Three seniors at Flinthills High School were recognized by the University of Kansas Honors program. The program ranks all area seniors in the top 10 percent of their class. This year, the recognition was held at the El Dorado Civic Center Oct. 22.

It recognizes students who have worked hard to achieve academic excellence. The students and their parents, along with a representative of their school were invited. The school representative made the introductions of the students and their parents.

The Flinthills students were: Jacob Ritter, son of Jim and Carol Ritter; Grant Vogt, son of Brian and Denise Vogt; and Micah Womacks, son of Mark and Michelle Womacks.
LAWRENCE | Chancellor elected to board

University of Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway has been elected to the 11-member executive committee of an organization representing 60 of the nation's top research universities.

Hemenway will serve a three-year term for the Association of American Universities. Some other members of the committee are the presidents of Pennsylvania State University, Princeton University, Emory University and Yale University.

| Maré Rose Williams, mdwilliams@kcstar.com
The University of Kansas will ask the 2008 Legislature for $50 million to start dealing with a growing shortage of pharmacists by nearly doubling the number of pharmacy students in Kansas, KU officials said Monday in Wichita.

Under the proposal, about $5 million would be used to add on to the KU School of Medicine's Wichita building to make room for a pharmacy school here. The rest of the money would go for a new School of Pharmacy building on KU's West Campus in Lawrence.

If the Legislature approves the appropriation, 20 pharmacy students could start classes in Wichita in the fall of 2009, said KU Pharmacy Dean Ken Audus. The Wichita program would be expanded to 40 students in later years.
The new building in Lawrence would provide room for 45 more students, in addition to the 105 now accepted each year, said KU Provost Richard Lariviere. The School of Pharmacy is at capacity now, he said.

Pharmacists in the Wichita area make an average of $44 an hour, according to the Kansas Department of Labor.

Legislators are well versed in the shortage of pharmacists, said state Sen. Carolyn McGinn, R-Sedgwick. Seven counties in Kansas have none now; 30 more have only one; the average age of pharmacists statewide is 54. But the question in the Legislature this year will be familiar: How to prioritize this need with many others.

University officials proposed the Wichita pharmacy school in 2006 but did not seek money then because of a higher priority to seek money for maintenance projects at all of the state’s public universities, Lariviere said.

KU officials have been talking with state legislators about the need. “The response so far has been remarkably sympathetic,” he said.

It won’t be easy to get that much appropriated, but, he said, “my sense is that it’s going to be successful.”

In part, that’s because every part of the state is feeling the pharmacy shortage, he and Audus said.

In the seven Kansas counties that don’t have any retail pharmacists, they said, residents have to go elsewhere to get prescriptions filled.

Legislators, knowing how critical the need is, will give the request a vigorous look in the coming session, said McGinn and another state senator, Jean Schodorf, R-Wichita.

The problem, as always, will be how much money is available. KU’s medical school, already dealing with a doctor shortage, has also asked for another $12 million to expand research.

Legislators are also trying to figure out how to put up more money this year for scholarships to deal with a shortage of public school teachers.

“We’ll give their request a good hard look,” Schodorf said. “If we don’t deal with it all this year, we’ll do so by next year.”

Jeanine Brizendine, a past president of the Wichita Academy of Pharmacists, said Wichita doesn’t have enough pharmacists.

Hospitals want to hire more pharmacists, she said in October, and some retail pharmacies have changed their hours to make the best use of the pharmacists they have.

Becoming a pharmacist takes six years, so the problem will get worse before it gets better, the KU officials said.

By 2015 or 2020, the nation is expected to be 150,000 pharmacists short of what it needs, Audus said, as baby boomers get older and require more prescriptions and as older pharmacists retire.

Lariviere said 440 students apply each year for the 105 slots now open at KU. The 335 not chosen, he said, are “an asset that we can’t afford to lose.”

He said studies show that 63 percent of pharmacy grads stay in the state, so the hope is that expanding the Lawrence program and starting one in Wichita would help with the Kansas shortage.

