Kansas Miracle Presentation
Will Be April 17

FOR THE INDEPENDENT

HALSTEAD - The Kansas Miracle: Mennonites, Volga Germans, & Turkey Red Wheat is a program that is sponsored by the Kansas Humanities Program and the Halstead Public Library and will be held at the Kansas Learning Center, April 17, at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited.

German-speaking people of Catholic, Lutheran, and Mennonite faiths moved from Russia to Kansas beginning in the 1870s. Learn how they adapted to a new homeland and their role in bringing hard wheat to the Great Plains. The speaker is Norman E. Saul who specializes in Russian history and international relations.

Norman E. Saul has been a professor of Russian history at the University of Kansas since 1970. Saul has also taught at University College in Dublin, Ireland, and at Northwestern, Brown, and Purdue Universities.

For more information, call the library.
Supporters have started fact-gathering to prepare to place the Johnson County Education and Research Triangle initiative on the November 2008 ballot.

Triangle group spokeswoman Mary Birch said supporters want to tell voters exactly what their tax dollars would provide.

"The first thing will be to get our facts straight as to what the long-term economic impact will be to this community," Birch said.

Supporters agreed to pay the Johnson County Economic Research Institute to determine the economic impact that triangle funding would produce. Private money from the Community Foundation covers research costs, Birch said.

Supporters plan to give voters proposed construction plans to the square foot, name degree programs the education institutions would offer, specify research projects and detail maintenance and operations costs.

Supporters plan to use the facts to ask Johnson County Board of County Commissioners to place the measure on the ballot, Birch said. If commissioners agree, the next move would involve organizing a campaign leading to next year's November election.

"It gives us enough time to run a really well-thought-out, strategically planned campaign," Sen. Barbara Allen, a triangle advocate, said.

Birch said supporters need to gather facts within a few months to have time to plan and amass funds to launch the election campaign.

"If we can build enough community support, and if we can get the commission to put it on the ballot, then I would think that there will be a number of these folks who would contribute to a campaign to make sure that we are able to educate the community about the benefits of the project," Birch said.

Allen said people want to know a new sales, property or combination tax that raises up to $18 million annually would be money spent well.

The plan calls for a property tax of no more than 2 mills, a sales tax of no more than two-tenths of a penny, or a combination of both. The tax plan must be based on what produces the minimum amount required to fund the triangle.

The amount of money needed could decrease as building bonds are paid off, but some tax revenue would be needed always to cover ongoing costs, Birch said.

"We're very dedicated to making sure maintenance goes into this package," Birch said.

County Commission Chairwoman Annabeth Surbaugh said Saturday that any tax before the county that involves construction accounts needs to account for ongoing costs. The jail tax plan, for example, would add more facilities but offers no solution to staff those facilities, she said.

Kansas State University and the University of Kansas would receive the county tax funds to bolster their Johnson County facilities, programs and personnel, Allen said.

"The benefit would be great. ... The (research) engine is going to be built right here in Johnson County and it will bring jobs and economic development and people," Allen said. "It's an exciting opportunity for this county."

Birch said she expects most Johnson Countians will find value in the triangle plan.

"This might be our chance to have a piece of that new knowledge-based economy, but also the human side of being able to make a small contribution to cancer cures and treatments, and be able to make a small contribution to food safety and animal health," she said. "All of those things will be used to convince the public this will be good for the quality of life for Johnson County and for our economy."
These 15 people co-chair the Triangle Advocacy Council that seeks to institute the Johnson County Education and Research Triange.

Robert Regnier
Fred Merrill
Ron Wimmer
Mike Brown
James Hubbard
Laura McKnight
Greg Graves

Laura McConwell
Samuel H. Turner Sr.
Barb Unell
Sandy Price
Charles Sutherland
Jeffrey Gaidos
Lyle Pishny

Drew Jennings
Research triangle clears first hurdle; two to come

JACK "MILES" VENTIMIGLIA

EDITOR

Lawmakers in Topeka cleared a hurdle to upgrade Johnson County's standing as a health and safety research center last week.

"For Johnson County, that was a huge victory," Sen. Barbara Allen, R-Overland Park, said.

Before the cancer and animal research triangle can occur, the county commission would have to agree to present the plan to voters, who then would have to approve a tax to fund the plan.

Lawmakers agreed April 3 to let the county commission decide whether to ask voters about approving a tax to generate up to $18 million annually to establish the proposed Johnson County Education and Research Triangle.

