By JOEY YOUNG
THE INDEPENDENT STAFF

BURRTON – Burrton High School journalists were recognized for their writing, editing, and photography skills in the Burrton Courier, the school newspaper, at Wichita State University on Thursday, Feb. 21 for a regional journalism contest.

Taking third place at the competition was Hillary Janzen for yearbook sports writing, Marah Corwin for editing, and Danica Wente for feature photography.

Honorable mentions include Mackenzie Allen for feature writing, Kayla Hill for cutline writing, Amanda Meacham for editing, and Mackenzie Allen and Amanda Meacham for Theme Development and graphic design.

“I am very proud of these girls and what they have accomplished,” Journalism Advisor Kelli Zehr said.

The girls have earned the right to compete in the State Journalism contest on May 3 at Kansas University, which is done through Kansas Scholastic Press Association.

“Making it to state for sports is always a big deal and gets recognized, but to make it in something academic is just as important and these girls did just that,” Zehr said. "I am hoping that we can have great success at the state level in May.”
The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services has received a $2,500,000 grant from the Administration for Children and Families to provide services to families and youth affected by methamphetamine or other substance abuse.

The program has two areas of focus. The first will provide services to substance-affected families with children who have been placed in foster care or are at risk of out-of-home placement.

These families will receive targeted training on parenting, children's living skills and family skills.

Skills training will be provided through a model program of the National Institute of Drug Abuse and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration — the Strengthening Families Program. Kansas is the first state in the nation to implement the program statewide.

These services will be available starting in March.

The second focus area will target youth ages 15 and older in foster care, or former foster children currently receiving independent living skills. Beginning in 2009, a Web-based program will be launched to integrate substance abuse prevention with life and independent living skills.

"We must continue to help families impacted by substance abuse," said Gov. Kathleen Sebelius. "I'm proud Kansas is the first in the country to implement the Strengthening Families Program statewide and hope it makes a real difference, especially for the children."

Partner agencies involved in the Kansas initiative, Kansas Serves Substance Affected Families include:

- University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare.
- Kansas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children.
- KVC Behavioral Healthcare Inc.
- TFI Family Services Inc.
- St. Francis Community Services.
- Youthville Inc.
- DCCCA Inc.
- LutraGroup.
- inDepth Learning.
Smoky Valley German students to attend

Schuelerkongress at KU

LAWRENCE - The annual Schuelerkongress at the University of Kansas is expecting about 300 high school and under school students studying German at 9:00 a.m. Saturday, March 1, in Wescoe Hall’s fourth floor.

“Schuelerkongress translates as student congress, but the day feels almost like the Olympics when they get their medals,” said William Keel, professor of German.

Top competitors receive awards at a 1:30 p.m. ceremony at 3139 Wescoe Hall.

Keel offers some strong incentives for studying German. Nearly 40% of Kansans claim German ancestry and German dialects such as Pennsylvania Dutch and Mennonite Low German are still spoken among family and friends in a number of Kansas communities. Many older Kansans speak Volga German, Bukovina German, and varieties of Low German, brought by their immigrant ancestors in the late 19th century to the Great Plains.

The Kansas Association of Teachers of German sponsors the daylong event in cooperation with KU’s Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures.

Schuelerkongress activities include contests in poetry recitation, prose reading, spelling, poster making, cultural tests, and proficiency.

Culture test questions may run the gamut of geography, cuisine, history – anything related to German-speaking countries.

The poetry and prose recitations tend to attract students because more can win medals in those competition. Keel’s committee of high school teachers selects the poems and prose in advance to match students’ levels of study, such as first-year or second-year German.

Faculty and graduate teaching assistants from KU’s Department of Germanic, Languages and Literatures serve as judges of the various contests.
Kansas Honor Scholar

The University of Kansas Alumni Association identified Jaron Hake of Tipton Catholic High School as a Kansas Honor Scholar at the Honors Program held at Beloit on Monday, February 11. Hake is the son of Gery and Stacie Hake, Tipton. Pictured with Hake are Michele Heidrick and KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway.

Submitted photo
This week brings what is known as "Turnaround Week" in the Kansas House of Representatives. A bill originating in the House must have passed through that chamber by the end of this week, or the bill will be considered dead for this legislative session. Some bills are exempt from that deadline.

