Lecture to focus on state Supreme Court

Professor Stephen J. Ware from the University of Kansas School of Law will discuss his recently published white paper, "Selection to the Kansas Supreme Court: Options for Reform," Thursday in Garden City.

Sponsored by The Federalist Society and Americans for Prosperity, the discussion will be from 7 to 8:15 p.m. at Lonestar Steakhouse, 2306 E. Kansas Ave.

There is no admission charge, and refreshments will be provided.

For more information, call Debbie O'Malley at (202) 822-8138.
Penner will speak at Chamber's Annual Dinner on 23rd

Author, public speaker and director of the Kansas Sampler Foundation, Marci Penner, will be addressing the Garnett Area Chamber of Commerce during the Annual Banquet on Wednesday, January 23, 2008, at the VFW. Marci encourages fellow Kansans to look at Kansas with new eyes through "Exploring Tourism". Her guest appearance is being sponsored by the newly formed Garnett Tourism Advisory Committee.

Marci Penner is the author of the Kansas Guidebook for Explorers, a 432-page book about what there is to see and do in Kansas. Marci spent two years going to every incorporated city in the state to research for the guidebook. In the early 1990s she co-authored three Kansas guidebooks with her father, Milferd Penner, and as a result of their journeys they founded the Kansas Sampler Foundation. The mission of the foundation is to preserve and sustain rural culture. Marci serves as the executive director.

Projects of the foundation include the annual Kansas Sampler Festival, the Kansas Explorers Club, the 8 Wonders of Kansas, and the We Kan! network and conference. Marci speaks throughout the state and region.

A graduate of Kansas University, Marci received her Master's degree in Counseling and Guidance from the University of Wisconsin. She was the co-chair of the Governor's Rural Life Task Force and was named the Distinguished Kansan of the Year by the Kansas Native Sons and Daughters in 2006. Mostly, she just prefers to be known as a rural culture activist!

Tickets for the GACC Annual Banquet are $12 and on sale now at the chamber office, City Hall, Attention to Detail, American Family Insurance and The Advocate. The ticket price includes a buffet meal. The event begins at the Garnett VFW with a social time at 6:30 pm, followed by dinner at 7 pm. The event is open to the public. Enjoy decorated table settings sponsored by various chamber member businesses and organizations with complimentary (free) drawings to be held for table centerpieces. The Board of Directors will highlight 2007 chamber accomplishments. Awards presentations, including honoring the Business of the Year and Volunteer of the Year will take place.

For more information about the Garnett Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet, or chamber membership, please contact the GACC Office, 419 S. Oak Street. (785) 448-6767.
LAWRENCE — The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall 2007 semester at the University of Kansas have been announced by the Office of Registrar.

Graduate and undergraduate degrees are conferred in December based on work completed during the fall semester. Because KU conducts only one formal commencement ceremony each year, many students graduating in the fall or summer terms will return for the traditional walk down the hill and into Memorial Stadium on Sunday, May 18, 2008.

Pratt County graduates include:

Craig Allan Dietz, son of Pamela Dietz, Public Health MPH Graduate Master of Public Health Pratt High School

Tyson Ray Eisenhauer, son of Rob and Cindy Eisenhauer, History bachelor of general studies, Senior Bachelor of General Studies/History

Rachel Leigh Fowler, daughter of John and Georgie Fowler, Accounting and Info Systems master of accounting and information systems, Graduate Master of Accounting and Information Systems

Kristen Faye Kuhn, daughter of Tim and Faye Kuhn, Accounting bachelor of science in business, Senior Bachelor of Science in Business/Accounting & Bachelor of Science in Business/Finance
EMPORIA LEGISLATORS RESPOND TO SEBELIUS SPEECH

By Joey Berlin
berlin@emporiagazette.com

Late last week, State Rep. Don Hill said the governor’s State of the State address historically featured “a thematic approach, long on style and short on real substance.”

On Monday night, the Emporia Republican had a different view of Gov. Kathleen Sebelius’ freshly delivered 2008 address.

“My reaction is positive,” he said. “It was the sixth address that I’ve heard her give, and I thought it was the best among those. Little bit longer on substance than what is often the case, and I appreciate that.”

Sebelius’ speech, which focused primarily on education, health care, the economy and energy, drew praise afterward from both Hill and State Sen. Jim Barnett, while State Rep. Peggy Mast offered some criticism.

