LAWRENCE — The music of the Man in Black will be celebrated when the Lied Center of Kansas presents "Ring of Fire — The Music of Johnny Cash" at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday in the University of Kansas performance hall.

More than four years after his death in 2003, Cash remains one of the most popular entertainers of all time. He placed 48 singles on the Billboard Hot 100 pop charts and more than 130 hits on the Billboard Country singles chart — more than anyone in history.

Tickets are $49 and $40 for adults, $48 and $39 for seniors 62 and older, and half-price for KU and Haskell Indian Nations University students and youths to age 18. They can be purchased by calling (785) 864-ARTS or going to www.lied.ku.edu.
Three hopefuls coming to Kansas

Huckabee, McCain, Paul to campaign before state caucus

By Tim Carpenter
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Three Republican presidential contenders plan to swoop into Kansas today for a last-minute push for support prior to the statewide GOP caucus.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee will be in Topeka for a public rally at 3:30 p.m. at the Ramada Hotel and Convention Center. It will follow stops in Olathe and Wichita in the morning and precede an evening event in Garden City.


The suspension of former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney's campaign Thursday left Huckabee, a populist with strong support from Christian conservatives, as the only person with any chance of catching McCain.

"It changes the dynamic," said Christian Morgan, executive director of the state's Republican Party.

Kris Kobach, chairman of the state GOP, had endorsed Romney.

Burdette Loomis, a political science professor at The University of Kansas, said the absence of Romney might curtail interest in Saturday's winner-take-all Republican caucus in Kansas. Romney's decision made business sense given the personal price the venture capitalist paid to be in the GOP race, Loomis said.

"After you lose that first $40 million," he said, "you might reconsider that investment."
Simultaneous hearings held in House, Senate on power plant expansion

Energy emotions heat up

By James Carlson and Tim Carpenter
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Tensions rose Thursday during the final day of hearings on a bill allowing expansion of a coal-fired power plant in southwest Kansas.

A small outburst in the Senate committee was quickly quelled by the chairman, and one legislator in the House hearing questioned why the state's top environmental official hadn't appeared.

The House committee could take action on the bill today, while the Senate committee won't act until early next week.

The legislation is in response to a decision last year by Rod Bremby, secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, to deny an air-quality permit for the $3.5 billion expansion of the Holcomb power plant.

The majority of the 1,400 megawatts of power produced by the two new units would be used by out-of-state customers. About 200 megawatts would stay in Kansas.

The current legislation would allow Sunflower Electric Power Corp. to build the addition but also would enact the state's first regulations on CO2 emissions. One of those rules, a $3 per ton charge on carbon emissions, has drawn criticism from both sides of the political spectrum.

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, expressed disdain in the House committee for the modest carbon tax in the bill because it would inevitably balloon into another massive burden on taxpayers.

He illustrated the point by bouncing from the Spanish-American War to Russian dramatist Anton Chekhov to the U.S. Congress. The "temporary" 3 percent tax on telephones initiated in 1898 to support the war still takes a bite out of Americans, he said.

"Chekhov once observed that if a gun is hanging on the wall in the first act, it will always go off by play's end," Norquist said. "The same applies here."

On the other side of the issue, Wichita resident Walt Chapel told the Senate panel the carbon tax was "a farce," saying it amounted to a slap on the wrist for deep-pocketed utility companies.

Opponents of the plant expansion, such as Chapel, offered blunt
Energy: KDHE chief not present at either hearing

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criticism of the plan.
“The whole idea of clean coal is nothing but a taxpayer subsidy, a boondoggle, public relations gimmick,” Bob Eye, an attorney for the Sierra Club, said while straying from the podium and gesturing with his hands.

Frustrations with the time allotted for testimony elicited a small disruption in the packed Senate hearing.

Bills normally run through one chamber’s committee process before heading to the next. The current bill was heard simultaneously by both chambers, which forced some people to run back and forth between committees.

When Senate Utilities Committee Chairman Jay Emler, R-Lindsborg, called for three different conference committees in the House panel testifying at that time, Chapel spoke up from the back of the room.

“That’s what happens when you schedule back to back,” he said.

Emler responded: “That’s the way we are up here. We can’t change the amount of time we have.”

“Why?” asked Rick Jenkins, an Overland Park resident sitting in the crowd. “Why?”

“That’s enough,” Emler said. “There’s no argument in here. You had your chance to testify.”