Each week for the rest of this legislative session, The Gazette will look at what each of Emporia's legislators worked on last week and what they have on their agenda for the week ahead.

Please see Laws, Page 3
Sen. Jim Barnett

LAST WEEK: At an Education committee hearing, Barnett dealt with the issue of legislation tied to funding for the Emporia School District, and other districts in Lyon County, in order to soften the effect of the Tyson layoffs. USD 253 Superintendent John Heim and Southern Lyon County Superintendent Mike Argabright both appeared at the Statehouse last week to speak on behalf of putting in a two-percent floor on the reduction of adjusted enrollment. That would guarantee that each district received at least 98 percent of last year's funding. Barnett said he felt good about how that hearing went and was also pleased that the Senate passed a multi-year school funding bill on Thursday.

"I think it's in the best interest of the state and school districts to have a multi-year funding plan that will allow the school boards, administrators and teachers to plan on a multi-year basis, know that the funding will be available for the programs that they'd like to institute," he said.

In health care, the Senate passed Bill 491, which would create a state electronic database for narcotics and other controlled substances. The bill came following the indictment of Haysville physician Stephen Schneider, who is accused of illegally prescribing painkillers to 56 patients who died of overdoses.

"Kansas is one of the few states that doesn't have that type of electronic database," Barnett said.

THIS WEEK: The Education committee will hold another hearing on school district funding, this one for Chase County USD 284 and other similar school districts. Barnett has introduced a bill to help those districts receive more local-option funding.

"Chase County, it's ranked as a wealthy district, although I don't think they are a wealthy county," Barnett said. "But under the current school finance formula, that's how they are actually ranked, and as a result they receive very little local-option funding."

Barnett said he has had meetings with various stakeholders in the health care reform issue. He said several health care-related bills will be worked on in committee this week, including one that would introduce a premium assistance program to make health insurance affordable for low-income Kansans.

"We have some small business pieces included that I think are important to help small business have more access to affordable health care insurance," he said. "That'll be a big part of what I'm working on this coming week."

Rep. Don Hill

LAST WEEK: Hill doesn't believe that House Bill 2776, a bill he introduced to make the state school funding formula more favorable to USD 253 following the Tyson layoffs, will be worked in the House. Instead, Hill said, the Senate bill on the funding formula will probably be used as a vehicle to help USD 253. He said it sometimes made sense to have identical legislation moving in both houses.

Hill, a member of the House education committee, said he was excited about several school finance bills passing out of committee last week. Two bills offer incentives to encourage low-enrollment districts to consolidate. One bill states that small districts that choose to consolidate will, for a period of three years, receive the same funding they would have gotten had they remained separate. Another bill offers funding formula incentives for districts that consolidate in a shorter period of time.

"In the last eight or 10 years, we've gone from 304 school districts in Kansas down to, I believe they were down to 296," Hill said. "Which I tend to believe (is) too many. Very inefficient on the cost side, and probably of greater concern is the fact that when school districts go small, they're not able to deliver the quality of education."

THIS WEEK: Hill will work on the legislation related to allowing the expansion of the Holcomb coal-fired energy plant. The bills passed each chamber with a veto-proof majority and now are in the hands of a six-legislator
conference committee that considers both versions. The conference committee can make its own changes to the bills and send them back to each chamber in the form of a report. Hill said he has been trying to find ways that the two bills can be improved to the point where they will gain more support, including provisions about conservation and encouragement of renewable energy.

"Most of us, myself included, are interested in the Holcomb station being moved forward," he said. "But we're also very interested in making strides on the environment."

On Tuesday, the House and Senate will both be working on a proposal for expansion of the University of Kansas School of Pharmacy, something Gov. Kathleen Sebelius endorsed in her State of the State address last month. The legislation would add to the number of students at the Lawrence campus and would also create a satellite campus in Wichita. The KU pharmacy school will participate in hearings in both chambers on Tuesday, and Hill said he would spend time with its representatives.

Also, Hill said, the House will spend significant time looking at disaster relief following a particularly high number of weather-related disasters in the state in 2007. He said that issue will be examined both in the Economic Development committee and in separate group activities.

"Been a lot of legislation introduced on that," he said. "None has really moved so far."

