Early detection key to treating breast cancer

Pink is not a traditional fall color, but pink ribbons are on full display this October in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

In Kansas, it’s the second leading cause of cancer death among women. Annually, 2,000 women in Kansas are diagnosed with breast cancer and 400 lose their battle.

My aunt died of breast cancer when she was 33, leaving five children behind. The good news is that medicine has advanced since then, and many more women are survivors today.

Early detection is key to treating the disease. If breast cancer is caught early, the five-year survival rate is 97 percent. The American Cancer Society recommends women conduct self-breast exams monthly, receive clinical breast exams annually, and that women over the age of 40 have a mammogram each year.

The State of Kansas provides mammograms free of charge to low-income women between the age of 40 and 64 through the Early Detection Works Program at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. To date, 20,000 Kansas women have received mammograms, 500 of which were diagnosed with breast cancer and were able to receive early treatment.

Women who are diagnosed with breast cancer deserve the highest quality medical treatment available. Here in Kansas we are fortunate that the breast cancer specialists at the University of Kansas Medical Center are leaders in diagnosing and treating breast cancer. The KU Breast Cancer Prevention Center saves lives through prevention, detection, and treatment, but extensive research is still needed to find the cause of and a cure for breast cancer.

In an effort to take cancer research to the next level, the KU Cancer Center is seeking a designation as a National Cancer Institute. D. Roy Jenson, a Kansas-born and nationally recognized breast cancer researcher, is leading the effort to make KU a nationally recognized comprehensive cancer research and treatment center.

For the one in eight women who will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, it is of critical importance that we find a cure for breast cancer. I encourage Kansans to make a difference by supporting breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment not just during October and Breast Cancer Awareness Month but throughout the year.

For more information about free mammograms and the Early Detection Works Program, visit www.kdhe.ks.gov/edw.
Debate over coal plants also debate about power needs

LAWRENCE (AP) — Timothy Carr delivered his message with a matter-of-fact tone: The world is going to consume more energy; little of the electricity it will need will come from renewable resources, and much of that power will come from coal.

Carr, a senior Kansas Geological Survey scientist, spoke last week at a University of Kansas conference. His remarks came a day before former Vice President Al Gore received a Nobel Prize for his campaign on global warming and a day after environmentalists had denounced Sunflower Electric Power Corp.’s plan for two coal-fired power plants in southwest Kansas.

Some of the loudest criticism of Sunflower’s proposal is heard from the city of Lawrence, and Carr seemed to sense that some audience members wouldn’t like his assessment.

“Shoot the messenger,” he said.

Sunflower’s $3.6 billion proposal has put it at the center of a debate over carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. But another question is part of the discussion: whether Kansas needs as much capacity to generate electricity as Sunflower plans to build.

“When you combine the benefits of both conservation and wind and look at the current coal plants and nuclear plant that we have, my view is that there is a very limited need for additional coal plants in the future,” Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson, co-chairman of an energy policy council, said during a recent interview.

Sunflower is seeking an air-quality permit from the Department of Health and Environment, and Secretary Rod Bremby has said he will decide whether to grant it by the end of this month.

Environmentalists want Bremby to reject the permit over the plants’ CO2 emissions, even though the state doesn’t regulate the greenhouse gas, which most scientists see as a major contributor to global warming. Many legislators, including Senate President Steve Morris and House Speaker Melvin Neufeld, are pressuring him to approve a permit, seeing the project as vital economic development.

The project would add two, 700-megawatt plants next to Sunflower’s existing 360-megawatt plant outside Holcomb, in Finney County. Construction on the second plant would be finished in 2013.

How big is the project? The total generating capacity of 1,400 megawatts would be enough to supply all of the households in Denver, Oklahoma City and Albuquerque, N.M., combined. Sunflower and a sister company, Mid-Kansas Electric Co., have 400,000 customers; together, the two have 1,200 megawatts of generating capacity.

Sunflower would export much of the new power into other states and argues the new plants will lead to bigger transmission lines that could hook up to wind farms. Sunflower executives — and many legislators — have no doubt the power will be needed, both in rural Kansas and points well beyond.

“We’re entering into a time frame where energy growth is phenomenal,” said Sunflower spokesman Steve Miller. “It’s probably going to be a once-in-a-generation time when rural Kansas is going to benefit.”

