HUMBOLDT — Thirteen Humboldt High School journalism students competed in the Kansas Scholastic Press Association’s Regional journalism competition Thursday at Wichita State University, and the HHS team won the event. Students competed in 17 categories, such as advertising, design, writing and photography.

As a team, at least one HHS participant placed in each category, leading the team to the first-place finish. Individually, 11 students placed and qualified to compete in one or more categories at the state level at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, on May 3.

Those who placed and will continue to state competition are:

- Senior Karna Carlson, Yearbook Copy Writing (third place), Theme Development (third place)
- Junior Megan Dillow, Sports Photography (third place), Infographics (honorable mention)
- Senior Emily Hauser, Sports Photography (first place), Editorial Writing (second place), News Writing (second place)
- Sophomore Alexis Hosack, Editing (first place), Yearbook Sports Writing (honorable mention), Theme Development (honorable mention)
- Senior Haley Huffman, Editorial Cartoon (first place), Newspaper Design (first place), News Writing (first place), Headline Writing (honorable mention)
- Junior Bailey Myers, Feature Writing (first place), Newspaper Sports Writing (second place)
- Junior Shelby Novotny, Yearbook Layout (honorable mention)
- Senior Bethany Wolverton, Feature Photography (first place), Editorial Cartoon (second place), Cutline Writing (honorable mention), Infographics (honorable mention)
- Senior Michelle Solars, Advertising (honorable mention)
- Senior Sarah Works, Theme Development (honorable mention)
- Sophomore Kassidy Young, Yearbook Sports Writing (honorable mention), Theme Development (honorable mention)

“We went up against some of the best student journalists in the state at our regional,” said Kim Isbell, HHS journalism adviser. “All of these students should be proud of the outcome and should look forward to the upcoming state competition.

“Publications students work hard not only when contest comes around, but also throughout the entire school year to ensure that the high standards of Humboldt’s publications department continues. The student body can be proud of the journalism work produced by its school.”
Catch ‘Catch-22’ at Lied Center

By Bill Blankenship
THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

That “Catch-22” is still some catch 47 years after it entered the American lexicon.

The first national touring production of Joseph Heller’s own stage version of his 1961 novel comes to the University of Kansas when the Aquila Theatre Company presents “Catch-22” at 7 p.m. Friday at the Lied Center.

Tickets, which are $30 and $25, with $1 off for seniors and a 50 percent discount for KU and Haskell Indian Nations University and youths to age 18, can be purchased by calling (785) 864-ARTS or by going to www.lied.ku.edu.

In the highly allegorical and wonderfully surreal novel, Heller, a bomber pilot in World War II, explains the title comes from a rule in effect for when airmen could go home:

“There was only one catch and that was Catch-22, which specified that a concern for one’s safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could be grounded.

“All he had to do was ask; and as soon as he did, he would no longer be crazy and would have to fly more missions. Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and sane if he didn’t, but if he was sane he had to fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and didn’t have to; but if he didn’t want to he was sane and had to.

“Yossarian was moved very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful whistle.

“That’s some catch, that Catch-22,” Yossarian observed.

“It’s the best there is,” Doc Daneeka agreed.

“Catch-22” as a play continues to explore the absurdity of war.

Bill Blankenship can be reached at (785) 295-1284 or bill.blankenship@cjonline.com.
The origins of flight

‘Nova’ tonight addresses scientific controversy with focus on research done by KU professors

Researchers from The University of Kansas are taking center stage tonight in an evolutionary debate that has raged on and off for more than 100 years — did flight happen from the ground up or from treetops down?

David Burnham, a paleontologist, and Larry Martin, a professor and curator of paleontology, will be featured at 7 tonight on KTWU-TV Channel 11 as part of a “Nova” program examining the origin of flight. Their hypothesis regarding a recently discovered winged dinosaur — the microraptor — flies in the face of conventional scientific theory.

“Most paleontologists today have been convinced for the past 30 years that birds evolved from small predatory dinosaurs that were bipedal (two-legged) runners,” said Mark Davis, producer of “The Four-Winged Dinosaur.”

Burnham and Martin disagree, saying instead that birds predated dinosaurs and flight originated in tree-living animals.

Martin’s well-documented theory may have landed him the opportunity to work with the microraptor fossil.

In 2000, farmers in northeastern China found the complete fossil of an animal never seen before — a small dinosaur with fully formed wings on its arms, feet and tail.