Audus said the university also is trying to get private money for an expanded program.

“This is a problem that’s not going to wait,” Lariviere said.

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When it comes to finding out where a business jet is headed, The University of Kansas and Kansas State University are more secretive than the governor's office. Since January, The University of Kansas has participated in a service that shields real-time flight plan information from the public for trips taken by its Cessna Citation Bravo based at Lawrence Municipal Airport.

Kansas State has been blocking flight plan information for its two business jets from Internet tracking sites for six years. "It is fairly common, for security, to not let the whole world know where your plane is going," said Todd Cohen, a spokesman for The University of Kansas. But Gov. Kathleen Sebelius doesn't keep her flight plans secret.

"Our schedulers or security get on the flight tracking system and track the state plane regularly when needed," said Sebelius spokeswoman Nicole Corcoran.

Pilots regularly file flight plans with the Federal Aviation Administration prior to takeoff. Web sites then track the flights as they happen. Federal law allows plane owners to request that information be blocked by the National Business Aviation Association. "In the business community, some of the flights carry competitive and/or security concerns," said Dan Hubbard, a spokesman for the association. "There may be a reason why the party making the flight feels the flight should not be understood in real time."

The schools use their planes for a number of sensitive trips, including coaches recruiting players, performing government-funded research that officials would like to keep quiet or transporting controversial speakers to campus. Kansas' Cessna seats about eight and is used by officials at both the Lawrence campus and the KU Medical Center campus in Kansas City, Kan.

The university does not block flight information on a King Air C-90B, of which the school is a part-owner. That plane, based in Kansas City, Mo., is used primarily for medical outreach reasons.

Kansas State uses its two planes for general business travel and developed the policy blocking the flight information since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "Part of that response was to make sure that we do not make available where the aircraft is going," said Dennis Kuhlman, dean of K-State Salina. "That helps protect the university and the people who are on those planes."

The blocking policy doesn't cover the university's fleet of 40 aircraft used to teach piloting, maintenance and engineering, Kuhlman said.

The public can still find out where the planes went and when by filing a request under the Kansas Open Records Act, although the universities typically charge retrieval fees.

According to those records, Kansas Chancellor Robert Hemenway, Provost Richard Lariviire, Athletic Director Lew Perkins and men's basketball Coach Bill Self are the university's most frequent fliers.

The school said it spends almost $700,000 a year on its aircraft, including salary and benefits for three pilots and a scheduler, maintenance, training and insurance.
“Part of that response was to make sure that we do not make available where the aircraft is going. That helps protect the university and the people who are on those planes.”

— Dennis Kuhlman, dean of K-State-Salina
Program saves Kansas taxpayers money and improves people’s lives

SUBMITTED BY ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR KANSANS AND THE KANSAS HEALTH POLICY AUTHORITY

(Parsons, KS) A young man in Winfield with a spinal injury has a shower chair and cushion. A woman in Conway Springs with health and mobility challenges is using a patient care bed. One of the Greensburg tornado survivors now living in Great Bend has received a manual wheelchair.

These are a few of the success stories of the Kansas Equipment Exchange, a project that accepts used equipment and matches it with Kansans who need it. Since April 2003, Equipment Exchange has saved Kansas taxpayers more than $2 million.

"Most of the recipients of durable medical equipment don’t have medical insurance," said Patty Black-Moore, Expanding Reuse Project Coordinator. "Kansas Equipment Exchange saves tax dollars while improving lives. We placed over a half a million dollars in refurbished durable medical equipment last year."

Since June 2002, durable medical equipment purchased by the Kansas Health Policy Authority (KHPA) is used by the recipients as long as they need it. When the equipment is no longer needed, it is returned to the Equipment Exchange. Items in good condition are refurbished and then reassigned to another Kansan with a disability.

Not all of the equipment originates with the KHPA. "We’ve received patient lifts, beds, wheelchairs, communication devices and other items from individuals and families who no longer needed them," Ms. Moore explained. "A lot of usable items are stored in garages and attics. We need and accept donations of durable medical equipment and assistive technology that will enable people to live more independently."