**Rep. Peggy Mast**

**LAST WEEK:** Mast battled influenza last week but didn't miss any votes.

"I'm thankful that I'm not too far from my niece's house," she said. "I would quarantine myself in the bedroom of my niece's house almost every afternoon, all afternoon long and tried to get rested up so I could get over the flu."

Mast is sponsoring House Bill 2570, which is now in the Judiciary committee, to outlaw Salvia, a psychedelic plant that is often chewed or smoked for recreational use. She expects that bill to be amended onto another bill and passed.

Her resolution condemning gangsta rap is expected to reach the Senate floor soon. Mast said she requested the resolution after meeting Topeka civil rights activist Sonny Scroggins late last year when Scroggins was walking around the Capitol.

"When he told me what he was walking for, I thought it was a very valid concern about the effects that the lyrics of gangsta rap had on young people that hear it repeatedly," she said, "and how demeaning it is to women and how destructive it can be to children.

"I told him that (with) First Amendment rights, we couldn't regulate free speech, but I would be glad to draft a resolution to make people aware of the lyrics and also get the conversation going."

**THIS WEEK:** Mast says illegal immigration will be one of several time-consuming issues up for debate on the House floor during this week's "crunch time." She said that legislation will deal largely with requiring employers to use the federal E-Verify system to confirm that a prospective employee is legal.

"Illegal immigration seems to be an issue that has statewide interest as far as all the people that I know that have sent out questionnaires and everything; illegal immigration has been one of the top concerns that people have written about," she said.

Other issues that have been put off for awhile, such as budget and tax legislation, may also be discussed, Mast said.
Virtual therapy

By KRISTI HENDERSON
Lawrence Journal-World

LAURENCE (AP) — With all the clapping and commotion coming from the Big 12 Pub at Brandon Woods Retirement Community, it could’ve been mistaken for a bowling alley.

But instead of a lane and bowling balls, there was a Nintendo Wii and flat-screen television. And the bowlers could choose between throwing strikes while standing or sitting.

Brandon Woods has introduced the Nintendo Wii game system as a new activity for residents.

“We see a lot of therapeutic benefit to it as well as the very obvious social, sports-related benefit,” said Donna Bell, director of public relations at Brandon Woods. “When you’re bowling or playing tennis, there’s a whole range-of-motion benefit.”

Before anyone took to the lanes last week at Brandon Woods, Kim Blocher, social programming director, gave the small group of men and women a tutorial on the controller and game.

Some had been exposed to the Nintendo game system through grandchildren. Others hadn’t even heard of it.

Resident Evelyn Hallberg said she had played tennis on the Wii once during a family gathering. But she didn’t consider herself an expert.

“I don’t learn things like that easily,” Hallberg said.

Blocher went through the game step by step, showing them how to position the bowler, how to angle the ball’s path and even how to put a little curve on it.

“Whatever your hand does, you’re doing to the ball,” Blocher said. “If you turn it a lot like this, like I did, it’s going to curve powerfully. If you roll straight, it’ll go straight.”

For some bowlers, there was frustration at first.

“Hell’s bells” was resident Natalie Gump’s reaction when she hit the wrong button and couldn’t figure out how to get back to the main screen.

But after a few throws, everyone in the group seemed to get the hang of it and began making spares and strikes.

“After a while, it starts to get simple,” said Gump, who didn’t know what a Wii was before the tutorial.

Senior center directors and researchers see a lot of potential with the Wii.

The obvious benefit is increased physical activity.

Susan Kemper, a distinguished professor of psychology at Kansas University, says the competition that comes with playing the Wii is a great motivator. Kemper, who has an emphasis in aging and cognition, works with the Gerontology Center at the University of
It's not just you playing against a clock or a computer scoring system. It's not just you keeping track," Kemper said. "It's a real sense of competition. That's why it seems to be very rapidly adopted in a lot of assisted living senior centers because it gets people active."

The competition also lends itself to more social interaction.

"If it gets older persons up and moving and doing something enjoyable that they can share with their friends and younger family members, then that's definitely beneficial," said Matthew Schrager, an assistant professor in health, sport and exercise science at KU. He also works with the Gerontology Center.

Douglas County Senior Services also recently acquired a couple of Wiis. Although training doesn't even begin until next week, the system already seems to be popular.