Burnham said officials from the university near where the fossil was found wanted Martin to look at it.

Martin and Burnham created from the fossil a 3-D model of the microraptor. Their first model — they have since built a second, more aerodynamic model — will be featured on tonight’s “Nova” program.

However, the debate is far from over. Davis said another group of scientists from the American Museum of Natural History in New York reconstructed a skeleton of microraptor that doesn’t splay its legs. It looks like a typical small dinosaur.

“So who has got the real microraptor, and what can it tell us about the origin of flight?” he said. “That’s what ‘The Four-Winged Dinosaur’ is about.”

Story by Kasha Stoll: (785) 295-1270 or kasha.stoll@cjonline.com.
From left, David Alexander, Larry Martin and David Burnham have developed a model of a flying dinosaur based on research they say indicates animals learned to fly by jumping from trees, not by leaping from the ground.

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**THE TWO ARGUMENTS**

**FROM THE TOP DOWN**

**Theory:** Tree-living animals that jumped from one limb or tree to another gradually developed the ability and biomechanics to glide and, eventually, fly. The microraptor is evidence this could have happened.

**Why it makes sense:** These animals would have been working with gravity. On the other hand, it is impossible to run fast enough to take flight, so the conventional flight-from-the-ground approach can't be right.

**Evidence:** Martin and Burnham said they initially tried to place the legs of the microraptor in the hip socket so it could stand erect, but the legs didn't fit because of the shape of the socket. The researchers repositioned the legs so that they splayed out to the side, and the leg bones popped easily into the sockets. The researchers quickly concluded the microraptor couldn't have been a ground-dwelling animal.

**FROM THE GROUND UP**

**Theory:** Flight evolved in running bipeds (animals standing on two legs) through a series of short jumps. As the jumps became more and more extended, the animals used their wings for balance and propulsion. The jumps eventually led to flight. This evolution could have happened one of two ways, both of which center around the animal's hunt for prey.

- Enlarged feathers would help an animal bat and catch animals with its forearms. As the forearm enlarged through evolution, the motion needed to swat prey evolved into the flapping needed for flight.
- Animals who caught prey with their jaws used rudimentary wings as stabilizers. That helped them keep their balance while running, jumping and turning. Their forearms grew through evolution, providing the animals with minute increments of lift. That enabled them to jump farther and capture more prey.
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Penalties involving illegals opposed

Businesses worry about immigration reform proposals

By James Carlson

The state’s largest business organization on Tuesday told a House committee that employers would fight penalties at the core of immigration reform bills being heard in the Legislature.

“We are not interested in being responsible in the business community for solving a social concern,” said Amy Blankenbiller, president of the Kansas Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The KCCI joined 28 other business, Hispanic and immigrant-rights groups opposing proposals seeking to address the influx of undocumented residents in the state.

There are four bills under consideration by the House panel. They deal with hiring requirements, denying most public benefits to illegal immigrants, allowing local governments to ban them from renting houses and requiring law enforcement officers to inquire about the residency status of people they arrest for any violation.

All of the legislation includes some measure of punishment for businesses that knowingly hire undocumented workers. The penalties range from a 10-day suspension of business licenses upon a first offense to a permanent suspension on a third violation.

The business community showed up in force Tuesday to oppose those provisions.

Reg Robertson, with Custom Lawn and Landscape in Olathe, echoed the sentiments of many witnesses when he said federal rules haven’t allowed enough work visas for out-of-country workers.

Please see REFORM, Page 3A
As a member of the Kansas Board of Regents since 2005, I am concerned about tuition increases at our schools (2/14, Local, "College tuition increases in Kansas left to schools"). Regent schools pay their bills with money received from the state Legislature, tuition and donations.

Twenty years ago, Kansas State University and the University of Kansas received 52 percent of their budgets from the Legislature. Today that figure is only 26 percent.

Regent schools have tried to make up this huge budget loss by getting people like you and me to donate to their schools. Donations have increased but not enough to offset the big loss from the Legislature.

I will do all I can to keep tuition costs down, but the students and their schools need more help from the Kansas Legislature.

Dan Lykins
Topeka
Growing numb to matters of morality?

Stories of politicians' indiscretions — whether proven or not — appear to inspire less indignation now.

By DARRYL LEVINGS and STEVE KRASKE
The Kansas City Star

New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller could barely make himself heard above the boos at the 1964 Republican convention.

Denied his party's nomination largely because of his divorce and second marriage a year earlier, he insisted in his speech that "This is still a free country, ladies and gentlemen."

