

NEWS SNIPPETS

Mayor Questions Retired Employee's New Gig

ST. LOUIS—St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay says Marie Jeffries is sending the wrong message during the city's budget crunch. Jeffries, who has worked for the city for 40 years and served as the director of operations for nearly 20, is now retired. The mayor says she took more than \$100,000 with her, including pension and pay for unused vacation and sick days. Then, just one day after her retirement, Jeffries took another post with the city as a consultant—one in which she could make another \$80,000 next year. Slay calls the move one that "could be perceived as a sham" and says there should be a limit to the number of hours a retired employee can come back and work.

Area Teacher Gets National Award

NORMANDY—A Normandy teacher is one of two from Missouri to receive a prestigious honor. Kathryn Garrett, from Bel-Nor Elementary School, was honored last Monday night in Los Angeles, with the \$25,000 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. Garrett taught kindergarten for ten years and is now an instructional specialist. The Milken Family Foundation honored 100 educators from 46 states this year.

Attorney General Touts "No Spam" bill

JEFFERSON CITY—Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon is joining several state representatives in calling on the state Senate to pass a "No Spam" bill. The state House approved a bill creating a No Spam List last month by a wide margin, but the measure has yet to come to a vote in the Senate. The No Spam List would be modeled on the No Call list, which has grown to include nearly 1.2 million residential phone numbers in Missouri. Its main purpose would be to reduce unwanted commercial e-mails, but Nixon says it could also reduce Internet fraud. Since enforcement of the No Call law began in July of 2001, complaints of telemarketing fraud in Missouri have dropped by nearly half. Experts say similar Internet legislation is unenforceable, since some spammers aren't even in this country and often fake their return addresses.

Congressman Blames Job Losses on Weak Policy

ST. PETERS—Missouri Rep. Todd Akin says the state holds a dubious distinction when it comes to employment, leading the nation in job losses. Akin blames that in large part on what he calls poor policy at the state level. At a subcommittee hearing April 28 in St. Peters, Akin heard testimony about other factors blamed for job losses—foreign competition and the high cost of healthcare for businesses. The subcommittee heard testimony from the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and small business owners.

Drivers Will Have to Adjust to Parkway Work

ST. LOUIS—Beginning Sunday, the Forest Park Pkwy. shut down from Ritz Carlton to Big Bend as construction starts on the cross-county MetroLink extension. Eventually, the parkway will be closed all the way to DeBaliviere and will stay closed for two years. Residents at a meeting last Tuesday night expressed concern about the impact of the project on neighborhoods and businesses along the Forest Park Pkwy. Officials urge people with questions or concerns about the project to go online at www.crosscounty.org or call 314-923-3050.

Free Services Offered for Some Dogs

ST. LOUIS—Operation SPOT and St. Louis Animal Control are teaming up to offer free services to city residents who own pit bulls and Rottweilers. Owners can bring their pets to designated city recreation centers at 8 a.m. between May 6 and May 29. The dogs will be taken to the St. Louis Pet Clinic to be spayed or neutered, and they can also be microchipped and vaccinated for rabies. Owners can also receive a city license for their dogs and a free bag of dog food when their pets are returned at 3:30 p.m. For information on how to prepare your dog for surgery and where you can drop off your furry friend for the free services, call Operation SPOT at 314-995-8678.

Holden Warns Against Cuts in Health Care, Education

CLAYTON—Gov. Bob Holden is pledging to veto any budget that comes to his desk with huge cuts in health care and education. If the Republicans have their way, Holden says 30,000 women and 80,000 children in Missouri would be without health care. Holden says he wants Missourians to send tell Republicans in the state legislature to put families first.

Security Screeners at Lambert to be Laid Off

LAMBERT AIRPORT—More than 100 security screeners at Lambert International Airport will soon lose their jobs. The Transportation Security Administration has announced plans to furlough 126 of the airport's 628 full-time positions. The screeners were slated to be informed of the cuts, which are taking place nationwide, as early as Thursday. The first round of cutbacks will be finished by the end of the month, with the second coming at the end of September. TSA officials say those who are losing their full-time positions will be able to relocate, go to part-time status, or get the agency's help in finding other work.

