Legislators are meddling

Kansas legislators left for spring break exhausted after some late-night sessions. They could lessen their workload by staying out of matters in which they have no business interfering.

Case one: Lawmakers passed a bill telling cities and counties they can’t restrict handguns in areas, such as parks, that aren’t mentioned in the state’s concealed-carry bill.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius should veto this bill. It is a serious affront to local officials, who know their communities best.

Mayors and city managers, not state legislators, should decide whether to allow people to bring guns to city parks, municipal office buildings and other city facilities.

As Olathe Mayor Michael Copeland has pointed out, under the legislation city employees would have fewer protections than workers at private businesses, which can post signs forbidding handguns.

Case two: At the insistence of House Republican leaders, lawmakers placed language in the $12.3 billion state budget bill that would give the University of Kansas Hospital veto power over attempts by the University of Kansas and its medical school to form a partnership with St. Luke’s Hospital in Kansas City.

The language is an offensive example of meddling that could hurt the medical school’s attempt to grow in quality and stature.

Unreasonable resistance by KU Hospital could also present a setback to the region’s drive to develop as a bioscience center.

Sebelius, who supports the partnership, can veto any line item in the state’s budget. She should use that privilege to help an important bi-state collaboration move forward.

— Kansas City Star
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KU business professor pledges $10 million

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Dale Seuferling, the association’s president, said he couldn’t comment on McCarthy’s pledge because it hadn’t been put in writing. But he said the school must remain competitive, especially as enrollment in the business programs grows.

“We always have to look at the facilities and keeping the facilities competitive,” Seuferling said. “That’s going to rely upon private support making that possible. This is a high priority project.”

That was shown in an e-mail obtained by the Lawrence Journal-World sent out earlier this year by William Fuerst, the business school’s dean. Fuerst sent the message to 145 people talking about McCarthy’s $10 million pledge and $1.2 million donation.

“Kent’s challenge grant has a deadline,” Fuerst wrote. “We must match his $10 million with another $10 million from other donors by December 31, 2007.”

The e-mail said Fuerst was developing a plan to raise the first $10 million for the match by the deadline and the remaining $25 million to $30 million next year.
Workers at meatpacking towns preparing for possible raids

By Roxana Hegeman
Associated Press Writer

DODGE CITY — Frightened by raids last year at six Swift & Co. plants, illegal immigrants in the nation’s meatpacking towns are preparing for their possible arrest.

For years, immigrant rights groups had been confident the meatpacking giants were so powerful immigration agents would never raid them.

But since the Dec. 12 sweeps at Swift plants in six states, immigrant advocacy groups have been holding workshops, teaching undocumented workers how to prepare for their arrests by doing such things as drawing up legal documents so someone could care for their children and handle their financial affairs.

In addition, the United Food and Commercial Workers union has printed a bilingual immigration rights kit it plans to distribute nationwide to workers in the coming weeks. The kit includes practical information, legal documents and sample letters.

“We want to make sure they (immigration officials) don’t take advantage of our people,” said Martin Rosas, secretary-treasurer for UFCW in Dodge City.

Among those making preparations since attending a workshop is the family of a 43-year-old man who works under a false identity at the National Beef plant in Liberal. Two of his four children, ranging in ages from 4 to 18, were born in the United States, where he’s lived on an off for 21 years.

His wife, a 39-year-old illegal immigrant, asked not to be identified for fear the family would be arrested. The family is writing documents so her brother, a legal resident, would have custody of the children if the parents are deported. They have put their few possessions in another person’s name and are trying to save what little money they can.

“It is the expected response of people that are terrified, that have to keep working in order to live,” said James Austin, a Kansas City, Mo., immigration attorney who has taught at such workshops in Kansas.

Ed Hayes, Kansas director of the Minutemen Civil Defense Corps, an anti-illegal immigration group, said he was dismayed by those who are helping illegal immigrants.

“Those people ought to be arrested because they are helping people break the law,” Hayes said. “We have churches that are aiding and abetting people breaking the law. We have chambers of commerce who want them to do it, politicians who want them to do it. What happened to our nation of laws?”

Immigration informational meetings are not new, Austin said, but only recently have organizers begun distributing and discussing power of attorney documents at them. He said that’s a direct response by Hispanic advocacy agencies to recent Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids, including last year’s arrests of 1,282 Swift workers at plants in Colorado, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, Iowa and Minnesota.

“I don’t know what else to do, other than have people prepare as much as they can in case that happens here,” said the Rev. John Fahey of St. Anthony Catholic Church in the southwestern Kansas town of Liberal, where a recent workshop drew 250 workers from meatpacking plants in southwestern Kansas.

The Hispanic advocacy group Hispanics Unidos of Liberal and United Methodist Mexican American Ministries helped organize the meeting, said Arturo Ponce, a former meatpacking plant worker who helped found Hispanics Unidos of Liberal.