That was then. This is now.

This year, three of the top Republican presidential candidates have had divorces. Rudy Giuliani, who was his party's front-runner for months, is on his third marriage.

That was a first. Similarly, voting for a candidate who's been wronged by her man, or a candidate who freely acknowledges youthful cocaine use.

Here is what is not new: questions about fidelity.

With The New York Times writing delicately last week of a "relationship" that might have "become romantic" between Sen. John McCain and a younger lobbyist eight years ago, the American public found itself following a well-worn path.

In the traditional mixing of politics and morality, has the morals factor become increasingly diluted in the last 20 years? Certainly, the media are more aggressive in looking into can-

SEE SCANDAL | A4
SCANDAL: ‘Psychic numbness’ has set in

From Al

Kansas City Star
Kansas City, MO
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From Page: 4
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On Thursday, McCain went before the cameras, his wife in tow. “I’m very disappointed in the article,” the likely Republican nominee said. “It’s not true. ... At no time have I ever done anything that would betray the public trust. I intend to move on.”

Stories of possible out-of-wedlock misbehavior are not even a first for this campaign.

The Enquirer ran a story that John Edwards had a mistress and love child, a charge he and the former campaign worker stoutly denied. A flurry of news stories in November centered on how then-New York Mayor Giuliani had used city police to drive/guard his mistress/now, wife while his family lived estranged in the Gracie Mansion.

Giuliani’s nosedive this year was not attributed to his personal life as much as his strategy to focus on Florida rather than earlier primary and caucus states.

Have we progressed as a society because we focus less on personal failings? Or is the fact that we seem to care less a sign of a loosening of our moral and standards?

“I don’t know,” Cigler said. “I think it’s probably both.”

Washington has been dubbed “Hollywood for the ugly,” and, as all who have stood in a supermarket checkout lane know, going through life with the same spouse has not been a staple of Hollywood lore.

Former actor Ronald Reagan’s second marriage never left a bruise on conservatives’ love affair with his legacy.

Sen. John Kerry only caught a little flack for his second marriage to a rich heiress. The age-old practice has not really come up with McCain.

What’s certain, Cigler added, is that in an era of 50 percent divorce rates and routine premarital sex, the country has grown more tolerant.

Tolerant enough that Bill Clinton could become president and serve two terms amid the image of the White House, but it never took.

Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn’t.

The same year Hart bailed, Donna Brazile, who was working for Michael Dukakis, told reporters that George HW. Bush needed to “fess up” about a rumored extramarital affair.

“The American people have every right to know if Barbara Bush will share that bed with him in the White House,” she said before being forced to resign.

Four years later, with Clinton fighting off tales of his own sexual adventures, the staffer who told Bush from his China ambassadorship to the West Wing to the White House came up again. To tamp it down, Bush, surrounded by family, held a news conference.

“I will not respond to it,” he said. “I have not responded to it in the past.” Then added: “Except to say, it’s a lie.”

Bush’s loss to Clinton that year was linked to several factors, most notably the economy. The alleged affair was hardly discussed.

The similar mini-drama that surrounded Kerry in 2004 quickly died out. On Feb. 12, just after Kerry had become the Democratic front-runner, The Drudge Report alleged that Kerry had had an affair with an intern. Four days later, the intern had denied the story, and so had Kerry.

The story crashed.

So why should we still care about any of this? Maybe because the stories, if proven true, can say something important about the candidates for our highest office.

“Voters still care about the character of the people they elect to be their president,” said David Kimball, a political scientist at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

That was what bit Rockefeller. He still had a narrow lead, when, three days before the California primary, his new wife, Happy, gave birth to a son. Immediately, Barry Goldwater touted his impeccable family background while questioning line of Bob Dole about the damage the Clintons had done to the image of the White House, but it never took.

Rather than gasp at the idea of McCain straying, the public has mostly reacted against The Times for even bringing it up without better sourcing. Such stories have become commonplace, often forcing readers to separate fact from mere accusation.

“There’s almost a psychic numbness to revelations of a personal nature that makes it not even matter that much anymore,” said Allan Cigler, a University of Kansas political scientist.

“It matters to some, but it’s the ‘some’ that wouldn’t be on your side anyway.”

George W. Bush’s early drinking problem? Here and gone, even though the story of his 1976 arrest for driving while intoxicated even though the story of his 1976 arrest for driving while intoxicated came out shortly before the 2000 election.