Sebelius’ plans for education resonated with both Hill and Barnett. As expected, she emphasized K-12 education, but also mentioned the importance of higher education.

“We can’t afford for any of our young Kansans to be so far behind by the time they reach kindergarten that they can’t catch up,” she said.

Hill supports Sebelius’ proposed fourth year of the school finance plan that includes increased funding for all-day kindergarten. He said he’s optimistic that that measure will pass, calling it “very bipartisan.”

Hill, a pharmacist, also praised Sebelius’ mention of the importance of technical education, as well as her proposal to expand the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy, which the governor said would nearly double the school’s capacity and promote hospital residencies across the state.

Barnett said he was pleased with the specifics Sebelius offered, including her proposal for $1 million in funding for new teaching scholarships in math, science and technology and for an additional $3 million in student scholarship money. Sebelius said the $3 million would give 2,000 students the chance to compete for jobs in the state’s “innovation economy.”

“I think that there were many good points in her speech that I support and I enjoy,” Barnett said. “I would like to have heard a little bit more specificity in terms of how we can address the need for a state-wide energy plan.”

Sebelius said her budget recommends the formation of a bioenergy research grant program. She said Kansas should be a leader in Congress’ recently legislated goal to achieve production of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuels by the year 2022.

A proponent of wind energy, Sebelius lauded the fact that the state now has four wind farms and more that are now in the planning stages.

Sebelius’ emphasis on wind energy conflicts with Mast’s views. A veteran of the House utilities committee, Mast said she thinks nuclear power is cleaner and more efficient than wind power, and she said she wants to educate her constituents that wind energy will be more expensive.

“It’s estimated to cost about five cents more a kilowatt hour,” she said. “And if she … socializes the cost — right now, we have some of the lowest energy rates in the state in my area thanks to the nuclear power plant — we would see our rates go up higher than the majority of the rest of the state would.”

Mast differed from the governor on other issues, as well.

“I think some of the statements that she made were very positive, and I was glad to hear those,” Mast said. “Some of the things that she said, I felt, left me wondering how she was going to pay for some of the new programs.”

The governor wants to follow the recommendations of the Kansas Health Policy Authority. Sebelius said the initiative would have three major focuses: promoting personal responsibility to maintain good health, paying for preventive care and giving all Kansans access to affordable health insurance. She urged the Legislature to pass the health plan in its entirety during this session.
Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius delivers her State of the State address Monday at the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka.
Board wants to cap tuition hikes

By Chris Green
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — The state Board of Regents could discuss next month whether to cap tuition increases to keep Kansas universities affordable.

Several board members expressed concern Wednesday that costs to students and their parents were rising too steeply and too rapidly.

However, they also worried that any new restrictions on such tuition charges could rob the state's six public universities of the funding they need to excel.

The board scheduled a discussion of tuition charges for its Feb. 13 and 14 meetings. Board members also invited university leaders to offer their insights on the issue.

"This isn't about looking back and making judgments," said Regent Gary Sherrer of Overland Park. "It's about looking ahead to the future."

Each May, the state Board of Regents hears tuition and fee proposals from leaders at all six universities. The board then finalizes them the following month, which recently has meant endorsing each university's proposal.

However, Regent Janie Perkins of Garden City said board members want to look at whether they need to set more definite parameters to guide schools in making their rate proposals.

The move comes after a recent overhaul in the board's composition. Five new members joined the nine-member board in July after being appointed to their posts by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

Since 2002, tuition and fees at state universities have more than doubled at the University of Kansas and Kansas State University. Increases at the state's other schools have averaged at least 8 percent a year.

At the same time, student debt loads among borrowers were 5 to 21 percent higher for 2006 graduates than their 2004 counterparts.

Sherrer said he was concerned that tuition hikes were outstripping the ability of citizens to pay, since increases in personal income haven't risen by the same percentage for most citizens.

However, board members also noted that universities face increasing pressure to raise tuition because funding provided by the Kansas Legislature hasn't met rising costs in higher education.

In fact, the state's share of funding college opera-

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Continued from Page 1.

tions has fallen to all-time lows in recent years. At the same time many college leaders say they are struggling to pay competitive salaries to their employees and cover rising energy, health care and other costs.

"I think the Legislature has got to understand that these costs keep going up and somebody has to pay for it," Regent Dan Lykins of Topeka said.

In recent years, much of that burden has fallen on students and their parents, some board members admitted.