With the increased concerns about electronic waste Equipment Exchange has added PDAs, hearing aids, navigational/GPS systems and electronic communication devices to its list. The project collects serviceable used items and passes them to Kansans with disabilities. "We’ve passed on Palm Pilots and HP iPAQs, Tom Tom and Garmin navigational systems, and Chat PC and Tech Talk com-
communication devices," Moore said.

Persons wishing to donate equipment to the Kansas Equipment Exchange can call 800-526-3648 toll free. Kansas Equipment Exchange is a statewide project guided by individuals with disabilities, family members and the KHPA. It is affiliated with Assistive Technology for Kansans, a program coordinated by the Kansas University Center on Disabilities at Parsons.
The University of Kansas debate team of Brett Bricker and Andrew Jennings captured second place at a tournament involving 82 of the nation’s top debate teams held Oct. 27-29 at Harvard University.

The performance of two KU teams at Harvard allowed the KU debate program to remain in first place in the National Debate Tournament varsity rankings. KU also is No. 1 in the country in the overall NDT rankings. The rankings are based on points earned by the combined performance of KU teams at tournaments throughout the season.

“We are thrilled with the performance of both teams because the Harvard tournament is the most difficult tournament of the year,” said Scott Harris, debate coach.

Bricker and Jennings advanced to the finals of the Harvard tournament where they lost a 2-1 split decision to the University of California-Berkeley. Bricker and Jennings won 10 debates at the tournament. Jennings was recognized as the third-place individual speaker, and Bricker received the fourth-place individual speaker award. This was the second consecutive year that Bricker and Jennings took second place at the prestigious Harvard tournament.

Jennings, junior in political science, son of Joe and Kathy Jennings, is a Silver Lake High School graduate. The KU team of Nate Johnson and Chris Stone finished in ninth place at the Harvard tournament. The two KU teams met each other in the single eliminations on the final day. Johnson was the 20th individual speaker at the tournament.
By EMILY BEHLMANN 
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There’s a saying around the University of Kansas that Chancellor Robert E. Hemenway said he likes to promote—“We work for Kansas.” The university has a responsibility to the entire state, not just for educating students, but also by helping Kansas benefit from its research in areas like medicine, Hemenway said Wednesday during a visit to Garden City.

Hemenway spoke to Garden City’s Rotary Club and met with alumni of the university. He shared news about KU’s efforts to achieve National Cancer Institute Designation for its cancer center and systems to train western Kansas medical professionals.

Finney County connections

This fall, KU has 156 students from Finney County.
- 124 are undergraduates.
- 32 are graduate or first professional students.
- 125 are graduates of Garden City High School.
- 11 are graduates of Holcomb High School.
- 28 percent are minority students, compared to 12.5 percent of the university’s overall population. Of the Finney County minorities on the Lawrence campus, 47 percent are first-generation college students.

Even though its main campus is in the opposite corner of the state in Lawrence, KU has plenty of connections to southwest Kansas, Hemenway said. There are 156 Finney County students attending the university this semester, and 219 of its current students have attended Garden City Community College, according to KU.

Though KU draws some residents away from the area for degrees, Hemenway said, it tries to encourage graduates to return to smaller Kansas communities through programs like the Kansas Medical Student Loan. The loan is forgiven for graduates who practice medicine in Kansas.

“It’s a continuous challenge to deliver as many health care workers as we can,” Hemenway said. “One of the best ways to get people to serve in small towns in Kansas is if we support them when they come back and share their skills.”

The university also provides continuing education for medical professionals throughout the state with its Area Health Education Centers, he said. The centers, in Garden City, Hays and Pittsburg, make programs available to rural providers and students.

“Doctors can come and give seminars on the latest way to treat an illness,” Hemenway said. “The idea is to share the medical knowledge we all need.”