Similarly, Barack Obama’s admission of drug use has not become fodder for personal attacks.

“I believe what the country is looking for is someone who is open, honest and candid about themselves rather than someone who seems endlessly driven by polls or focus groups,” Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs told The Washington Post last year.

Just two decades ago, a nominee for the U.S. Supreme Court, Douglas Ginsburg, withdrew after reports he had used marijuana as a law professor.

Similarly, the National Enquirer ran photos of Donna Rice cuddling with 1988 Democratic presidential candidate Gary Hart. Not long afterward, he was out of the race.

A sharp corner was turned in the next election, when it was Gennifer Flowers in the Enquirer discussing a 12-year affair with Bill Clinton. Clinton denied it (although later he had to own up to one tryst with Flowers) on “60 Minutes” with his wife at his side. He went on to win — and make “I did not have sexual relations with that woman” (Monica Lewinsky this time) a national joke.

What’s certain, Cigler added, is that in an era of 50 percent divorce rates and routine premarital sex, the country has grown more tolerant.

Tolerant enough that Bill Clinton could become president and serve two terms amid a sexual soap opera, complete with impeachment proceedings.

Mitt Romney tried to rekindle the “where’s the outrage?”
his opponent's morality. Rockefeller never recovered.

Similarly, despite revelations of a sexual hunger that took John F. Kennedy into shadowy areas that defy common sense if not national security, a recent poll showed that he narrowly topped Reagan as the man Americans would most like to bring back as president, if they could.

If the story about McCain turns out to be true, Kimball said, it could prove damaging "because he has a reputation as a kind of straight arrow." And, Kimball said, the fact that Vicki Iseman is a lobbyist who would benefit from a relationship with McCain "also undermines his clean-politics image."

But others suggest we've arrived at a new place in our regard for presidential peccadilloes. Short of a relationship interfering with the ability to govern, Americans are more willing than ever to look past the big, uh-oh headlines.

"After the Clinton impeachment, we've moved beyond the idea that a presidential candidate's sex life has particular impact on his political life," said Jeffrey Moran, a KU history professor and author of Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century.

The new thinking coincides with a 2006 Gallup poll that recorded a steep drop in the percentage of Americans who said they thought government should promote moral values. In 1996, 60 percent of Americans said they thought the government should do so, but that number had fallen to 48 percent by 2006.

Moran pointed out that before 1980, the media largely steered away from stories about sexual misconduct by politicians. Clinton's entanglement in the Lewinsky scandal came at a time when the public was not yet jaded to presidential monkey business.

"Clinton got caught in that ugly window," Moran said. "Now we're on the other side. People are less concerned."

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Child molester sentenced

BY JOHN RICHMEIER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

A Leavenworth man has been sentenced to more than 25 years in prison for sexually molesting an 11-year-old girl.

Kevin D. Skaggs, 29, said he had been advised against making a statement during Friday’s sentencing hearing, but a number of his friends and family members asked the judge for leniency.

Judge Frederick Stewart also heard from the mother of the victim before he issued the sentence.

Skaggs was convicted in June in Leavenworth County District Court on three counts of rape involving sex with a child under 14, one count of aggravated criminal sodomy, two counts of sexual exploitation of a child and one count of promoting obscenity to minors.

He was acquitted of a second aggravated criminal sodomy charge.

The charges stemmed from the sexual abuse of an 11-year-old girl in late 2004 and 2005 in Leavenworth.

The victim was the daughter of a friend of Skaggs. The girl and her sister were sometimes left in his care.

Skaggs showed the victim child pornography in order to groom her for a

see PRISON on page A3

Kevin D. Skaggs sits in Leavenworth County District Court Friday to await his sentence. He was sentenced to more than 25 years for the sexual abuse of an 11-year-old girl. Also pictured is defense attorney Melanie Morgan.
Prison sentence assigned to sexual molester

Continued from page A1

Sexual relationship, according to the prosecution.

"He doesn't deserve a place in this world," the victim said in a statement read in court by her mother.

In her statement, the victim said she lost trust for everyone after the abuse.

She said Skaggs should be in hell and doesn't even deserve a burial.

The victim's mother also provided her own statement.

A number of people were in the courtroom Friday to speak on behalf of Skaggs.

The defendant was described as a "sweet, loving" person and "selfless and caring."

"Kevin is only guilty of seeing the good in people and trusting them," said Skaggs' father, Ed.

