooms are stretched thin because of an insufficient number of KU medical residents.

The House also inserted into the bill $3 million to raise the salaries of people providing community-based services for Kansans with developmental disabilities. Currently, these workers make about $7.60 an hour, while employees doing comparable work at state hospitals make $11.80 an hour.

Other amendments, however, took money out of the budget.

Rep. Jeff Whitham, R-Garden City, obtained sufficient support for an amendment slicing $12.6 million from the House budget for a proposed central training facility in Salina. The center would be used by Kansas National Guard troops and local fire and medical first responders.

James Carlson can be reached at (785) 233-7470 or james.carlson@cjonline.com.
Bailor Hardman, KU junior, was initiated into the 2007-2008 Torch Chapter of Mortar Board at the University of Kansas in a ceremony held April 15th in the Kansas Room of the University of Kansas Student Union. Mortar Board is a national honor society of college seniors founded in 1918. The society recognizes in its membership the qualities of superior scholastic ability, outstanding and continual leadership, and dedicated service to the university community. Torch Chapter of the Mortar Board at the University of Kansas was established in 1924.

A reception for forty-two new Mortar Board initiates was held immediately following the initiation ceremony at The Outlook, residence of University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway.

Hardman, a 2004 Osborne High School graduate majoring in Human Biology, is the son of Philip and Deb Hardman.
COUNCIL GROVE-Morris County Hospital is proud to announce that Jeff Mathis, OTR/L, OTD, CHT has earned his Clinical Doctorate in Occupational Therapy from Rocky Mountain University. Less than 50 therapists in the United States hold the combined designation of Clinical Doctorate and Certified Hand Therapist.

Dr. Mathis obtained his bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from the University of Kansas in 1988 and his Certified Hand Therapy designation in 2004. He specializes in treating and preventing carpal tunnel syndrome, elbow injuries/pain, shoulder injuries/pain, and decreased range of motion in the upper extremities.

Dr. Mathis is a member of the Rehabilitation Team at Morris County Hospital.
Senate passes repair bill

House balks at $630 million plan to fix up university campuses

By JOHN HANNA
The Associated Press

TOPEKA — A five-year, $630 million plan for fixing crumbling buildings on the state’s higher education campuses won overwhelming Senate approval Friday but failed in the House.

The bill would provide no-interest loans from the state and anticipates setting aside future gambling money for repair projects. It also would authorize tax credits to lure dollars from private donors.

The six state universities, which officials say are desperately short of maintenance funds, would receive most of the aid, but some would go to community colleges, vocational schools and Washburn University in Topeka.

Senators passed the bill, 36-4, and its leaders had hoped for quick approval in the House, which would have sent it to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and resolved the biggest budget issue still facing legislators.

But the House, where members have struggled to find an acceptable plan, voted 71-51 against the bill. Its leaders scheduled debate for today on a five-year, $106 million proposal drafted by its Appropriations Committee.

"The House has a plan that we haven’t even had a chance to consider," committee Chairwoman Sharon Schwartz, R-Washington, told her colleagues during their debate on the Senate bill. "I think you better stop and think through what your decision is."

Sen. Janis Lee, D-Kensington, said she wasn’t surprised to see senators come to a bipartisan agreement on a plan after failing to find much common ground earlier.

"I figured all along that it’s one of those issues that just had to percolate," Lee said.

Lee said she believed the senators’ compromise allocated enough aid to address the deferred maintenance issue.

"This is probably large enough, if used wisely, to take care of all the deferred maintenance needs in our regents system," Lee said.

Sen. Pete Brungardt, R-Salina, said the plan’s use of tax credits and loans to leverage state dollars made it particularly innovative.

"It’s a tremendously creative solution," Brungardt said. "Over a decade, you have the potential to make some significant improvements in the regents system."

However, the size of the package made Rep. Deena Horst, R-Salina, uneasy. She also said she was concerned that the chamber hadn’t been able to vote on its own plan.

Simply approving the Senate’s version would have given the House no say in a plan to address campus repair, she said.

"It literally took our voice away," Horst said.

But some House members were frustrated with talk of delay.

"What we’re dealing with today is not a ‘want’ issue but a ‘need’ issue," said Rep. Paul Davis, D-Lawrence, whose district includes part of the University of Kansas campus. "If we put this off another, it’s just going to cost us more money."

The debate about crumbling higher education buildings isn’t confined to Kansas. A report last year from APPA, formerly the Association of Physical Plant Administrators, estimated universities nationwide have a $36 billion backlog of projects.

Although aid would go to community colleges and vocational schools, the universities' worries have driven the Kansas debate.

The Board of Regents, which oversees higher education, estimates the universities have a $663 million backlog of repairs and need an additional $69 million a year for maintenance to keep that backlog from growing.