Charges Unlikely Against Struggling Pet Owners

ST. LOUIS—Two Webster County residents are unlikely to face charges after the Humane Society of Missouri rescued their pets Wednesday. The two rescues east of Springfield involved a number of dogs and cats, some of them as young as five days. Humane Society officials say both owners turned over their pets voluntarily, saying they couldn't take care of the animals. The animals are receiving medical care at Humane Society headquarters in St. Louis. Many of them are underfed and suffering from skin conditions, but they're all expected to be fine and should be available for adoption soon.

Kids to Get Hands-On Help From NASA

ST. LOUIS—Three months after the tragic loss of the space shuttle Columbia, children in St. Louis were to take part in a NASA-sponsored program Thursday to increase awareness of and interest in the space program. As part of Space Day, local students in fourth through eighth grades are designing and building their own aircraft for projects sponsored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. St. Louis-area students will be sending digital renderings of their signatures into space on a future mission.

New Website Offers Online Home Healthcare Info

JEFFERSON CITY—A website giving Missouri residents information about the state's home healthcare agencies was expected to go online Thursday. The site, www.medicare.gov, is part of an initiative by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. It is a pilot project allowing residents in Missouri and seven other states to get information about the home health agencies where they live. Consumers will also have the option of calling 1-800-MEDICARE to get information about home healthcare agencies.

Red Cross Says Needs Type O-Negative Blood

ST. LOUIS—The American Red Cross in Missouri and Illinois is putting out an urgent call for universal donors. The need for type O-negative blood has risen to a critical level, it says. O-negative can be given to anyone, making it crucial for emergencies when there's no time to determine a patient's blood type. To schedule a donation appointment, call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

Police Watchdog Group Calls for Tourism Boycott

ST. LOUIS—A group of community activists is calling on tourists to stay away from St. Louis until a civilian oversight board for the city's police department is created. A bill to create such a board is pending in the St. Louis Board of Aldermen. While Mayor Francis Slay says he supports the concept of a civilian oversight board, he opposes the bill currently before the board, saying it goes too far to constrain the police department. Calls for a civilian review board have grown out of allegations of police brutality and race-based harassment. The activists staging the boycott say they'll continue it until the issue is resolved.

Fire Station Gets \$700,000 Facelift

ST. LOUIS—Firefighters stationed at St. Louis Engine House 22 can finally return to their home base. A ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday marked the official reopening of the renovated facility. The \$700,000 in improvements include new windows and doors, electrical upgrades, a new kitchen, lead paint abatement, new plumbing and climate control systems. It's the first time Engine House 22 has undergone changes since its 1958 construction. Thirty St. Louis firehouses are being upgraded as part of a bond issue passed in 1998.

Mayor Slay Announces "Start-Up" Heating-Up Grants As Down Payments To Needy Households



Mayor Slay



Rev. Nance Jr.

DOWNTOWN—In response to Ameren UE's new program, "Clean Slate," which is going to give customers in St. Louis City and St. Louis County an opportunity for a clean slate on their electric bills within the next 30 days, Heat-Up St. Louis, Inc., a regional non-profit, non-utility charity covering 18 Missouri and Illinois counties, has announced a special "Start-Up" Heating Grant to help some qualified electric needy households make a 10% or 20% down payment on their bill.

"The AmerenUE settlement from overcharging electric customers has been put to good use. We applaud this program," says Reverend Earl E. Nance Jr., vice chairman of the board of directors for Heat-Up St. Louis, Inc. "Unfortunately, it requires a 10 or 20 percent down payment before the arrearages can be paid in full, and in these economic times it's tough, not only for the needy but for the working poor and working class." Heat-Up St. Louis officials noted that fewer funds are available during May for energy assistance.

At the AmerenUE press conference, Mayor Francis G. Slay, commended Heat-Up St. Louis officials for the development of their new program, and announced that the City of St. Louis also provided some financial support to the charity.

Reverend Nance, Jr. observed that in parts of Eastern Missouri, gas customers will be left out in the cold, because they use Laclede Gas and other natural gas vendors, who have no such program. Natural gas customers' usages are higher in the winter months.