Emler later said the bill received four days of hearings instead of the normal one day. It was “preposterous” to suggest the proposal was being rushed through, he said.

In the House hearing, Rep. Bill Light, R-Rolla, said he was disturbed that Bremby wasn’t among the dozens of people to testify before the House and Senate utility committees on the bill.

“Where is Secretary Bremby?” Light demanded.

House Energy and Utilities Committee Chairman Carl Holmes, D-Liberal, said several members expressed a desire to hear from Bremby.

In the Senate hearing...

Sen. Jay Emler

Sen. Jay Emler

Rep. Carl Holmes

Sen. Jay Emler

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Rep. Carl Holmes

Rep. Annie Kuether, D-Topeka, ranking Democrat on the House utilities committee, said litigation filed against KDHE regarding the proposed expansion at the Holcomb plant made it unwise for Bremby to testify in a public committee hearing on his decision to deny a permit to Sunflower.

“I think he has legitimate cause not to be here,” Kuether said.

Karl Brooks, a lawyer and faculty member at The University of Kansas, said the bill wasn’t the compromise as touted.

“Everyone in this room knows House Bill 2711 was written for one primary reason,” Brooks said, “to change Kansas law so Sunflower Power could get something indispensable, something the company has so far been unable to obtain through the regular channels of Kansas environmental and administrative law.”

Emler, in the Senate, said no coal company had any input in the bill’s drafting.

Rep. Tom Moxley, R-Council Grove, asked the KU professor whether Bremby had authority to deny Sunflower the air-quality permit.

“Yes,” Brooks said. “I do believe there was adequate statutory and regulatory authority.”

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At the Flint Hills Center for Public Policy, we think that we could all benefit from making K-12 schools act more like businesses in one important way — having to compete for students. Many people in the public school industry disagree, saying that business and learning are in conflict. Yet take a closer look and you’ll find that business and learning can go hand-in-hand.

Companies such as the Apollo Group and the Capella Education Company make money by educating students, offering both graduate and undergraduate degrees in multiple subjects. Apollo enrolls well over 300,000 adults in its University of Phoenix and other programs. Capella enrolls about 20,000 students.

Are these “real” universities? Certainly, their students think they are. Also, both are accredited by the same organization that accredits the University of Kansas.

The combination of profit and knowledge isn’t limited to colleges and universities. Tutoring has been around for thousands of years. In 2005, an estimated $4 billion in private funds was spent on tutoring services, and many of those services were offered by commercial enterprises. Under the federal law known as No Child Left Behind, $2 billion in public funds also is spent each year on tutoring.

Kumon Math & Reading Centers began 50 years ago in Japan by a father seeking to help his child learn. Today it operates in 43 countries. Kumon has 1,400 centers in North America, helping 135,000 students with math and reading. If you buy one of the company’s franchises, you can earn a living for yourself while educating children.

Educate Services, Inc. operates Sylvan Learning Centers, which has 1,100 locations in North America. Sylvan, founded in 1979, offers tutoring in homes, online, and at its own facilities. Students can get help in math, reading, writing...
and study skills. They can also prepare for the ACT and earn high school credit.

Huntington Learning Centers, also started in 1979, has 400 locations across the country. As with Sylvan and Kumon, it charges fees to willing families and sells franchises to would-be business owners.

Kumon, Sylvan and Huntington are just a few of the companies that offer tutoring. Together, they have multiple locations in the Kansas City metro area. They also operate in Hutchinson, Lawrence, Manhattan, Topeka and Wichita. The Education Industry Association, a trade group that includes tutoring companies, claims over 800 members.

Is Capella University for everyone? No more than KU is. Likewise, Sylvan Learning Centers are an appropriate tutoring option for some children, but other children will benefit from a program conducted by a different company, a non-profit community organization, or a school district.

At a fundamental level, people have the same needs, including food and shelter. In today’s world, you can add education to that list. Different people meet their needs for food and shelter in different ways.

That’s also true in education, which means that business and learning can indeed be compatible — perhaps even mutually beneficial.

John R. LaPlante is an Education Policy fellow with the Kansas-based Flint Hills Center for Public Policy. A complete bio on Mr. LaPlante can be found at http://www.flinthills.org/content/view/24/39/, and he can be reached at john.laplante@flinthills.org. To learn more about the Flint Hills Center, please visit www.flinthills.org