He had intended to read the words but appeared to be struggling with his emotions as he stood in the courtroom.

Stewart asked Skaggs' father if he would rather have someone read the statement for him. The statement was read by Melanie Morgan, one of Skaggs' attorneys.

Morgan also read several statements from people who could not be in court.

Defense attorneys called a witness to testify regarding scientific evidence in the case.

Dean Stetler, a professor with the University of Kansas' Department of Molecular Biosciences, testified that there was no scientific evidence to support a sexual assault in the case.

At one point, Deputy County Attorney Roger Marrs objected to the testimony, saying it wasn't relevant to sentencing.

"The court has already pronounced judgment in this case," he said.

Stewart said he would note Marrs' objection for the record. The testimony proceeded.

Defense attorneys also had asked Barbara Crim-Swanson, a Kansas Bureau of Investigation lab scientist who testified at Skaggs' trial, to appear in court for Friday's sentencing.

But defense attorney Cheryl Pilate said Crim-Swanson wasn't needed after Stetler's testimony.

"We just covered all of the ground we needed with the previous witness," she said.

Skaggs' sentencing was continued last month in order to give Crim-Swanson time to prepare to testify.

In court Friday, Stewart sentenced Skaggs to a total of 310 months in prison, which is 25 years and 10 months.

Skaggs was sentenced to 155 months for the first rape count. He received an additional 155 months for the second count of rape. These two sentences will be served consecutively.

The sentencing for the other counts will be served concurrently, or at the same time as the other charges, which is required by law.

Marrs explained later that Skaggs' total sentence couldn't exceed double the amount of prison time he received for the most serious charge, which was rape.

Marrs said 155 months was considered the standard sentence for rape in this case.

He had argued for a more severe sentence, saying Skaggs was a "grave danger to society."

Pilate asked Stewart to consider mitigating factors.

After the sentencing, Marrs said he was pleased with the outcome.

"Three years is a long time to get there," he said.
PSU sets enrollment record again

BY ANDREW NASH
THE MORNING SUN

Enrollment numbers for spring 2008 were released Thursday, and Pittsburg State is setting records again.

Spring enrollment numbers released by the Kansas Board of Regents showed that 6,560 total students are enrolled at PSU, an increase of 138 students from spring 2007. That equates to an increase of 2.1 percent.

The four categories of enrollment numbers released Thursday include resident and non-resident students, which is equal to the change in on-campus and off-campus students. PSU was the only school in Kansas to see increases in all four categories.

PSU also saw a rise in full-time equivalent students, which is equal to the change in on-campus and off-campus students. The student body is enrolled in 86,601 credit hours, a 2.5 percent growth from last spring.

"It's another semester where we are seeing comfortable and continuous growth," said Dr. Tom See ENROLLMENT PAGE 6A
Bryant, PSU president in a press release. “We are keeping up with the needs of the student body while continuing to make room for future students through parking additions and new facilities. I’m very proud that more and more students are seeing the value in Pitt State.”

Graduate student enrollment may have risen the greatest. Enrollment is up 7.5 percent in that field and up 11.2 percent in graduate students enrolled in full-time hours.

Peggy Snyder, PSU College of Continuing and Graduate Studies dean, attributes the rise to an increased awareness of what graduate degrees have to offer. “We have made a strong effort to let people know that beyond our great undergraduate programs, we offer graduate programs that make students more marketable for the jobs of today,” Snyder said in a press release. “There are many jobs now where having a master’s degree, if not a minimum requirement, is a great asset to a job candidate.”

The large numbers can not be attributed to any one department, but reflect increases in the university in general. “We had a record enrollment last fall,” said Dr. William Ivy, dean of enrollment management and student success. “Since we had a record enrollment in the fall, as long as we had good retention, we’d have a good enrollment in the spring, as well. We did, but we also had an influx of new graduate students, new freshmen, and new international students.”

Pittsburg State was one of two schools — the University of Kansas Medical Center being the other — to see a rise in resident enrollment in the last year. PSU was also one of three schools — in this case, Wichita State University and the KU Med Center — to see an increase in the number of on-campus students.

Overall, the state of Kansas had an enrollment increase of 913 students, which is a 1.1 percent increase from last spring.

Fort Hays State and KU Med Center both had the largest increase in enrollment from last spring, each with a 5.7 percent bump in students. On the opposite end of the spectrum was the University of Kansas, with a 158 student decrease from spring of last year.
KU Medical Center could get additional space

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — A nonprofit foundation is offering to provide the University of Kansas Medical Center drug development and testing space if Johnson County voters approve a sales tax for research this fall.