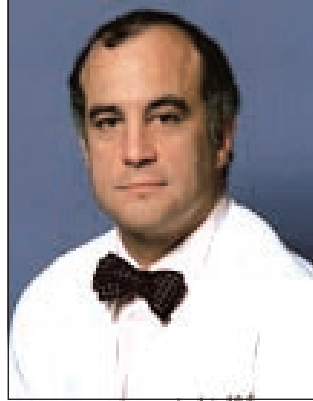
Heat-Up St. Louis, Inc. has about \$30,000 to distribute in May. It will support some of those qualified electric customers who will need that 10 or 20 percent to participate in the Ameren UE Clean Slate Program. Those qualified individuals requiring a down payment on their electric bills should call the Heat-up St. Louis hotline at 314-241-7668. There will be no administrative fees in the execution of Heat-Up St. Louis' special heating grants. All donations to Heat-Up St. Louis are 100% tax-deductible, and no administrative costs are used so that every dollar donated goes to the needy.

"If people can have a clean electric slate, it will give them time to do battle with their often high natural gas, propane and home heating oil bills this winter and cooling bills later on this summer," says Reverend Nance.

The funds will be distributed by Heat-Up St. Louis through its agencies as long as the funding lasts.

A Rational Tobacco Tax Policy For Missouri

By BRAD RODU, Professor, Department of Pathology School of Medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham



Brad Rodu

Once again state finances are in trouble. And once again the tendency is to force tobacco users, in the form of excise taxes, to help balance the budget. To the casual observer this appears to be a no-brainer. Lawmakers in Jefferson City face only minimal constituent pressure to oppose new taxes, because only 27% of Missouri residents smoke. Even so, in fiscal year 2003 smokers generated \$164 million in revenue for Missouri from the indirect "tax" disguised as the national master tobacco settlement agreement, and \$104 million more from state excise taxes. That's almost a quarter billion dollars! Now lawmakers want more, and they will rely on the usual public health arguments from the usual anti-tobacco crusaders to justify even higher taxes. But public health is exactly why lawmakers should reduce the tax on smokeless tobacco products to the lowest possible rate.

Excise taxes on tobacco products may be inevitable, but they don't have to be illogical. A common sense approach is to tax tobacco products according to risk. Cigarettes, widely acknowledged as the most dangerous products, are already taxed at high levels by most states, ostensibly to discourage consumption. But the health impact of smokeless tobacco use is much, much lower; scientific and medical research has confirmed that smokeless tobacco use carries only about 2% of the risk of smoking. A rational tobacco tax policy would set taxes on smokeless products at 2% those of cigarettes. In Missouri the excise tax on a package of smokeless tobacco should be dropped from 27 cents to nothing, based on the current cigarette excise tax of \$0.17. Even if the excise tax on cigarettes is raised to \$0.57, as proposed by Wayne Goode in SB 254, the tax on smokeless should be only a penny.

Taxing tobacco products according to well-established risks will serve the public health goal of reducing the death toll from cigarette smoking. Economic research shows that a large price differential encourages cigarette smokers to switch to smokeless tobacco. A growing number of public health experts, including the prestigious Royal College of Physicians in Britain, recognize that smokeless tobacco may be an acceptable substitute for smokers who have been unable or unwilling to quit. They point to evidence from Sweden where, over the past century, men have smoked less and used more smokeless tobacco than in any other Western country. The result: Swedish men have the lowest rates of lung cancer—indeed, of all smoking-related deaths—in the developed world.

How have the Swedes achieved this record-setting reduction in smoking? First, placing tobacco discreetly inside the mouth is far safer than setting it on fire and inhaling the smoke, and the Swedes know it. In contrast, American smokers have been misled into thinking that smokeless tobacco is just as dangerous as smoking. It gets even worse. Prohibitionists in control of the American anti-tobacco movement actively oppose telling adult smokers about alternative tobacco products that are far safer. Second, smokeless tobacco satisfies, because it delivers nicotine almost as efficiently as a cigarette. Nicotine is addictive, but it causes none of the diseases associated with smoking. Third, the "spitting image" of smokeless tobacco is history, because modern products, available in Sweden and the US, can be used invisibly and as easily as breath mints. Finally, in Sweden the price of smokeless tobacco products is less than half that of cigarettes, the difference largely reflecting levels of taxation.

