

FIRE | Short in refrigerator wiring sends University Farm Building Duplex up in flames, sleeping student finds safety despite disabled fire alarms

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He said the farm residents had a running prediction about the possibility of a fire, but they hadn't considered the refrigerator a likely culprit.

"Those of us that lived there for a couple years, ... we'd always joked around because down in the basement, there was just a mess of electrical, and we always joked that this place was going to burn down around us," he said. "Luckily I was the only person there when it did."

Junior Kendra Nilson, the other resident of the University Farm, was at her St. Louis home during the fire — she and Duncan split Winter Break. Nilson said she was in disbelief when Kuntz called her early the

morning of the blaze.

"I was really shocked," she said. "... The electrical system to the house was going to be redone because it was horrible, so the cord to the refrigerator was really a surprise."

Nilson said she managed to wash the smoke stains out of her clothing, but her furniture and many of her books, posters and photos are destroyed. Her laptop is clinging to life for the moment.

"We're thinking it's going to die pretty soon, but I did manage to get all my data off of it," Nilson said.

Duncan was examined by EMTs from the Adair County Ambulance District on Jan. 10, and he did not sustain any injuries. But the building is another story — workers recently had

mounted new sheet rock and laid new carpet and were completely renovating the kitchen.

"That's all gone," Duncan said. "Actually they had just had a company come in and work on the electrical. They'd been working on it for two days. We'd just got a new meter and service in the day before it burned."

Duncan, who said he has a call in to his insurance agent, estimated the damage to his personal belongings at about \$700. He had purchased a \$200 chest freezer just three months prior, which was destroyed, along with a five-disc CD player with speakers and a kitchenful of utensils and dishes.

Duncan's father helped him move

his belongings to the Classroom Building at the University Farm on Jan. 10, and for now he is living in Centennial Hall. He said he is not sure where he will spend the rest of the semester, now that the farm arrangement — free room in exchange for 10 hours of work per week — no longer is an option.

"I was kind of expecting that," he said.

Instead, the science department might pick up the tab for his new room, most likely in Centennial, Duncan said.

Nilson, on the other hand, has moved to an off-campus residence for the semester.

"I guess Truman supposedly is going to do a rent-help thing because I chose

to live with my fiancé," she said.

Nilson said Kuntz is coordinating any reimbursement from the University.

"My boss is asking for us so that it gets done," she said.

Duncan said that although the Farm Duplex Building will probably either be gutted or completely torn down, it looks almost whole from its exterior.

"You can't tell it's been burnt from the outside at all, except they pulled the two eaves out so the smoke could get out," Duncan said.

Fire investigator Bill Albus, with the Missouri Office of the Fire Marshal, conducted an investigation at the University Farm on Jan. 10. Albus was not available for comment.



This room used to house Il Spazio's brewing equipment, but the restaurant stopped brewing its own beer locally in March. Owner Jeff Newton said production ceased because of a lack of demand for the beer.

Mark Hardy/Index

BEER | Ingredient prices rise, putting strain on brewers

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and low demand. As a result, many farmers switched from growing hops to corn or wheat, which were experiencing high market prices. Von Eichel said that by 2004, the surplus had been used up but the demand for hops was high.

"With hops, you're planting a perennial plant," von Eichel said. "Since we'd cut our productive capacity [in light of the 10-year surplus], it's not that easy to increase again because the infrastructure has been removed. ... A lot of growers have switched to other crops that, thanks to ethanol, have increased in value."

Besides ethanol-driven hop crop replacement, von Eichel said the energy industry has placed additional demands on the hop market.

"We've begun supplying certain hop-based compounds to the sugarcane and ethanol industries, adding new use to the already strained demand," von Eichel said.

Von Eichel said that in light of the hop shortage, breweries are willing to pay any price for the essential ingredient. He said that since spring of 2007, hop prices have nearly tripled.

"The hops market is sold out for 2008," von Eichel said. "We're looking at an extension of this shortage until at least 2009. ... The crop prices will continue to increase for 2008 and 2009."

Von Eichel said smaller craft brew-

ers have felt the pinch more than their corporate brothers. In the past, many breweries maintained five- or six-year contracts with the hop industry to ensure a steady supply at a fixed price. However, in light of the surplus, von Eichel said many switched to buying hops on a spot market, hoping to catch a low price. Now, without contracts, small businesses are feeling the strain.

"Craft brewers are suffering," von Eichel said. "They use four times more hops per barrels than commercial breweries. ... They can't get the variety or the quantity."

Industry giant Anheuser-Busch did not return repeated phone calls about the rising costs of beer, but Jeff Newton, owner of Il Spazio restaurant, said his microbrewery ceased production because of a lack of demand, not just crop prices.

"Northeast Missouri is too small to support a full-time [micro]brewery," Newton said. "We were selling about half of what we needed."

Newton said Il Spazio brewed its last batch of beer March 11, 2007 — near the beginning of the noticeable hops price hike. However, Newton said the last time he ordered brewing supplies was 2006.

"If we were selling as much [beer] as we needed to, we would have noticed because we would have ordered more frequently," Newton said.

ORTECH | Local GM supplier gets underbid on contract, work goes out of U.S. leaving 100 Kirksville residents unemployed by the end of March

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which is a weekly claim that pays benefits to workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own.

Hultz also said this type of insurance is based on each individual claim and that there are no guarantees how much a former employee can draw, though the largest possible amount is \$270 a week.