The tax would fund research facilities and staff at the Kansas State University Innovations Campus in Olathe, with a focus on food security and animal health research; the Kansas University Edwards Campus in Overland Park, with the focus on science, math and engineering; and the KU Medical Center, which would open a cancer research center.

TRIANGLE PLAN STILL FACES OBSTACLES, SA

DETAILS

- The tax would raise up to $18 million annually to start.
- Start-up money would cover construction.
- After paying for buildings, the tax could be reduced.
- Ongoing tax funds would cover maintenance and operations.
- The tax could consist of a 2 mill property tax.

- The tax could consist of a two-tenth-cent sales tax.
- The tax could consist of a mill and sales tax combination.

- The tax must be the lesser amount of the mill or sales tax.
- Seven elected officials will comprise the tax oversight board.
- Tax funds would be equally split at these three places:
  - K-State's Johnson County campus: animal health/food safety;
  - KU Edwards campus: graduate/undergraduate programs; and
  - KU Med Center: life sciences/education/cancer research.
Triangle plan still faces obstacles

Continued from Page 1

in Westwood.

“What this will do is create a bioscience area,” Rep. Cindy Neighbor, D-Shawnee, said.

Some lawmakers opposed letting voters decide whether to tax themselves, Rep. Kevin Yoder, R-Overland Park, said. Proponents argued county residents should be allowed to make the decision.

“Research dollars would come into the community, developing a bioscience corridor right through Johnson County where we bring in businesses that need the same type of skills that we’re producing on these campuses,” Yoder said. “There’s real coordination to be had with private industry and bringing in federal research dollars.”

Rep. Gene Rardin, D-Overland Park, said the debate ended on the last day of the session on a 75-44 bipartisan vote for the bill.

“If the voters choose not to do it, or the county commissioners choose not to pursue it further, then that's what will happen,” Rardin said. “From what I have seen of the research triangle project, it is very promising in terms of the educational impact and the health impact and the science impact.”

The measure passed the Senate 32-6. Sen. Nick Jordan, R-Shawnee, said mixed signals from county leaders delayed SB 115’s passage until the session’s last day. Early in the session, Jordan said, lawmakers heard the measure meant little to commissioners.

“We struggled trying to find out what the county’s priorities were. ... They were neutral on the public safety bill and the research triangle bill,” Jordan said.

County leaders instead preferred an unrelated Kansas Association of Counties bill to allow a blanket tax increase to cover ongoing needs, including infrastructure. When that bill stalled, priorities changed and the commission appeared to support the public safety and the triangle bills, Jordan said.

“We ended up passing both of them so the county commission can decide what their priorities are,” he said.

County Chairwoman Annabeth Surbaugh, in her State of the County address March 27, called public safety a county priority. But on Saturday she also said she is concerned about any sales tax, including the public safety proposal, that would not support ongoing operational costs.

Surbaugh called the proposed triangle “fabulous,” but she needs to learn more.

“It has a lot of details to be worked out yet and they have plenty of time to do that,” Surbaugh said.

Allen said she believes that after commissioners hear the reasons they will let the tax go to voters.

“When they ... see what the opportunities are in this county, yeah, I think they’re going to put it on the ballot,” Allen said.

Jordan said commissioners face a tough decision regarding what to do with two tax issues. Voters may consider two too many, he said.

“Both probably are not going to pass on the ballot in the same year. Generally you wouldn’t think you would put two issues – public safety and the research triangle – on at the same time,” he said.

Rardin and Allen said dealing personally with cancer made them want to give voters a chance to decide the triangle tax issue.

“My wife was diagnosed with lung cancer in November so I have been learning more about it than I ever wanted to learn,” Rardin said.

If KU Medical Center opens a cancer center in northeast Johnson County, across from the old Sprint Center, then research could occur there.

Allen said the Phase I research would allow human tests that could benefit county residents.

“I’m a breast cancer survivor and I have a very strong interest in seeing us get this (National Cancer Institute) designation for the cancer center,” Allen said.

Allen said she participated in an out-of-state clinical trial because Kansas lacked what she needed.

“Just speaking from personal experience, Kansans deserve to have this access to cutting-edge clinical trials right here,” Allen said. “It’s difficult to travel when you're being treated for cancer. It’s expensive and you just don’t feel good; you feel sick and it’s not easy to get on an airplane. You need your family and your friends there to help you.