Meanwhile, the University of Kansas Cancer Center seeks new treatments to combat cancer, and Hemenway said it’s his No. 1 priority to make the center worthy of designation by the National Cancer Institute.

As a cancer survivor, Hemenway’s interest in cancer treatment is partly personal, but he also said it’s a way to help fulfill the university’s mission.

“This would give us the ability to share with people in Garden City and the state absolutely up-to-date treatments of cancer,” he said.

Currently, 61 U.S. cancer centers in 32 states have NCI designation, and many are concentrated on the coasts and in the northern part of the country. The closest centers to Kansas are in Albuquerque, N.M.; Aurora, Colo.; Omaha, Neb. and St. Louis.

Hemenway said KU Cancer Center Director Roy Jensen is working toward all the requirements for the designation.

One step was establishment of the Midwest Cancer Alliance, a network of Midwestern medical providers. Hemenway said the close contact among doctors is especially helpful for small-town hospitals and clinics.

Hospitals including St. Catherine in Garden City have expressed interest in the alliance, said Kathy Damron, a Scott County native who works in government relations for KU.

Victor Hawkins, St. Catherine’s executive director of marketing and development, said the alliance would provide southwest Kansans with a connection to the latest in cancer research developed in their own state.

St. Catherine already has a comprehensive cancer center, which opened in 1997, with isotope therapy and chemotherapy treatment, plus various diagnostic and treatment technology. However, Hawkins said, the alliance would work toward greater advancements.

“There’s a lot of experimental drug therapy out there,” he said. “By KU creating an experimental drug therapy network, that’s one more access point for our patients.”
The executive director of the Kansas Press Association will be among members of a board supervising development of a searchable Web site of state spending information.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius announced the appointment of Doug Anstaett, who has led the KPA since 2004, and three others to the board Friday, including state Secretary of Revenue Joan Wagnon.

Denise Moore, the executive branch's chief information technology officer, and Charles Jones, director of the Public Management Center at the University of Kansas, also were named.

The Legislature created the board this year to oversee the creation of a new central computer system and a searchable Web site for state agency expenditures and revenues, bonded indebtedness and other budgetary information.

Rep. Kasha Kelley, R-Arkansas City, and Alan Cobb, director of the Kansas chapter of Americans for Prosperity, are also among those who have been added to the 15-member panel.
Study: Fort Hays top 10 percent in student value

By Ramona C. Sanders
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Fort Hays State University has been ranked nationally in the top 10 percent of four-year institutions for improving student education by the Council for Aid to Education, a national nonprofit New York-based organization.

The recognition was announced Tuesday by Fort Hays State University President Edward Hammond during a stop at The Goodland Star-News as part of a five-day media tour throughout the state.

"Everybody already knows we’re the fastest-growing and most affordable college in the state," Hammond said. "Now we finally have something to point to other than our own opinion that we do a good job."

The Council for Aid to Education conducted a four-year study called the Collegiate Learning Assessment which tested the knowledge base of a random sample of incoming freshmen and compared the testing of the same group four years later. The study concluded that Fort Hays State University performed better than 90 percent of universities nationwide for improving students’ writing, reasoning, thinking and argumentation skills.

The Council for Aid to Education was established to advance corporate support of education and to conduct policy research on higher education, according to its Web site. The organization focuses on improving quality and access in higher education.

During his visit, Hammond talked about other things the university can be proud of including tuition affordability and significant enrollment growth.

Hammond compared the university’s tuition cost to University of Kansas. "It costs $8,000-$10,000 (annually) for tuition and fees at KU," he said. "That compares to $3,000-$4,000 at Fort Hays."

He said a combination of growth, cost reduction due to technology and better use of energy and a decrease in non-teaching staff has resulted in the college becoming more efficient and affordable.

Hammond talked about the success of the college’s on-line degree program called Virtual College and international studies program which includes a partnership with four colleges in China.

In addition to the Virtual College, Fort Hays has a College of Arts and Sciences, College of Education and Technology, College of Health and Life Sciences, College of Business and Leadership and a Graduate College.