"It is a tax on kids," Regent Jill Docking of Wichita said of tuition increases sparked by relatively flat state funding.
Authority announces planning grants

By Sarah Kessinger
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — The Kansas Bioscience Authority announced new planning grants Wednesday to develop centers of innovation in medical research and new, marketable uses for Kansas grains.

Nearly $580,000 will aid in the planning of three new Kansas Bioscience Centers of Innovation, which are to be established to help commercialize bioscience research and help attract and expand related industries.

“They will define what it will take for Kansas to be a leader in these areas,” said Authority President Tom Thornton, during Kansas Bioscience Day at the Kansas Statehouse.

The grants include:

- $200,000 for planning the Kansas Center for Biomaterials Innovation and Design that includes the University of Kansas, Wichita State University, Pittsburg State University, Via Christi Health Systems and more than 20 other private industries and educational institutions.

- $180,000 to help plan a Kansas Biosciences Innovation Center in Drug Delivery at the University of Kansas. The center would focus on pharmaceuticals and how to achieve desired effects.

- $200,000 to aid in the development of the Kansas Innovation Center for Advanced Plant Design, which focuses on commercial opportunities for wheat, sorghum, small grains and native plants and prairie grasses.

The center would be based at the Kansas State University, collaborate with the Kansas Wheat Commission and research programs at KU.

“We believe this can develop industrial uses for wheat, soybeans and other plants,” Thornton said.

Thornton said the centers would seek to develop new business opportunities both in urban and rural Kansas. He also said the Bioscience Authority wants to continue hearing the public’s ideas at upcoming stakeholder meetings in Kansas communities.

“We get very, very excited about getting out and listening to what priorities are around the state,” he said.

The authority, a $581 million initiative, is funded by a tax on bioscience firms. It was created by the Legislature’s Kansas Economic Growth Act in 2004 to expand research, support bioscience start-ups and expand and attract existing industries.

The authority also introduced its first two “eminent scholars” Wednesday. The researchers accepted invitations to Kansas to conduct bioscience studies with potential to become new enterprises in the state.

The new scholars are Blake Peterson, a professor of medicinal chemistry who joined the University of Kansas from Pennsylvania State University, and Juergen Richt, who will join Kansas State University this spring as an animal health researcher.

Peterson develops synthetic cell receptors as a new tool for drug delivery and studies small molecule-protein interactions to generate potential therapeutic leads. At KU, he will focus on developing anti-cancer drugs and delivery systems. Funding for his work will total $5 million over five years.

Richt comes from the National Animal Disease Center and Iowa State University. His recent research includes emerging viral diseases of swine and prion diseases, such as mad cow disease. His expertise is in diagnostics and vaccinations, which he will apply at K-State’s Biosecurity Research Institute.
Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has appointed a representative from the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to a new Wind Working Group created recently by Executive Order. Blake Elliott, Director, Electric Supply Planning, will serve as BPU’s representative on this prestigious new state committee.

With Kansas poised to be a leader in the production of wind energy, the new 33-member Wind Working Group will educate stakeholders and the public about wind power, including wind energy markets, technologies, policies, and everyday issues. Working Group members include environmentalists, businesses, and key utility officials.

The Working Group will be chaired by Lt. Gov. Mark Parkinson, who says the goal of the project is to develop a shared vision for how the state should move forward with new wind energy projects. The first meeting of the group is scheduled for Jan. 18 in Wichita.

“We are proud that Mr. Elliott has been appointed to this important group,” said Robert L. Milan Sr., BPU Board president. “He was instrumental in BPU’s purchase of Kansas wind energy and being able to offer reasonable rates to our customers.”

Last year BPU announced a partnership with TradeWind Energy, a Lenexa-based renewable energy company, for the purchase of 25 megawatts of energy generated at the Smoky Hills Wind Farm near Salina. BPU is committed to a 20-year purchase agreement for wind energy.

Elliott has worked at BPU for 30 years, starting as a power plant operator and attending college classes whenever he could. After earning a B.S. degree from Park College and an M.B.A. from the University of Kansas, he transferred from Electric Production to the Environmental Services Department and eventually to Electric Production and Supply.

As Director of Electric Supply Planning, Elliott is responsible for forecasting fuel, purchased power, customer demand and electric sales revenue. He also manages long-term capacity plans through management of sales/purchase contracts including renewable contracts and implementation of energy-efficiency and demand-response initiatives.