The Hall Family Foundation is buying an office complex in Fairway and said it is willing to give one of the two buildings to the medical center.

“We have tremendous capability in this community in the drug development field,” said Bill Hall, president of the foundation started by the founder of Hallmark Cards. “What has been done by KU over the years is extraordinary. The ability to combine clinical trials with drug development capabilities should give us a significant leg up.”

County officials are being asked to place a measure on the November ballot asking voters to approve a 1/8th-cent sales tax to pay for the Johnson County Education Research Triangle initiative. If approved, the measure is expected to generate $15 million a year, which would be split between the medical center, the University of Kansas Edwards Campus and Kansas State University.

The schools plan to use the money to build new facilities in the area, develop cancer treatments and increase the number of degree programs for math and science.

Organizers have said they expect the triangle initiative to create more than $1 billion in economic development for the area over 20 years.

Kansas State is opening a new food security and research institute in Olathe on property also shared with the Kansas Bioscience Authority and private-sector companies, such as Fort Dodge Animal Health.

The Edwards Campus plans to create a Business, Engineering & Technology Center focused on offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs in molecular bioscience, engineering and other advanced areas.

The medical center’s project would cost $15 million in construction and equipment, which the Hall foundation would provide. Noting that the Edwards Campus and Kansas State already have property allocated for their projects, Hall said it was important to do the same for the medical center.

“It says to the voters that this is a real proposal,” he said.

David Adkins, the medical center’s vice chancellor for external affairs, said the 70,000-square-foot building would help as the center works to become one of the nation’s leading centers for cancer treatment and research.

The medical center already has opened the Kansas Life Sciences Innovation Center, a 200,000-square-foot facility that had helped attract top scientists.

Adkins said the Fairway building would fill a big need for clinical trials.

“At this point there is not the kind of space on our campus that would be easily and conveniently accessible to patients seeking clinical trials,” he said.

Those trials require intensive record keeping and supervision by physicians, nurses and others, said Roy Jensen, director of the University of Kansas Cancer Center. He said it would be cheaper and more efficient to put all of those efforts in one place.

Making the process cheaper and easier would also attract the attention of pharmaceutical companies and other drug developers looking for a place to do clinical testing.
Two news items from Kansas State University this week showed how far university officials have come in responding to emergencies, but also how far the university community has to go in boosting security and protecting those on campus.

The items, both of which appeared on the Kansas State Collegian’s Web site, included a story outlining emergency response measures K-State has adopted since the Virginia Tech shootings last April. Those measures include e-mail alerts, a text-messaging system and reverse 911, designed to provide students with the quickest, most readily accessible notification about campus emergencies.

The steps were outlined during a panel discussion to discuss campus safety in response to the shootings last week at Northern Illinois University. The discussion itself was a step in the right direction. Students, faculty and staff — and their families — deserved a chance to find out what steps were being taken to prevent or respond to such a tragedy at K-State, and the university was admirable in providing the opportunity.

But the same story, and an accompanying article in the Collegian, showed there was plenty of room for improvement.

While the text-messaging program would seem to be a quick and effective way to sound warnings, for example, only 13 percent of students and faculty had signed up for it as of early this week. A university official said the program was fairly new and that he expected the number to rise, but only 4,500 students and faculty had requested text notification this week.

What’s also of concern is that there is no device available to communicate to every building on campus. K-State Police Capt. Richard Herrman said not all buildings have intercom systems, putting even more of a premium on methods such as text-messaging and e-mail alerts.

That’s not to pick on K-State. Universities from coast to coast are facing an uphill battle to increase safety on campuses, which pose unique challenges in terms of security because of their open design.

What’s tragically clear, however, is that no campus appears safe from violence. Campus administrators must take all reasonable steps to identify signs of emotional trouble among students, help those who are struggling, make campus buildings secure and notify students when emergencies do happen.

K-State and other Kansas colleges are doing just that. The University of Kansas, for example, created an emergency management planning position in January and adopted a several new security and alert systems.

In addition to e-mail and text-message alert systems, KU implemented an indoor intercom system and made residence halls accessible only by swipe card.

Officials at KU and K-State are off to a good start in making the schools safer.

As they and administrators at other colleges work toward that goal, we wish them the best.

Good start

As colleges take steps to increase security, students and staff need to get involved