Executive Director John Glassman said golf and bowling have been the most sought-after games.

"I've got these people up here talking to me already. 'Which golf game did you get? Did you get the Tiger Woods game?" Glassman said.

For some seniors, the Wii has brought back fond memories.

Gump, at Brandon Woods, had been an avid bowler until a leg injury. Until the Wii tutorial, she hadn't bowled in probably 15 years, she said. After bowling for a few frames, she said it made her want to return to the lanes.

But she wasn't so sure her bowling experience was going to translate into endless strikes on the Wii.

"Oh, I don't know about that," she said.

Virgie Pine, a resident at Brandon Woods, took her turn at the Nintendo Wii.
Ice? Not nice, but KU Honors Program goes on at Larned, without a hitch

By JERRY BUXTON
jbuxton@gbttribune.com

If the music — and the KU Alumni Association officials — were iced in, and couldn’t make it to Larned, John Adams, Pat Springer et al brought Mount Oread to Larned, at least sort of.

In fact, they did an excellent job, at the annual KU Honors Banquet for the Larned area, last Thursday night at the Knight of Columbus Hall on Scenic Drive.

Adams served as emcee, and 60 to 70 people attended, including most of the 20 members of the Classes of 2008 from six area high schools who were being honored, and their parents.

A vicious ice storm in eastern Kansas made the KU contingent of four people unable either to fly or drive out to Larned for the festivities.

Adams, who has a bachelor’s degree from KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and a graduate degree from the Home of the Jayhawks as well, is the KUAA’s principal Larned representative/site coordinator for the annual Honors Banquet.

It honors students in the top 10 percent of their soon-to-graduate high school classes.

Larned High School seniors honored were Jacob Finger, Brooks Hanson, Dennan Morrow, Lindsey Scheibmeir, Katie Vine and Michael Vratil.

St. John High School honorees were Josh Hildebrand, Felicia Norton and Savannah Sievers.

From Stafford Middle/High School, honorees were Erica Meyer and Anna Zink.

Pawnee Height honorees were Samantha Crook, Jordan Hann and Christopher Housman.

Honored from Macksville were Jared Loomis, Justin Bright and Nicole Petty.

From Kinsley, honorees were Ben Burghart, William Burkhart and William Fulls.

Adams said he would “wing it” as emcee. The weather has played cat and mouse with this yearly event before, but this was the first time the KU group had been unable to make it to Larned, he said.

“I have to inflect myself on you for the whole evening,” he told the audience. They didn’t mind; it was “painless,” and better than painless.

“Our most important guests are here,” Adams said, “the KU Honor students.”

Pat Springer provided music at the piano (“Take Five,” “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore,” “Takin’ a Chance on Love,” “Over the Rainbow,” “Frankie and Johnny” and others), and “We don’t have to go to the Great Bend Airport” to pick up the KU people or take them back, Adams pointed out.

“These are the best and brightest young men and women Kansas has to offer,” Adams said, referring to the honored seniors. The KUAA has more than 40,000 members, he said.

Each student was given a brand-new American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language. Sarah Blaney, assistant director of Kansas Programs for the KUAA, would have presented them, had she been able to attend.

“Most (more than half) of the content on the World Wide Web now has been put there by people younger than 20, he said.

Be happy doing whatever you (choose to) do,” Corbett advised. Whether you’re a teacher, a farmer, a politician, an astronaut, an executive, whatever, be happy with who and what you are.

There are more than 200,000 KU alumni worldwide, he said.

Adams closed by reiterating, from the 2007 Larned KU Honors Program, a list of 11 things high school grads “didn’t learn in school.” A KU dean had read the list a year ago.

John and Nancy Adams were the site coordinators for the program from Pawnee County; Gayle Cornwell was the Stafford County coordinator, and Allen Frame was the Edwards County coordinator.
Erica Meyer, at left, and Anna Zink, both Stafford High School seniors, were honored at the KU Honors Banquet last Thursday night in Larned.

ABOVE: Larned High School seniors in the Class of 2008, honored at the KU Honors Banquet in Larned last Thursday night, included, from left, Brooks Hanson, Dennan Morrow, Katie Vine and Michael Vratil. Absent, but also honored, were seniors Jacob Figner and Lindsey Scheibmeir.