The same growth in energy consumption is expected worldwide, something Carr noted in his conference presentation. The International Energy Agency projects that energy consumption will be 52 percent higher in 2030 than it was in 2004.

And, as Carr also noted, coal is expected to remain a big source, particularly as China, India and other developing nations attempt to catch up to an American or European standard of living.

Of course, that prospect raises fears about climate change. Bill Downey, president and chief executive officer of Kansas City Power & Light Co., said after his own conference speech, “We have to find a way to clean up coal.”

But at least a few environmentalists don’t accept Carr’s assessment of energy needs over the next few decades and believe conservation efforts can significantly slow any growth in energy demand.

Dan Nagengast, executive director of the Kansas Rural Center, said Americans shouldn’t assume that other nations will emulate the “glut-
tonous” U.S. lifestyle. And, he said, legislators, utility executives and analysts aren’t considering the potential of homes and farms generating their own, “off-grid” power from solar panels or windmills.

“Everybody’s defending a system,” Nagengast said. “There’s no thought in there that there’s other ways to be, other than, you know, a giant utility with giant coal plants and giant wind-turbine arrays.”

Even participants in the debate who aren’t contemplating such a future question Sunflower’s desire to build so much coal-fired generating capacity and sell most of the electricity outside the state.

“Do we want western Kansas to be the place where every other state builds their coal-fired plants?” Parkinson said.

Miller said such arguments make him “almost livid,” adding that Sunflower wants to export power for the same reason Kansans export other products, such as aircraft.

And Jim Owen, a spokesman for the Edison Electric Institute, a trade group for investor-owned utilities, said assuming that a company will generate power only for customers within an assigned territory is an old business model.

“Increasingly, we’re moving to regional electricity markets,” he said. “Distinctions of this nature will become less important.”

Owen, Sunflower and others accept projections that Americans’ demand for electricity will grow enough that new coal-fired power plants must be built to keep up with it. Environmentalists aren’t likely to concede the point.
TOPEKA — A regulator’s decision Thursday to block new coal-fired power plants based on global warming concerns signals a landmark change in state policy.

Officials from Kansas utilities expressed uncertainty on the potential consequences of the ruling by Rod Bremsby, secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

Despite the action, coal still produces nearly 75 percent of the state’s electricity. More than a dozen other coal-powered plants, some of which have been running since the 1950s, still operate in the state.

“It’s unprecedented,” Stuart Lowry, executive vice president and general counsel for the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, said of Bremsby’s decision. “We’re trying to understand what it really means and respond in a way that’s best for the consumer.”

Bremsby denied Sunflower Electric’s request for air-quality permits for two 700-megawatt generators near Holcomb, citing concerns that carbon dioxide from the plants would exacerbate climate change and threaten human health. Bremsby called the decision a first step in emerging policy to address existing and future carbon dioxide emissions in Kansas.

“KDHE will work to engage various industries and stakeholders to establish goals for reducing carbon dioxide and strategies to achieve them,” Bremsby said, noting it was consistent with actions in other states.

Current state and federal laws don’t regulate CO2 as a pollutant, and Sunflower representatives boasted that their plants would meet or exceed all existing environmental standards.

But Bremsby said he couldn’t ignore emerging information about the effects of CO2, citing a U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing the gas to be considered an air pollutant.

Wes Jackson, president of The Land Institute, an environmental research organization in Salina, said that verdict signaled a desire for state policymakers to move toward an economy more reliant on renewable energy.

However, Sunflower spokesman Steve Miller said Bremsby’s decision should be of concern to the entire energy industry.

“If he’s going to regulate CO2, it will affect other emitters of CO2, ethanol plants being one of those.”

Lowry said the ruling appeared to be a strike against coal as energy, pushing utilities across the state toward other, more expensive forms of energy, such as wind. That could ultimately result in consumers paying more to power their homes and appliances, he said.

“The effects of this will be felt by everyone,” said Lowry, whose group consists of 30 electric cooperatives with about 400,000 ratepayers across the state.
Regents award higher salaries to university leaders

TOPEKA (HNS) — The president and chief executive officer of the Kansas Board of Regents will receive a 13.1 percent salary boost this year, members decided Thursday.