Immigrant families are also being urged to set up a savings accounts with $3,000 to $10,000 per family to pay bail bonds and other costs.

“They are putting aside a little money as often as they can for such a situation,” Ponce said. “It is a heavy burden, but it is realistic.”

Other legal advice included warnings not to sign a voluntary deportation form and to demand an immigration attorney, Ponce said.

Rosas said UFCW’s bilingual kit will explain workers’ rights and offer practical advice for dealing with immigration problems. Among the documents in the kit are sample letters immigrants can use to better respond to the federal government’s inquiries about problems with Social Security numbers.

“There is always the same fear now — everywhere you go,” said Rosas.

The detailed extent of family preparations by undocumented workers surprised officials at Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as as the meatpacking industry’s trade group, the American Meat Institute. Both groups told The Associated Press they were unaware of them.

“I haven’t heard of any companies actively trying to prepare workers, because if a company knows they are undocumented they are not supposed to be hiring them anyway,” Austin said.

Employers can face charges if they knowingly hire illegal workers.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Brent Anderson noted that about half of immigration-related cases in Kansas — which has massive
slaughterhouses in Dodge City, Liberal, Garden City and Emporia— are associated with the food-processing industry. Anderson said the “hot area now” in the state for identity theft is in Cowley County, where Creekstone Farms Premium Beef opened a plant in 2003. He said illegal immigrants sometimes steal identities to get past the government’s “Basic Pilot” program, which screens Social Security numbers to make sure they’re real and that they match up with the person’s name.

Don Stull, a University of Kansas anthropology professor and industry expert, said it’s estimated about 25 percent of people working at the nation’s meatpacking plants are in the country illegally. In the Swift raids, about 10 percent of the company’s work force was arrested.

The industry says it is doing everything it can to make sure it does not hire illegal immigrants.

“Hiring illegal workers just doesn’t make good business sense. Employee turnover is very disruptive,” said Dave Ray, spokesman for the American Meat Institute.
Martin Rosas talks with a reporter while members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union handout flyers outside National Beef in Dodge City Wednesday, April 4. Frightened by raids last year at six Swift & Co. plants, illegal immigrants in the nation’s meatpacking towns are preparing for their possible arrest.

Martin Rosas reads from the United Food and Commercial Workers union’s immigration rights kit in Dodge City Wednesday, April 4.
KU business professor pledges $10 million for new building

LAWRENCE — A University of Kansas business instructor is kicking in some of his own money to help generate more than $50 million for a new building.

Ken McCarthy, who has already provided $1.2 million to the KU Endowment Association, said Wednesday he has agreed to give another $10 million if the school can raise $15 million.

McCarthy said he hopes construction could begin on the new four- or five-story building if the $25 million can be raised by next year.

“I want to get the wheels in motion,” he said.

McCarthy teaches at the business school’s Applied Portfolio Management program, receiving the Henry Bubb Award for excellence in teaching in 1995. He came to the university in 1994 from Goldman Sachs investment bank on Wall Street and has a master’s degree in taxation from the school.

He started two hedge funds in 1995 and 1996 and started the Jayhawk China fund that invests in Asian equities.

No formal plans are set for the new building with some estimates up to $57 million. The business school currently resides in a five-story, 1960 structure and a five-story addition dedicated in 1983.

Endowment Association officials said it’s too early to talk about where the building would go but said McCarthy’s verbal commitment would begin the process of gathering money.

“We have been talking about the possibility of fundraising for a new facility for the School of Business and we have verbal commitments from two donors and we are continuing to identify potential donors,” said Rosita McCoy, the association’s senior vice president for communications.

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— Editor’s Note: Information from: Lawrence Journal-World, www.ljworld.com
ACT sprouts prep work for college-bound juniors

Sessions help acquaint students with college entrance test

Mollie Grove
Contributing Writer
The Hawk Eye

For most, Saturday means the start of a restful, care-free weekend, like driving a child to the soccer field for another game or dragging out the old John Deere lawnmower to manicure the yard. But this Saturday won’t seem as peaceful and stress-free for some Hiawatha High School juniors taking the often-dreaded, three-hour ACT test.

Nine juniors have devoted their time to attending the four ACT reviews offered at the high school in order to familiarize themselves with the test’s format.

The ACT reviews are taught by teachers in the tested subject. For example, junior English teacher Rita Spellman reviewed English and freshman English teacher, Kylee Reshke, helped juniors with the reading portion. The science segment was reviewed by chemistry and physics teacher, Donald Koon.

Each session lasted about an hour, with teachers reviewing general information about the ACT test and students participating in practice tests. Most juniors feel that the ACT reviews are worth their time and energy and have been a good prerequisite for taking the ACT.

“I think they are very helpful because they are an exact replica of the test,” said Erin Gernon. “It really helps me prepare.”