Switching from cigarettes to smokeless tobacco, called "harm reduction," has worked convincingly in Sweden, and it can work in Missouri, where over 10,700 people die each year from smoking-related diseases. When it comes to taxes there are no easy answers. But a rational tobacco tax strategy based on risk is as compelling as it is innovative, because it allows lawmakers to meet their fiscal responsibility while fulfilling their moral obligation to help smokers who are desperate to quit.

2nd 'McTeacher's Night' To Support Area Schools

ST. LOUIS—Local schools throughout Missouri and neighboring communities will have a second chance to "super size" their budgets today (Tuesday) as they partner with area McDonald's restaurants for round two of the McTeacher's Night program. The statewide education fundraising initiative kicked off March 4 and is scheduled to continue throughout 2003.

The first McTeacher's Night on March 4 raised approximately \$100,000 for nearly 400 partnering schools. All levels—grade, middle, and high—and types—public, private, and parochial—of schools were represented. Specifically, St. Louis and Metro East area McDonald's restaurants raised an estimated \$42,088 for their partnering schools.

McDonald's in the region are anticipating the same enthusiasm for the upcoming McTeacher's Night tonight (Tuesday). McDonald's employees, school faculty, and staff and, in some cases, Ronald McDonald, will welcome students, their families, and community members to the restaurants.

"The first McTeacher's Night in Missouri and surrounding communities was incredibly successful," said Rick Altizer, general manager, McDonald's Heartland Regional Office. "The stores were packed with enthusiastic students, parents and school faculty. Based on the feedback we've received from schools and our local owner/operators, we're gearing up for an even better May 6 event."

Subsequent McTeacher's Nights are in the works for the fall. Schools wishing to participate should contact their local McDonald's owner/operators.

State Amber Alert Debuts With Glitch

The Associated Press JEFFERSON CITY (AP)—Missouri's version of the Amber Alert child abduction alert system debuted with a computer glitch that caused a major communications tie-up.

Because of the glitch, an alert sent to police and media agencies saying an 11-year-old girl had been abducted Monday was repeated over and over, clogging fax machines well into Tuesday.

The girl was found unharmed at her baby-sitter's home a little more than an hour after the alert was initiated, but the notice canceling the alert was delayed by the repeating alert messages.

The problem originated with the computer server that was used to send the faxes, said Capt. Chris Ricks of the State Highway Patrol, which coordinates the new alert system.

The baby sitter was in custody April 29, Lexington police said.

People Magazine Names '50 Most Beautiful'; Halle Berry Leads List



Halle Berry

NEW YORK (Reuters)—It's official, Halle Berry, the actress whose star has risen in recent years thanks to an Oscar win and a stint as a Bond girl, is beautiful.

People magazine named the "50 Most Beautiful People in the World" in its latest issue, which hit newsstands Friday, with Berry's face on the cover.

The Oscar-winning actress made the list for the seventh time, while fellow Oscar-winning actress Julia Roberts made the list for an eighth time, the magazine said.

First on the list of men was Ashton Kutcher of "That '70s Show," who described himself in the magazine as "a guy's guy... I don't comb my hair unless I have to."

Also listed were actresses Nicole Kidman, singer Britney Spears, who said her beauty secret was "lots and lots of sleep," actress Susan Sarandon and her daughter, actress Eva Amurri, actresses Catherine Zeta-Jones, Salma Hayek, Jennifer Aniston, Queen Latifah, Julianne Moore, 16-year-old twins Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen and singer Norah Jones.

Lisa Marie Presley, the daughter of Elvis whose debut album has just been released, was also on the list and admitted to little beauty discipline.

"I smoke, I don't do yoga ... I bite the hell out of my nails," Presley said.

Also on the list were Hollywood couple Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, actors George Clooney, Hugh Jackman, Daniel Day-Lewis, Peter Krause, Colin Farrell, Leonardo DiCaprio, professional basketball player Tony Parker, flamenco dancer Farruquito and jockey Gary Stevens.

Comedic actor and writer Steve Martin was also named as a hunk, but joked his beauty "is actually a burden."