Reggie Robinson, who was selected to be the board's top executive in 2002, will see his salary rise from $160,000 last year to $181,000 in fiscal year 2008, which began in July.

All the leaders of the state's six four-year universities all received salary increases of 4 percent in both their base salary, funded by taxpayers, and the maximum salary they can receive with the help of private funding.

Fort Hays State University President Edward Hammond is set to receive a base salary of $197,652 this year and a maximum salary of $218,400, should his pay be supplemented by private donors.

Regent Bill Thornton, who led the board's salary discussions, said the increase reflected not only Robinson's performance but also the increased responsibilities of the position.

Robinson not only leads the state's four-year university system, he's also responsible for coordinating the educational efforts of community and technical colleges. This past year, lawmakers created a new authority under the Board of Regents to govern technical education.

Despite his responsibilities, Robinson remains underpaid compared to other system leaders with fewer duties, Thornton said.

Fiscal Year 2008 Salaries for Board of Regents Executives

Robert E. Hemenway, University of Kansas, $260,660

Jon Wefald, Kansas State, $249,071 base; $308,256 maximum

Donald L. Beggs, Wichita State, $217,942 base; $270,400 maximum

Edward Hammond, Fort Hays State, $197,652 base, $218,400 maximum

Tom Bryant, Pittsburg State, $197,652, $218,400 maximum

Michael Lane, Emporia State, $197,600 base, $208,000 maximum

Reggie Robinson, Board of Regents president, $181,000
The University of Kansas Army ROTC program’s Wall of Fame ceremony is from 9-11 a.m. Nov. 3 at the KU ROTC building before the Kansas-Nebraska homecoming football game. All former Army ROTC graduates from KU or any of its extension centers are invited to see military demonstrations by cadets and listen to the 312th Army Reserve Band. Contact David Pendleton at (913) 684-5320 or henry.david.pendleton@us.army.mil for information.
Local Boy Makes Good In Cape Town, S.A.

My son, Hutch, and I were in Cape Town, South Africa, about 10 days ago. In the course of our exploring we visited a number of museums, including the "Slave Lodge", a former prison and place of slave trading of those captured and traded from the Dutch East, India, Ceylon and East Africa.

The museum was devoted largely to the early slave trade and the development of slavery in South Africa and the development of "apartheid" there.

One of the several salons at the museum was devoted to the development of "apartheid" in America. Included were several pictures and comments concerning "Brown vs. Bd of Education", a case that arose in Topeka, Kansas, and was among the famous Supreme Court decisions of 1954 which began the changing of attitudes in America that "separate is not equal" in terms of children's education. The attorneys and jurisdictions that they represented were listed and shown: for Kansas, Paul Wilson, then a member of the Kansas Attorney General's staff, and later KU Law Professor, and former Ashland, Kansas, attorney (late thirties to 1942).

Paul later wrote about his experience in handling that appeal, "A Time To Lose". Paul was one of my law professors at KU and I had been his paper boy during his Ashland years. I got no mention in the Cape Town show!

Don Humphreys
Great Bend, Kansas.
KU to honor high school seniors

MANHATTAN— Students from 10 Kansas high schools will be honored Monday, Nov. 5, by the University of Kansas Alumni Association and KU Endowment.

A total of 91 seniors from high schools in Clay, Pottawatomie and Riley counties will be recognized for their academic achievements and named Kansas Honor Scholars at a 6:30 p.m. dinner program at the Manhattan Country Club, 1531 N. 10th St.

Among them are:

Clay Center Community High School—Abby Bauer, Bethany McCowan, Megan McFall, David Parry, Abigail Roth, Joshua Sanneman, Brian Skinner, Alicia Snyder and Claire Unruh.

Wakefield High School—Faith Miller and Brooke Nance.

Riley County High School—Jesse Bailey, Joel

See Page 8
KU to honor seniors

Honored students will be guests of the alumni association. Parents and area alumni are welcome to attend at a cost of $13 each.

Community volunteers collect reservations, coordinate details and serve as local contacts for the event. Clay County coordinators are Lucy Mulronen, and Sylvia Mansfield, both of Clay Center.

The Kansas Honors Program is made possible through KU Endowment and proceeds from the Jayhawk license plate program.