In the 20 years that Hammond has been president of Fort Hays, enrollment has almost doubled from about 5,000 in 1987 to its current 9,600. Enrollment includes 4,600 on-campus students and 5,000 on-line students including 2,200 students in China.

About 32 students from Goodland are enrolled in on-campus classes at Fort Hays and about 11 take on-line classes at its Virtual College. Hammond said about 1,000 students are from northwest Kansas.

Hammond said the Virtual College is the largest provider of distance learning in the state and one the best ways to serve rural northwest Kansas students.

"There are 1,000 students in western Kansas who can get a degree who have never set a foot on campus," Hammond said.

But Hammond said the college hopes to continue to add to those successes. With the original goal of having 10,000 students by 2010 almost met well before the deadline, Fort Hays has now committed to having 15,000 students by 2020, Hammond said.

Hammond
Campaign 101: Bring in Big Guns?

BY CHRIS GREEN AND SARAH KESSINGER
Harris News Service

The battle over the state’s 2nd District seat in Congress continues to draw heavy hitters to the Sunflower State.

The first woman to lead the U.S. House as a speaker, California Rep. Nancy Pelosi, will be in Kansas on Friday to help raise campaign funds for Congresswoman Nancy Boyda.

However, bringing in prominent politicians didn’t seem to help former Rep. Jim Ryun keep his spot in Congress last year. Despite visits from Vice President Dick Cheney and President George W. Bush, Ryun still lost to Boyda.

Some observers have speculated those visits hurt Ryun by highlighting his ties to a White House that was falling out of favor. Could bringing in Pelosi similarly hurt Boyda in her GOP-leaning district?

Bob Beatty, an assistant professor of political science at Washburn University, said he does think so. While the assistance to Ryun came in the heat of the campaign, Boyda’s visitor comes a year before the election.

He said, “It’s only the real political activists that are paying much attention right now.”

See how government spends

The executive director of the Kansas Press Association will be among members of a board supervising development of a searchable Web site of state spending information.

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Denise Moore, the executive branch’s chief information technology officer; and Charles Jones, director of the Public Management Center at the University of Kansas, also were named.

The Legislature created the board this year to oversee the creation of a new central computer system and a searchable Web site for state agency expenditures, bonded indebtedness and more.

Rep. Kasha Kelley, R-Arkansas City, and Alan Cobb, director of the Kansas chapter of Americans for Prosperity, are also among those who have been added to the 15-member panel.

Election's just a year away

The Kansas Democratic Party still has launched no challenge to U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kansas. But party communications director Jenny Davidson says Jim Slattery, a former Kansas congressman, continues to “seriously consider” it.

“We’re talking to a number of Kansans who are disappointed with Pat Roberts and the way he’s protected our president and who are looking for new leadership in Washington,” Davidson said.

Roberts comes up for re-election next year. He has a well-stocked campaign fund—somewhere near $2.72 million—just in case.

Gearing up to challenge the incumbent, Jim Ryun will welcome the public to his new campaign office Wednesday.

Ryun plans to officially open the office, in a downtown Topeka suite at 701 SW Jackson St., from noon to 2 p.m. He will address supporters at 12:30 p.m.

To pharm or not to pharm

The debate over pharmaceutical rice grown amid traditional food crops in Kansas is on tap this month at a conference at Washburn Law School.

“Pharmaceutical Crops in Kansas, A Larger Perspective,” is from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Nov. 14 at the law school’s Robinson Court Room, 1700 SW College Ave., in Topeka.

The forum is sponsored by the Kansas Rural Center, the Center for Food Safety and the Farmer to Farmer Campaign on Genetic Engineering. The groups say pharmaceutical crops should be of serious concern to food farmers.

The state’s Bioscience Authority, which is promoting new biological-based industries in Kansas, supports the venture.

Ventria Bioscience of California started this year to grow experimental pharmaceutical rice crops in central Kansas.