Regents Chairman Nelson Galle praised the Senate for its “critical leadership and labeled the plan “impressive” and “visionary.”

The Senate plan included $200 million in no-interest loans, though it doesn’t say how the institutions receiving them would pay them back. Community colleges, vocational schools and Washburn would have first priority.

The measure would set aside $115 million in revenue from new casinos and slot machines at dog and horse tracks, allowed under legislation approved this year. Also, it assumes nearly $65 million in private funds, leveraged by tax credits.

During her chamber’s debate, Sen. Vicki Schmidt, R-Topeka, read from a newsletter she received this spring from the University of Minnesota, where one of her sons is a student.

The newsletter noted Minnesota lured
away a highly regarded pharmacy researcher from the University of Kansas by promising her a state-of-the-art lab.

“This is the reason we need to do this bill,” Schmidt said.

Still, some legislators, particularly conservative Republicans, have questioned whether the problem is as severe as the regents say. Conservatives also wonder why critical maintenance projects haven’t been addressed in past years.

Sen. Tim Huelskamp, R-Fowler, questioned whether the Senate bill provided enough safeguards to ensure the universities spend the new dollars on critical problems. He successfully amended the bill to prohibit money from being spent on presidents’ homes or athletic facilities — but voted “no” nonetheless.
Senators take up $640 million plan; modest one fails in House

By JOHN HANNA
Associated Press Writer

TOPEKA — A plan for giving state universities $640 million over five years to fix long-neglected buildings faced scrutiny Friday in the Senate, a day after the House rejected a far more modest proposal.

The Senate proposal mixes no-interest loans, anticipated gambling dollars and using tax credits to lure dollars from private donors. It also provides some help to community colleges, vocational colleges and Washburn University in Topeka.

Senate leaders hoped their chamber would pass it Friday and send it to the House. The final version of a repairs plan will be written by House and Senate negotiators after the two chambers approve rival bills, but so far, the House has had trouble settling on a plan.

A House plan would have set aside $100 million for university repairs over three years, but when it was offered as an amendment to a bill meant to wrap up budget issues for the year, it failed, 61-61. Some House members questioned whether the state could afford it, while others derided it as insufficient.

Universities’ deteriorating buildings are a pressing issue to higher education officials and legislative leaders. The Board of Regents, which oversees higher ed, estimates that universities have a $663 million backlog of repairs and need an additional $65 million a year for maintenance to keep it from growing.

"The thing is, we know it’s a huge problem. We know we have to do something about it," said Rep. Barbara Ballard, D-Lawrence, whose district includes part of the University of Kansas campus. "I think we will, but like everything else, it’s not an easy process."

The Senate plan is designed to be a comprehensive solution for the universities, while aiding the other institutions.

It includes $200 million in no-interest loans, though it doesn’t say how the institutions receiving them would pay them back.

It sets aside $115 million in revenues from new casinos and slot machines at dog and horse tracks, allowed under legislation approved this year. Also, it assumes nearly $65 million in private funds, leveraged by tax credits.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee drafted much of the proposal last week, and the Assessment and Taxation Committee finished up work on the measure Thursday.

The House plan also lost votes because some legislators thought it was too small.

"It does not actually address the real need that we have," said Otto, who voted "no" and pledged to keep doing so.

"At what point are we willing to draw the line and say we’re not willing to spend money hand over fist?" said Rep. Lance Kinzer, R-Olathe.

Rep. Bill Otto, R-LeRoy, said such plans are geared toward helping the University of Kansas and Kansas State University far more than smaller universities or community colleges.

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The longer it’s put off, the farther behind they’re going to get," said Rep. Shirley Palmer, D-Fort Scott, a retired teacher who served on the Board of Regents from 1987 to 1993. "This is far from what is needed, but it’s a start."
Senate eyes repair plan

AP and Staff Reports

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The Senate proposal mixes no-interest loans, anticipated gambling dollars and using tax credits to lure dollars from private donors. It also provides some help to community colleges, vocational colleges and Washburn University in Topeka.

But 66th District Rep. Sidney Carlin, D-Manhattan, said the House Appropriations Committee has another program it plans to take to the floor. The plan calls for $10 million per year for each Regents school for the next three years.

The state would also match technology upgrades dollar for dollar, with a $5 million cap.

"It's not perfect, and I'm not sure how it will wind up," Carlin said, "but it's something."

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Senate eyes repair plan

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The Senate Ways and Means Committee drafted much of the proposal last week, and the Assessment and Taxation Committee finished up work on the measure Thursday.

The House's vote Thursday came a day after its Appropriations Committee failed to endorse a multiyear repairs plan and some members suggested legislators might give the universities a one-time infusion of cash and study their problems this summer and fall.

Some conservative Republicans don't think the state can afford to commit to setting aside tens of millions of dollars without creating budget problems.