“The whole idea of us having a world-class cancer center in the heartland region is a very good thing for the people of Kansas.”
AWRENCE, Kan. – University of Kansas Professor of Journalism David D. Perlmutter accepts the fact that “Blogwars,” his upcoming book on Internet Web logs and their effect on American politics, will be “out of date from the time it’s put out” by Oxford University Press this fall.

Such is the challenge of reporting on a 21st century phenomenon using 15th-century technology. He compared it to “describing NASCAR with stone tablets.”

And yet Perlmutter has hardly given up on the printed page. “Blogwars” will be the seventh book, and the third this year, that the first-year KU professor and associate dean of the journalism school has either written entirely or edited.

“In the early days of radio, you had newspaper publishers attacking radio as a loud and raucous medium, and not a good place for the public to get its news,” Perlmutter noted. “Newspapers have survived the advent of radio and television, so I think the republic will stand after blogging.”

Some people still think of blogs as diaries of minutia posted by anti-social computer geeks—and some of them are. But the blogs that interest Perlmutter most are the most highly trafficked, well-researched ones that seem to have the greatest effect on the body politic. Perlmutter, who came to KU last summer from Louisiana State University, where he earned his doctoral degree, thinks that blogging has matured in the political context.

“2004 was the election that introduced people to this new thing – the blog,” Perlmutter said. “In ’06, the blog became integrated into the political process. People saw the political utility. Bloggers were courted by candidates, and candidates saw the need to blog themselves. In ’08, I think we’ll get down to business; campaigns will find ways to integrate interactive Internet media, from blogs to YouTube to podcasting to myspace.”

See BLOGGER, Page 6
Plays lead role in skit selected for Rock Chalk Revue

LAWRENCE – Jacob Schirmer of Holton played the lead role in “Set in Stone,” one of five skits selected for the Rock Chalk Revue, a student-run show held at The University of Kansas in early March.

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.

“Set in Stone” was written and performed by members of Gamma Phi Beta sorority and Delta Upsilon fraternity, of which Shirmer is a member. Delta Upsilon also was one of the organizations receiving honorable mention for volunteer hours donated to worthy causes.

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

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

Since 1991, Rock Chalk Revue has raised more than half a million dollars.

Schirmer is the son of Charlotte Schirmer of Holton. He is a junior in theater and film.
Assists with KU student orientation program

John A. Babcock, a sophomore at The University of Kansas majoring in music, is one of 20 KU students chosen for KU's New Student Orientation programs this summer. Four of the students are returning for a second year as orientation assistants: Babcock, a graduate of Holton High School, is one of those. He is the son of Paul and Debbie Babcock.

Orientation assistants are hired through a process that includes essay writing, group interaction activities, a five-minute speech and final interview. The assistants prepare for orientation sessions by attending three weeks of training that covers KU academic and student services, public speaking, interaction with the public and diversity issues.

New Student Orientation programs, which are tailored to students' major fields of study, offer information about KU to first-time freshmen, transfer students and re-admitted students. The programs are designed to help students with their academic, social and personal transition to KU and to reduce anxieties about attending college.
HUTCHINSON — Two area residents were among the 58 graduates of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center at a March 30 ceremony at the 4-H Encampment Building on the Kansas State Fairgrounds. Kansas Bureau of Investigation Director Larry Welch extended congratulations to the graduates.

Local graduates were Lora Burkdoll of Princeton, Anderson County Sheriff’s Department, Sheriff’s Officer; and Phillip Bures of Richmond, Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks, Natural Resource Officer I.

The graduates, who began their training course December 18, represented 43 municipal, county and state law enforcement agencies from across Kansas. They were the 190th basic training class of graduates.

The training center is a unit of University of Kansas Continuing Education. Established in 1968 as the central law enforcement training facility for the state, the center is near Yoder.

Graduates receive certificates of course completion and Kansas law enforcement certification from the Kansas Commission on Peace Officers’ Standards and Training, the state’s law enforcement licensing authority. The training course fulfills the state requirement for law enforcement training. Classroom lectures and hands-on applications help train officers to solve the increasingly complex problems they face in the line of duty.

The center trains the majority of municipal, county and state law enforcement officers in Kansas and oversees the training of the remaining officers at seven authorized and certified academy programs operated by local law enforcement agencies and the Kansas Highway Patrol.