ABOVE: From left, Josh Hildebrand, Felicia Norton and Savannah Sievers, St. John-Hudson High School seniors, were honored Thursday night at the KU Honors Banquet, at the Larned Knights of Columbus Hall.
The president wants the students to have a say.
Alumni would like students to consider what such a decision could mean to their alma mater in future years.
That's what's facing Fort Hays State University's Student Government Association on Thursday when its regular weekly meeting takes action on the second reading of a resolution for a special election.
The resolution calls for an election by students to add $1.20 per credit hour to student fees beginning with the 2008-09 school year.

The fee would generate about $140,000 to go toward starting men's and women's soccer programs at Fort Hays.
Fort Hays had proposed a $2 per credit hour fee increase, and SGA countered with the $1.20 fee.
That $1.20 increase would calculate to less than $150 during a four-year career of a student meeting the 124-hour minimum requirement to earn a bachelor's degree.
More than 30 years ago, FHSU students voted in an increase in student fees that helped build Gross Memorial Coliseum in the early 1970s.
Today, the 7,000-seat GMC complex is home not only to FHSU athletic events and other community activities but also several statewide events such as state high school volleyball, wrestling and basketball tournaments, as well as the Kansas State Special Olympics Basketball Tournament.
"Having Gross Memorial Coliseum here puts us in a great position to bid on and host most of those events," said Jana Jordan, a Fort Hays alumna who now serves as executive director of the Hays Convention and Visitors Bureau.
She said these events bring hundreds of thousands of dollars into the city's economy.
A university soccer program in Hays, including a stadium, eventually could produce similar results.
"Hays is a great location, middle of the state, easy access off (Interstate) 70," Jordan said.
"It makes a really good location for the state activities association to select us for events, especially because (Fort Hays) has the people who work so well with the state."
"GMC has been and still is a real boost to our economy," she added. "And I can see where (a soccer stadium) could do the same thing. It would open us up to even do more things."
Soccer is a rapidly growing sport in the United States. In Hays alone, nearly 130 youth ages 5 to 19 are registered members of the Hays Soccer Club, and hundreds of youth participate in Hays Recreation Commission soccer programs.
"There are 6,000 registered competitive soccer players (in Kansas), and when they want to play college ball, they have to go elsewhere to school," said Patti Griffin, interim chair of the communications studies department at Fort Hays.
"Some of those are right here in Hays. "I think the opportunity to draw out of the metro markets would be big," said Keith Kuhn, a Hays resident and FHSU graduate. "But we would get some of those kids right here from Hays who go away to school, too."
One student who might have stayed home to go to college had there been a soccer program at Fort Hays was one of Kuhn's sons, Scott.
Scott Kuhn helped Hays High School to a state runner-up finish his senior year in the fall of 2002, then went to Southwestern College in Winfield to play soccer for four years and earn academic All-America honors.
Numerous former Hays High soccer players have gone on to attend school at Southwestern, as well as other private schools and junior colleges with soccer programs.
"I think soccer could pull kids from new markets," Keith Kuhn said. "And a lot of those would be quality academic students, too."
Several members of the Hays Soccer Club were at last...
Thursday’s meeting, something not lost on university officials.

“Athletics provides exposure for the university and gives them a chance to make an impact on our community,” said FHSU Athletic Director Curtis Hammeke. “And part of our university mission is to respond to the interest of our region, our area.”

Fort Hays State University has been creative in growing its enrollment the past several years, with the offering of virtual classes and especially with agreements with schools in China that offer dual degrees with their university and FHSU.

At last Thursday’s SGA meeting, Griffin pointed out that because of the decline of population in western Kansas, “it’s a demographic problem in recruiting” students.

While there are numerous junior college programs in the state, the only men’s soccer programs at four-year universities in the state are at private institutions. Emporia State is the only four-year state institution with women’s soccer. If added, a women’s program would compete in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association, while a men’s program would compete in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference.

“If our population continues to dwindle, tuition will go up,” Griffin said. “We need to get into Johnson County and those (eastern Kansas) areas. That’s where the majority of those 6,000 players are.”

Genesis Ferch, a Fort Hays student who spoke in the open forum Thursday, agreed.