Reschke herself is a big advocate for ACT reviews.

“I am a huge believer in reviewing for the ACT,” said Reschke. “The more familiar students are with the format of the test, and the more they learn to deal with the time factor, the better they will do.”

The ACT English test is 75 questions and lasts 45 minutes, whereas the ACT Math is a 60-question, 60-minute test. Both the ACT reading and science tests have 40 questions and last 35 minutes. With minimal time allotted for each portion of the test, students are beginning to feel the heat.

“A lot of students are surprised at how quickly the time goes,” said Reschke. “Although they may be good readers, they have to learn to take the test in a lot less time than they would typically have in a classroom setting.”

Like many others, Gernon is a bit anxious about the test.

‘If I do badly, I can always take it again.’

“I feel like so much is determined by this test, so it is important to do well,” said Gernon. “Although these tests are not an accurate assessment of intelligence, there is a lot of pressure put on students.”

Junior Josh Nigh is a bit more optimistic about his first attempt at the ACT.

“If I do badly, I can always take it again.”

However, guidance counselor Steve James is doubtful about the improvement made when taking the test a second or third time.

“Taking it again doesn’t insure a higher score,” said James. “ACT has kept statistics on it, testing hundreds of thousands of students. Over the years they say that about 51 percent of the students who take it more than once increase their score by one or more. The other 49 percent either stay the same or lower their score.”

For most, tomorrow will mark their first attempt at the test. Because the ACT is not offered in Hiawatha, several HHS juniors will be traveling to Highland, whereas some will take it in Sabetha.

According to James, the national average on the ACT is a score of 20. In Kansas, the average score is 21, and generally Hiawatha students score around a 22.

Many may not be aware that only six colleges in Kansas require a minimum score on the ACT.

“The Kansas Regents universities—Pittsburg State, Emporia State, Wichita State, Fort Hays State, Kansas State and University of Kansas, all require a minimum ACT of 21,” said James. “In the absence of that, if a student has a 19 or 20 or lower, then they look to see if the student is in the top third of their class as far as rank is concerned. If they’re not in the top third of the class, then they look to see if a student has taken the recommended curriculum and has a C average in that recommended curriculum. Private colleges don’t require a minimum ACT and any of the community colleges in Kansas don’t require a minimum ACT. Once we go out of state, then that’s a different situation. We have to look at each of the state requirements then.”

Junior Meagen Wright has high expectations of her
first ACT performance. “I want to score a 28 because I think that might be a goal I can achieve if I work hard,” said Wright.

Junior Ashley Mueller hopes to score a 25 or better on the test. “I am aiming for the mid to upper 20’s because then it would help me with scholarships,” said Mueller. “I don’t read very fast at all, so that’s going to be an interesting part of the test.”
Seven-year-old Brittany Crossen gets some origami tips from University of Kansas student Tatsuo Kasuya Thursday at “Nippon Night” at Eugene Field Elementary School. Librarian Linda Fredricks brought the event to the school as part of the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program. Fredricks traveled to Japan in November and she, along with parents, teachers and helpers from Eugene Field and Ottawa High School, helped bring the Japanese culture to local students and their parents.
LAWRENCE -- University of Kansas fellowship winner Holly Worthen, a 2002 graduate from McPherson, earned an honorable mention in competition for the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships.

Worthen, a 2002 KU graduate in English and international studies, received an honorable mention.

She is a graduate student in geography at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. At KU, Worthen was a 2001 Udall scholar and a 2002 Fulbright grant recipient.

At the 2002 commencement ceremony, Worthen received a Class of 1913 Award for superior academic achievement and community service. She is the daughter of David and Joanie Worthen and is a graduate of McPherson High School.
Former chief of staff to give this year's Dole Lecture

By Morris News Service

LAWRENCE — Gen. Richard Myers, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, will present the 2007 Dole Lecture at The University of Kansas.

The lecture will be at 7:30 p.m. May 2 at the Dole Institute of Politics. It is free and open to the public, but tickets are required.

Myers served as the 15th chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from Oct. 1, 2001, through Sept. 30, 2005. As chairman, he was the principal military adviser to the president, the secretary of defense and the National Security Council, and he oversaw the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Before becoming chairman, Myers was vice chairman for 19 months.

Myers, who was born in Kansas City, Mo., is a 1965 graduate of Kansas State University. He entered the Reserve Officer Training Corps program.

His career includes operational command and leadership positions in a variety of Air Force and Joint Chiefs assignments. Myers is a command pilot with more than 4,100 flying hours, including 600 combat hours.

Previous Dole Lecturers include President Bill Clinton, former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle and Sen. Bob Dole himself. Tickets are available at the Dole Institute.
KU business professor pledges $10 million for new building

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"I want to get the wheels in motion," he said.

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