About 350 officers enroll annually in the 14-week basic training program. The center offered continuing education and specialized training to more than 2,500 Kansas officers last year. Funding for the training center is generated from court docket fees from municipal and state courts. No funds from the state’s general revenue are used to operate the center.
Aaron Steele was omitted from the list of fall honor roll students at the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy. The names of more than 50 pharmacy students were inadvertently omitted by the university. Aaron is the son of Mike and Sharri Steele, Scott City.
On Wednesday, April 4, 2007 Megan Juenemann (right) and Stephanie Juenemann (left) attended the Kansas Honors Program award ceremony at the Gateway in Oberlin, Kansas. This program has been University of Kansas tradition since 1971. To be selected as an honor scholar, you must be at the top 10% of your class. These two young ladies were among fifty-two other scholars from the nine northwest Kansas counties that attended. They were awarded a certificate and an American Heritage College Dictionary for all of their hard work throughout high school.

**WKUII League Speech**

*By Ivonn Vargas*

On April 4th, 2007, the GP forensics team headed to Sharon Springs for League Competition. The team members attending League were Tate Bruggeman, Angel Lobato, Ivonn Vargas, Jordan Rogers, Isaac Broeckelman and Andrew Broeckelman. Tate and Andrew did Oral Interpretation of Prose, Ivonn and Angel did Oral Interpretation of Poetry, Isaac did Extemporaneous, and Andrew and Jordan did Improvised Duet Acting. Jordan Rogers says, “I’ve learned a lot this year about Speech. You must be dedicated in order to succeed. It’s been a really fun experience and I’m looking forward to next year.” The team did an excellent job performing and with enough ambition, two of the performers made it to the finals. Andrew qualified for the finals in Oral Interpretation of Prose reading *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst. Isaac qualified for the finals in Extemporaneous with the topic concerning the war.
A University of Kansas team of three undergraduate students placed first this year in the third annual Kansas Collegiate Mathematics Competition held March 30-31 at Wichita State University as part of the Kansas section meeting of the Mathematical Association of America.

Twelve teams of two to three students from Kansas colleges and universities took part in the intensive three-hour adjudicated competition that challenged each participant to solve five math problems worth 10 points each. The top two individual scores on each team were added to form the overall team score. Two teams of three students each represented KU at the event.

The KU-I team of Rachel Debes, Hays junior; Brian Moehring, Olathe senior; and Nick Tobaben, Topeka junior, received the first-place team member and fourth-place individual award winner.

Debes was fourth with 38 out of 50 points. Judges also cited Tobaben and Neuenschwander with noteworthy individual scores. First- and second-place individual winners were from Kansas State University.

Atanas Stefanov, KU assistant professor of mathematics, was in charge of the intercollegiate competition portion of the program. Jeremy Martin, assistant professor of mathematics, coached both KU teams.

KU undergraduates at the conference also took part in mathematics-related program presentations. Keynote speaker Robert Finn, professor emeritus of mathematics at Stanford University, considered a leading expert in the mathematical theory of capillarity, was keynote speaker.

The Mathematical Association of America is a professional society whose purpose is to advance mathematical sciences at the collegiate level.

KU student participants are listed below by hometown, level in school, major, parents' names, high school attended (when available) and award received.

**ATCHISON COUNTY**
-From Atchison 66002 - Rong Chen, freshman in mathematics, daughter of Xiuzhu and Lida Chen; Atchison High School.

**ELLIS COUNTY** - From Hays 67601 - Rachel Debes, junior in mathematics, daughter of Ken and Debbie Debes; Hays High School; first-place team member and fourth-place individual award winner.

**JOHNSON COUNTY**
- From Olathe 66061 - Brian Moehring, senior in mathematics, son of Rick and Dene Moehring; Olathe South High School; first-place team member and third-place $100 individual award winner.

**SHERIDAN COUNTY**
-From Hoxie 67740- Bowe Neuenschwander, sophomore in computer engineering with a minor in mathematics, son of Karl and Lu Neuenschwander; Hoxie High School.

**SHAWNEE COUNTY**
- From Topeka 66605 - Nick Tobaben, junior in mathematics and mechanical engineering, son of Jim and Anita Tobaben; Shawnee Heights High School, Tecumseh; first-place team winner.

**HONG KONG** - Bertrand Kotewall, senior in mathematics, son of Robert George Kotewall.