"Sometimes I go to a party and not one of the other 49 most beautiful people is there," he said in the magazine. "That makes me feel very solitary and alone, because it means I am the most beautiful person in the room."



2nd 'McTeacher's Night' To Support Area Schools Scheduled For Tonight

McDonald's And Local Schools Continue To Generate Funds For Education In Missouri And Nearby Communities

ST. LOUIS—Local schools throughout Missouri and neighboring communities will have a second chance to "super size" their budgets today (Tuesday) as they partner with area McDonald's restaurants for round two of the McTeacher's Night program. The statewide education fundraising initiative kicked off March 4 and is scheduled to continue throughout 2003.

The first McTeacher's Night on March 4 raised approximately \$100,000 for nearly 400 partnering schools. All levels—grade, middle, and high—and types—public, private, and parochial—of schools were represented. Specifically, St. Louis and Metro East area McDonald's restaurants raised an estimated \$42,088 for their partnering schools.

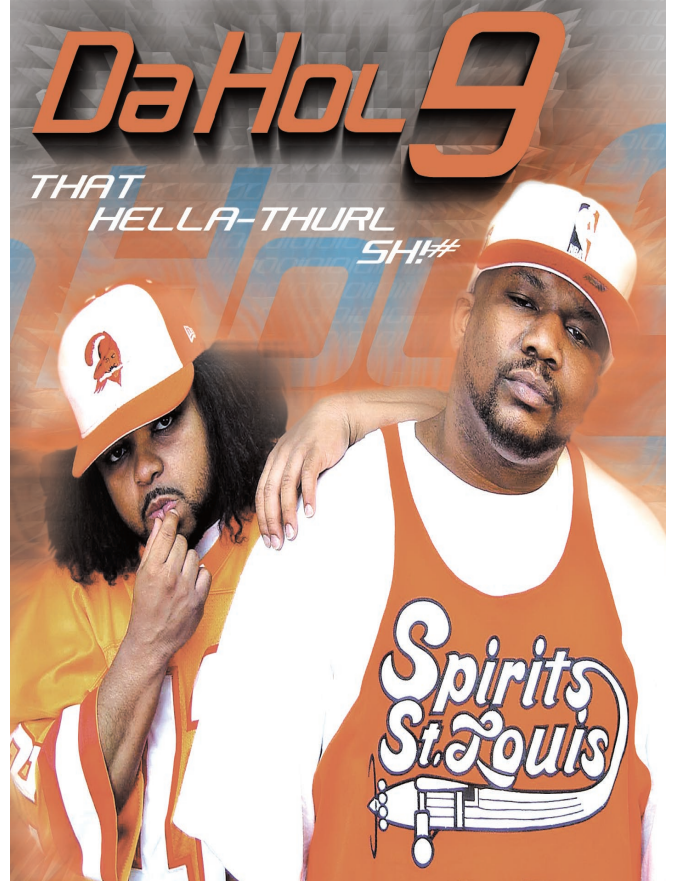
McDonald's in the region are anticipating the same enthusiasm for the upcoming McTeacher's Night tonight (Tuesday). McDonald's employees, school faculty, and staff and, in some cases, Ronald McDonald, will welcome students, their families, and community members to the restaurants.

"The first McTeacher's Night in Missouri and surrounding communities was incredibly successful," said Rick Altizer, general manager, McDonald's Heartland Regional Office. "The stores were packed with enthusiastic students, parents and school faculty. Based on the feedback we've received from schools and our local owner/operators, we're gearing up for an even better May 6 event."

Subsequent McTeacher's Nights are in the works for the fall. Schools wishing to participate should contact their local McDonald's owner/operators.

Notice To Subscribers

We get a lot of call about expired subscriptions. In October of last year, we stopped sending renewal notices and start printing the expiration date on the mailing label. For example, a subscription that expires at the end of March would have 0303 EXP. on the label.



ON SALE AT THESE RETAIL OUTLETS

- Streetside on Delmar
- Streetside on West Florissant/270
- Sound Revolution on N. Lindbergh
- Sam Goody in Crestwood Plaza
- Slakers in St. Charles
- And other retail record outlets