“I came from Johnson County,” said Ferch, a graduate student in the English department who lives in La Crosse. “Just because we don’t experience it in our little world doesn’t mean we won’t attract some of these 6,000 kids.”

“Unfortunately in our society, we’re about instant gratification,” Ferch said in reference that the results of an increase in student fees would take a while to be seen. “The current students would get the honor of knowing they made an impact.”

Chris Johnson, an FHSU senior from Leoti, voiced concerns about whether or not many FHSU students would take part in a soccer program since attendance numbers are lackluster for other sports.

“I am fine if it’s funded by some other means,” Johnson said.

Student senators also expressed concern about a rise in fees, especially since Fort Hays has made such an effort in keeping tuition costs down.

Fort Hays has the lowest tuition of all six state-funded four-year universities in Kansas.

Last year, Fort Hays’ tuition for a student taking 15 credit hours was $1,238 per semester. By contrast, it was $1,431 at Emporia State University and $1,518 at Pittsburg State University, the two regional institutions similar in size to Fort Hays.

At the two largest universities, the University of Kansas and Kansas State University, tuition was more than double that of Fort Hays with $2,756 and $2,588 per-semester numbers.

President Edward Hammond thinks adding soccer programs would be another way to increase enrollment, this time right here on the FHSU campus.

Fort Hays grew its enrollment about 62 percent from 2001 to 2006, so a majority of the tuition revenue during that time frame came from growth.

“The growth definitely has helped us keep tuition costs down, lower than other state universities,” Hammond said.

“More growth would help more. Soccer would help us grow, and we need to be able to see if students really are interested in supporting soccer.”

Reporter Diane Gasper-O’Brien can be reached at (785) 628-1081, Ext. 126, or by e-mail at dobrien@dallynews.net.
Astronaut to visit space center for announcement

It appears that NASA’s loss will become the University of Kansas’ gain.

Today, Kansas astronaut Steve Hawley and KU Chancellor Robert Hemenway will make an announcement about Hawley’s resignation from his position at NASA in Houston and his addition to the KU staff this fall.

The pair will make four stops around the state to make the announcement, including at the Kansas Cosmosphere and Space Center at 11:30 a.m. today. Other stops include Central High School in Salina, the Statehouse in Topeka and the Dole Institute of Politics at KU.

Jack Martin with KU university communications said the Cosmosphere was chosen as an announcement location because of its status as a “world-class facility devoted to promoting space and technology.”

“Given that, it is an appropriate venue for this kind of announcement,” Martin said, adding that he didn’t know of any plans for KU and Hawley to partner with the Cosmosphere on any endeavors.

Hawley is a 1969 graduate of Salina High School – now Salina Central High School – and a 1973 graduate of KU, where he earned degrees in physics and astronomy.

He has participated in several space missions and is in the Astronaut Hall of Fame.
Technical college board views CDL simulator

By Barbara Axtell
Call Editor

The North Central Kansas Technical College Board of Control began their meeting Monday night by looking at the Commercial Driver License Simulator in the diesel technology building on the Beloit campus.

The simulator will be used to train drivers in the CDL program at the college. The college can develop programs on the simulator for the drivers depending on what skills they need. The simulator can be programmed for various driving conditions and types of trucks.

Following the tour college president Clark Coco reviewed the performance agreement the college has with the Kansas Board of Regents. The agreement was written by Ron Hutkin, former employee of the college.

Obviously you want to meet your performance agreements, the president said. One of the agreement goals was to increase the number of students going for a bachelor degree, he said.

Another agreement was to increase the number of students on the Hays campus. We fell short of that agreement, but enrollment is up significantly on the Hays campus, Coco said.

Those agreements will be retired and replaced with new agreements which have been submitted and approved to KBOR.

Both of those issues can be taken care of, the president said. There are many agreements we have met.

Administrator reports

Dean of Instruction Joel Applegate and Director of Outreach Education John Matthews recently met with the Mitchell County health care facilities about the potential of programs with the health care folks.

Matthews said it was a real good meeting with people from the hospital and Hilltop Lodge. The goal is for the college to be more responsive to business and industry’s needs.

“When you go outside you find a lot of people that will listen to your ideas,” Matthews said.