Former employees also will have the opportunity to receive additional services and benefits because of the cause of their unem-

ployment.

"Ortech is eligible for what's called a trade act petition," she said. "Because the Ortech workers are going to be losing their jobs due to the work going overseas or to Mexico, then they're eligible for extended benefits."

Phil Tate, director of job creation for Kirksville Regional Economic Development Inc., said the contract Ortech had with GM is bid upon each year and that this year Ortech was underbid by a company in Mexico. He said the loss of

those 100 jobs will be a major blow to the local economy.

"A hundred people being laid off will have a direct impact on our community," Tate said. "Government agencies will be doing everything they can to lessen that impact, not only on the community but as the individual people are concerned, trying to help them become employed."

Tate said several companies in Kirksville's industrial sector still employ large numbers of people — including companies like En-

voy, Reliant Hardware and Commercial Envelope — and that even Truman and A.T. Still University can be included in that list.

"We've lost jobs certainly in the last five to seven years, but we've added jobs as well," Tate said. "The employment base in this community has remained ... reasonably static. We've worked hard to do that."

Tate said part of K-REDI's job is to convince new companies to choose Kirksville as a location.

"We're working with prospects all the time, that's what K-REDI does," he said. "K-REDI has been pretty good at doing that."

Currently, Tate said K-REDI will do anything it can to assist Ortech, which includes helping them market excess land they own around the plant or even helping with their electric rates.

Hultz and Jackie Johnson, who works with workforce development, also gave a pre-

sentation regarding the layoffs and Missouri's Rapid Response Program at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

"We encourage dislocated workers to hit the ground running," Johnson said.

At the meeting, Hultz and Johnson gave statistics showing that Adair County has seen 728 dislocated workers from 27 companies in the last five years.

Ortech officials were unavailable for comment.

BILL | Missouri House of Representatives pushes bill to prohibit illegal immigrants from partaking in higher education, would hold schools accountable

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Nolte said he thinks the federal government should reexamine its policies regarding illegal immigration, strengthen its laws and defend the national borders.

"That's not happening, so the states taking action would be the next step," he said.

Nolte said some people might not believe illegal immigration is an important issue in Missouri.

"We need to be looking down the road a little bit as far as what the seriousness of the problem is," he said. "... As states surrounding our area become more and more strict in their law enforcement efforts, it's going to drive more illegal immigrants into this state. ... It's an issue that's not going to improve, and if we allow it to continue, it will continue to get worse. Problems don't generally solve themselves."

Nolte said the Missouri legislature will continue to pursue this issue beyond this session and the next.

"It's something we're going to have to have a dialogue with and try to do our best to basically protect the jobs of Missourians and the interests of the citizens of the state," he said.

Melody Chambers, University director of admissions operation, transfer and enrollment, said the application to the University includes a section devoted to residency status. If the applicant indicates that he or she is not a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident, the University must inquire about his or her current non-immigration status and the type of visa he or she possesses, she said.

At the moment there is one applicant to the University who belongs to this category, although he is close to receiving his green card, Chambers said.

"He's not someone who's not undocumented, he's just in the process of getting that approved," she said. "That's my understanding."

Chambers, who is on the University's application review committee, added that this is the first time she's worked with an applicant who isn't at least already a permanent resident.

She said she is familiar with HB

1463 and added that she is concerned about the bill from an accountability standpoint in relation to how the University would have to meet the terms of the legislation.

"You never know, there can be all kinds of revisions if anything even makes it that far through the final legislation," Chambers said. "[It] can have very specific things that we have to make sure our processes are set up to comply with."

Federally, a bill named the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act has been proposed in Congress.

Grisella Martinez, an immigration policy analyst for the National Immigration Law Center, said the DREAM Act permits certain immigrant students who have grown up in the United States to become eligible for permanent resident status if they graduate from high school and pursue higher education.

In its most recent incarnation intro-

duced in October 2007, the bill requires that the student has come to the U.S. prior to the age of 16 and be no older than the age of 30 by the time of the bill's enactment, Martinez said. The bill also necessitates that the student must have lived in the U.S. for at least five years, graduated from high school and displayed good moral character.

Martinez said many national and grassroots organizations have pledged to support the DREAM Act.

"The DREAM Act is largely a youth movement because that's the population that is obviously the most affected by the ... act," she said. "The ones that would benefit the most are youth who have been here their entire lives [and] who have grown up here. As a result, they are largely the ones who are leading this movement on the ground."

Martinez said the act is important because many young people are brought to the U.S. as children and become assimilated into American culture but remain undocumented into their teenage years and beyond.

"[They are] often in college or have graduated from college and continue

to remain in undocumented status and can't really fully participate as members of society," she said.

There are about one million such students, and at least 366,000 of them would be immediately eligible for residency through the DREAM Act, Martinez added.

"That's a lot of people who have grown up here, have been educated here and ready to enter the work force — and can't," she said.

Martinez said the DREAM Act rewards people who work hard in school and in their communities.

"[The government is] leaving these people out," she said. "It doesn't make sense. How can you turn away an educated work force? I don't think it makes sense from a public policy standpoint, and I don't think it makes sense from an economic standpoint either."

The DREAM Act has a lot of bipartisan support, Martinez said, but currently is not pending in Congress after not receiving enough votes in the Senate.

"It will eventually be reintroduced," she said. "This is not the end of the DREAM Act."

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