In addition to the new appointment to the Kansas Wind Working Group, Elliott also represents BPU as an alternate board member on the Southwest Power Resources Association and the Kansas Municipal Energy Association.
LAWRENCE — The names of more than 1,600 candidates for degrees for the fall semester at The University of Kansas were announced by the Office of Registrar.

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Local and area students completing degrees included:

- Newton — Jacob A. Sacks, bachelor of science in education.
- Marion — Amanda Nichole Steiner, bachelor of general studies/psychology.
- Peabody — Morgan Rene Brickley, bachelor of science in business/accounting.
- Moundridge — Linsey Ann Moddelmog, master of arts/political science.
- Lawrence — Jessica Leigh Pownell, juris doctor, Newton High School graduate.
Bioscience effort boosted in Kansas

By JASON GERTZEN
The Kansas City Star

TOPEKA | Kansas bioscience leaders took steps Wednesday toward stimulating collaboration between companies and university researchers pursuing new drug technology, biomaterials and plant genetics.

The Kansas Bioscience Authority signed off on three planning grants totaling $580,000 for the potential creation of new bioscience centers of innovation.

That initiative, investments in companies such as XenoTech and Pinnacle Technology and providing up to $7 million toward the recruitment of two renowned scientists are the latest examples of how Kansas is attempting to bolster its bioscience economy, said Sandra Lawrence, chairwoman of the authority's board.

The authority was created as part of a development package expected to provide more than $580 million over a decade for bioscience efforts.

Expanding research programs, attracting out-of-state companies and assisting existing Kansas bioscience businesses are among the primary goals of the authority.

"This means jobs and significant capital investment in our state," Lawrence said.

Other states are pursuing similar strategies, but the Kansas program has an approach that is more innovative than most, Lawrence said.

"It gives us more national visibility because of the intensity of the work we are doing here," Lawrence said.

Officials are optimistic that the Centers of Innovation program will become a powerful catalyst.

The University of Kansas, Wichita State University, Pittsburgh State University's Polymer Research Institute, Via Christi Health System and other partners are teaming up to establish the Kansas Center for Biomaterials Innovation and Design.

Kansas State University is working with the Kansas Wheat Commission, KU and others to create the Kansas Innovation Center for Advanced Plant Design.

KU is working with young biotech companies and other partners to establish the Kansas Biosciences Innovation Center in Drug Delivery.

Encouraging stronger links between academic labs and companies is critically important, said Bill Sanford, vice chairman of the authority.

Major advances are possible by changing existing drugs so they do not trigger so many harmful side effects or so they deliver benefits more effectively. KU has some of the leading scientists in this area, and a new innovation center could bring a big boost to their work, said Richard Lariviere, the university's provost.

"It plays to one of our great strengths," Lariviere said.

To reach Jason Gertzen, call 816-234-4899 or send e-mail to jgertzen@kcstar.com.
Sebelius budget provides increase to state retirees

BY SCOTT ROTHSCILD
srothschild@theworldco.info

TOPEKA — Public employee retirees and higher education institutions will get some help in a "lean" budget. But kindergartners will have to wait.

That's part of Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' proposed $13.6 billion budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1.

She is recommending a lean budget. It keeps the commitments that have been made and also targets money to some key investments, like early-childhood programs," Sebelius' budget director Duane Goossen said Tuesday.

It also depends on gambling revenue before a slot machine or casino has been approved under the state's new gambling law.

The budget provides $6.4 million annually for a 1 percent cost of living adjustment for each of the next three years for retirees under the Kansas Public Employee Retirement System. If enacted, it would be the first COLA under KPERS since 1998.

Overall, higher education would receive a $35 million increase in its operating grant, which is approximately a 3 percent increase. And the Sebelius budget would increase funds to take care of renovations and repairs on university campuses by $15 million.

College-bound students would also see a $3 million increase in state scholarships under the plan.

Some of the projected new gambling revenue would be dedicated to expansion of Kansas University's Pharmacy School. KU also would receive $5 million to continue its efforts to be designated a national cancer care institution.

But phasing-in of full-day kindergarten will have to wait until the 2009-10 school year, under the plan.

Sebelius' budget does finance the final year of a three-year school finance package, but the price tag has gone up.

Once estimated at $122 million, the new figure is $167.6 million because of increases in special education costs. And she adds $23 million in grants for early childhood learning programs.