Eastes, Cassidy Fowles, Nathan Jones, Aimee Nanninga, Veronica Taylor and Mollie Winter.

The Kansas Honors Program began in 1971 and has honored more than 100,000 students. Scholars rank in the top 10 percent of their high school senior classes and are selected regardless of curricula, majors, occupational plans or higher education goals.

During the ceremony, each student will receive an American Heritage Dictionary in hardback and CD versions, presented by Sarah Blaney, assistant director of Kansas programs for the KU Alumni Association.

Rick Ginsberg, dean of the School of Education, will speak to the students, parents and guests.
Debate Over Coal Plants; Debate About Power Needs

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University leaders get salary increase

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Student performs a social study of Garden City

By EMILY BEHLMANN
ebehlmann@gctelegram.com

When Molly DesBaillets first arrived in Garden City in the spring, she didn’t really know anyone.

During her six-week stay, however, she not only got to know the people, but also the place and its social fabric, in what she said was an exhausting but fun experience in which she “felt like a discoverer.”

DesBaillets, an anthropology graduate student at the University of Kansas, has been putting together a masters thesis on how municipal government affects social capital — the networks and connections between people and groups — in Garden City.

The assumption is that social networks have value because they enable people to acquire resources. In other words, DesBaillets said, “How do the people you know help you get what you need?”

She plans to present her preliminary findings at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Finney County Museum, 403 S. Fourth St., with a Spanish translator present.

The University of California Los Angeles graduate already knew some about Garden City from her adviser, KU anthropology professor Don Stull.

He led a group of researchers on a study of Garden City as part of a Ford Foundation project in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The study also looked at five other communities — Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago, Houston, Miami, Monterey Park, Calif., and Philadelphia. The study examined relations between new immigrants and established residents and how that affected community life.

Stull since has written extensively about the meat packing industry, with Garden City as a case study in books including “Slaughterhouse Blues,” the one he co-wrote with fellow Ford Foundation researcher Michael Broadway.

DesBaillets said her adviser’s work played heavily into her own, but that she also read all the research about social capital that she could find, including that of Robert Putnam, director of the Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

Putnam recently published a book called “Bowling Alone,” in which he contends that social capital is declining, with fewer or weaker fraternal organizations, labor unions, professional societies and, yes, bowling leagues, in America.

Diversity is part of the cause of a decline in social capital, Putnam writes, but DesBaillets said she hasn’t found that to be the case in Garden City.

Through six weeks of “participant observation,” taking part in as many community activities as possible, and based on interviews with various stakeholders, DesBaillets said she will challenge Putnam conclusions with her own data that measure networks, inclusion, trust and cooperation in Garden City.

“Garden City is a good example of a case in which social capital is not diminished because of diversity or changes in time,” she said.

She said there are a lot of networks that function effectively in the community, though their nature has changed over time.

During her research, DesBaillets said, she spent about half the time boarding with a woman in town, and the other half living outside city limits. All the while, she was making observations and taking field notes.

“I was really exhausted by the time I left Garden City,” she said. “I was trying to spend as much time as I could in the public sphere. I was never off, but it was fun.”

She said she felt connected to many people in Garden City by the time she left, and she returned to town for the Community Mexican Fiesta in September, which she thought would be an event not to miss for her research. She compared notes about the event with colleagues in Lawrence who had attended a Mexican celebration there the same weekend.

Since then, DesBaillets has been wrapping up her thesis and teaching part time. She also is considering working on doctoral research on the same topic of social capital.

In Garden City, she plans to make policy recommendations, mostly focusing on municipal government, for the community.

“That’s the goal of my research,” she said. “The field I’ve chosen is applied anthropology. We hope to make recommendations that are useful in the communities in which we work.”

She said the many local officials she’s met have been helpful and receptive to her work, and she hopes Saturday’s presentation will begin a dialogue with feedback from the community.

The Ford Foundation report also made recommendations for Garden City that Stull said were aimed at enhancing the relations between new immigrants and established residents. One suggestion was to establish a cultural relations board, which the city has since created.

“Anthropology is the study of human beings and culture, and understanding the social and cultural aspects of a community is always useful,” Stull said. “(Garden City) has benefited from the attention social
science has given it. It has realized diversity is a positive characteristic and has celebrated it.”