Dean of Student Services David Hughes gave an update on enrollment figures for 2008-2009 at the college. The numbers are up a little bit, he said. Some departments are up, others are down. “We are working on those areas,” he said. “We are being more aggressive and attending more events.”

Four representatives from the college attended the Western Farm Show in Kansas City last week with a lot of interest shown in the college’s programs.

The college will host a Beloit High Career Day on March 14 with hands on opportunities for the entire sophomore and junior classes.

“We hope to get rid of the perception we are not the school for them,” the administrator said.

President Coco is working with USD 273 Superintendent Joe Harrison on ways to get more students from BHS involved at the tech college.

Dean of Administrative Services Bob Schmidt said they are all busy with routine work. The maintenance department has spent numerous hours and days clearing out the ag tech building getting it ready for fall classes.

The dean said the college has a change in insurance providers for workman’s compensation. Due to the experience factor, the premium has gone down from $62,159 last year to $23,508 for the coming year. The policy ends in February each year.

Schmidt is currently working on budget preparation for the coming year. He is setting up times to meet with instructors and look at fees. The plan will be shared with the cabinet and President Coco.

The college president reported for Don Benjamin, Dean of the Hays Campus. The pharmacy tech advisory board at Hays met recently. A member of the advisory board suggested the college look into national certification for the program. Coco has also talked to Kansas University about working out an articulation agreement with KU for the pharmacy program.

The college participated in a job fair at Schult Homes in Plainville.

President Coco presented information about future upgrades at the Hays campus. The college would like to offer additional general education courses for the nursing and pharmacy programs. Also they would like to expand the residential electricity program to the associates degree. The third proposal would be to add a full time CNA and CMA instructor.

Coco said staff would like to spend the next 25 to 30 days reviewing the plans and make a presentation to the board.
President Coco has been visiting with President Hammond of Fort Hays University about a welding program in Hays. There are 24 welding booths on the Fort Hays campus which Hammond said NCKTC could use for instruction. FHSU would pay the utilities with the technical college taking care of the consumables. Coco said he would come back with more information next month to see if the board wants to explore the opportunity with Ft. Hays.

Director of Outreach Education John Matthews said the new learning system the college has been developing with the assistance of Ft. Hays State University is up and running. The server is on the FHSU campus. The program is paid for by a federal grant.

Matthews sent a Memorandum of Understanding concerning the use of the program to Minnesota last week. The program should start on line with close to 700 students by the end of the year, he said.

"This system will give us the ability to do things for students outside at a low cost," Matthews said. "I am very confident this will be good for us."

President’s report

President Coco said he received an e-mail from NCRPC director John Cyr last week about the GIS program at the college. Cyr said the Kansas University folk who visited the college were very pleased and impressed with the information the two students in the program have generated.

The college president told the board members about a "Earn and Learn" partnership between Sunflower Manufacturing and the tech college. They are looking at a four week, four hour per day program to train welders for the manufacturing plant. Sunflower will provide the equipment and pay for the instructor, he said. NCKTC will provide the facilities. Students would earn up to two credit hours. The program would begin with five students.

Coco said the college has the space and the program would not interrupt the regular welding program at the college. "We want to kick it off April 1," Coco said. "Sunflower, Landoll and other manufacturers need welders."

The college president said the technical authority met in Garden City recently. "Standardization of curriculum is coming," he said. "It will be on an even playing field - variance of credit hours will not be there."

Coco said he visited with Joe Hess about another building on the Hays campus and asked if the Dreiling Foundation would help with the funding. Hess said they need to see a plan prior to making a commitment. The college will start working on a plan for a new building to present to the foundation.

The college is working on a strategic plan that involves providing a safe, secure environment for the students and fiscal long range planning for the school.

Auto collision building

The president said Campbell & Johnson is looking into what can be done about the structural problems with the auto collision building.

Three options have been presented. The options include pinning the walls, pumping concrete under the walls or placing 28 pylons and raising the floor. The college will explore the options before making a decision.

Action items

The college board approved the resignation of Eamonn Coveney as the GIS/GPS instructor and approved the search and hire of a new instructor.

The board also approved contracts for the administrators.

The trustee meeting for June was changed from the 23rd to the 16th.

The board went into an executive session to discuss personnel and negotiations with no action taken.