

Students equip homes for winter weather

Older local residences require important cold weather preparation

BY JESSICA RAPP
Assistant Features Editor

Some on-campus students will have the upper hand in the upcoming winter season.

As the temperature slowly creeps below 50 degrees during the afternoon and as low as 18 degrees at night, students already have begun to prepare their rooms from the stinging weather.

Senior Cody Pusateri, Ryle Hall committee coordinator, said he nearly has completed the annual procedure of covering up his windows with plastic. He said people living in the older residence halls, not Missouri Hall or West Campus Suites, usually cover their entire window with a piece of plastic and use duct tape to seal it. He said that when doing this, one should try not to put duct tape on the actual glass.

"Duct tape doesn't respond well to temperature, so when you take it off, it leaves marks," Pusateri said. "The sticky part of the duct tape is then separated off of the top, so when you rip it off, there's still a film left on the glass. I had done that with my windows last year, and I had to work pretty hard to get it off with the Goo Gone."

Pusateri said that if students cannot remove the residue from the windows, they will be charged \$25 for the cleaning service.

According to the Residence Life

Web site for winterization tips, students with an air conditioner should cover it with plastic to keep the cold air from coming through the vents.

For extra preparation, Pusateri said students living in the older dorms need to make sure their heaters do not have any objects blocking the airflow. He said both the bottom and the top of the heating unit should allow the free movement of air and that it is important to check for signs of airflow by checking the vents under the heater.

"The one thing we tell everyone to do when they leave for winter break is to move your bed about two feet away from the heater," he said. "And since it is cold, it would be a good time to do that now."

Pusateri said this will prevent any fire hazards over the long break. He said that although the University has never had an issue with a heater causing a fire in the past, it remains important to protect students' safety.

Like with any broken appliance in the dorm, students should call the Fix-It Line if they still have problems with their heater after taking all of the steps to keep their room consistently warm, he said.

If students still feel cold in their rooms after the extra insulation, Pusateri said he suggests making a hot cup of coffee or tea. Space heaters might be available in some residence halls if the room's temperature still feels uncomfortable.

Pusateri said students who live in off-campus housing should consider the same regimen for heating their homes. He said that unless they

live in a new apartment complex or house, students will have the same problems with drafts coming through single-pane windows.

Although students have already pulled out their winter coats, Pusateri predicts that this winter will be milder than last year.

Students like junior Karen Rohrer and senior Joey Puricelli, who have lived in the older residence halls in previous years, now face the winter with controllable heating units for their rooms in Missouri Hall.

Although it might cause difficulties for some roommates, neither of these students said they have had trouble keeping a comfortable temperature for themselves and their roommates.

Puricelli and Rohrer said that when they lived in the older residence halls, the centralized heating system made the dorms too warm despite the colder winter.

"We basically had the windows open all winter because the heaters were too high," Puricelli said. "That was a mutual agreement between me and my roommate."

John Mounsey, coordinator for Residence Life, said students can acquire the duct tape and plastic used for insulating their windows for free at their hall desks, unless they live in Missouri Hall or West Campus Suites.

For questions about what to bring for extra winter comfort, Mounsey said students can find a list on the University's Residence Life Web site of approved items to have in the dorms. An electric blanket is one of the items on the approved list, according to the site.

Also, on the homepage of the Residence Life site, a Winterization Information link will take students to a page featuring eight video clips for step-by-step tips and instructions on how to prepare a living space for the cold weather.



Photo illustration by Phil Jarrett/Index
Students gear up for colder weather by insulating windows and stocking up on items like ice scrapers, blankets, hot drinks and warm gloves.

Highway driving on holidays calls for caution

Missouri Highway Patrol advises students to be attentive drivers

BY KARA SAVAGE
Staff Reporter

When traveling home for Thanksgiving break, students might encounter difficulties on the road.

Brent Bernhardt, Missouri Highway Patrol sergeant, said students can experience a wide variety of car problems while driving home for Thanksgiving and that it is important for a driver to stay attentive. This will enable students to be ready for all obstacles that are put before them, he said.

"Last year, in the state of Missouri alone, there were 15 fatalities, 581 injured and 1,387 traffic crashes over the Thanksgiving period," Bernhardt said.

He said that to eliminate the extra problems that might occur while driving, it is vital that students concentrate on the task at hand, which is operating their motor vehicles safely.

"Students need to concentrate on getting to their destination safely, which can be impaired by cell phones, changing CDs or the radio," Bernhardt said.

Senior Kanna Taylor said she often talks on her cell phone, changes to different songs on her iPod and text messages while driving. She said that even though she knows these activities hinder her driving, she thinks she is good at multitasking.

"Text messaging is by far the most dangerous activity while driving because I have to take one hand off of the wheel, look at my phone and



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Emily Hoehn and Trish Speers, both freshmen, buckle up as they get ready to go to the Adair County Public Library Wednesday afternoon.

concentrate on what letters I want to push," Taylor said. "This completely distracts me from driving."

She said that while talking on the phone, she does not pay as much attention to her surroundings because she is focused on the conversation. However, she said that talking on the phone sometimes helps keep her awake, especially on long drives.

"I definitely believe these activities distract me from focusing on the road and my surroundings," Taylor said.

Obeying the speed limit and avoiding drowsy driving can help save a

student's life, Bernhardt said. It is important for students to wear their seat belts regardless of how far they are traveling because people have between a 45 and 55 percent chance of surviving a car crash if they wear their seat belts, Bernhardt said.

"About 25 percent of all traffic crashes that occurred last year during this holiday period were caused by speeding," Bernhardt said.

The Missouri Highway Patrol's main goal is to promote safety, he said. When the highway patrol receives a phone call explaining that someone is experienc-

ing mechanical difficulties or a roadside emergency, it treats these calls as priority, Bernhardt said.

"During the Thanksgiving holiday period, the highway patrol participates in Operation Care, which means we have all available officers working some time during the holiday period, not only aggressively enforcing Missouri traffic laws, but helping motorists if they should encounter some time of roadside emergency," he said.

Bernhardt said the highway patrol takes driving safety seriously every day, and on holiday weekends it steps

up that effort to make sure people arrive at their destinations safely.

If students do encounter problems with their motor vehicles, they should get off the road and not attempt to fix the vehicle while in close proximity to other vehicles, he said. This also can prevent drivers from hitting someone who is working on a vehicle, Bernhardt said.

Tom Johnson, director of the Department of Public Safety, said it is important for students to keep their cars in good mechanical condition. This can help prevent car problems while driving home for Thanksgiving.

"Some students do not think to check their fluid levels or tire pressure because their parents have done it for them in the past," Johnson said.

If students do experience a flat tire, it is wise for them to try to get off of the highway by taking the nearest exit if at all possible, Johnson said.

"If the student is able to get off of the highway, they need to keep in mind what is around them and what time of day it is," Johnson said.

Students always should be alert while driving and be prepared for anything, he said. Missouri's weather is unpredictable and can change depending on which direction they are traveling in, Johnson said.

"A student never knows when they are going to run into either ice or snow, and the road could quickly deteriorate," Johnson said.

Students can call either *55 or 1-800-525-5555 if they are having car trouble. Students also can report disabled motorists to the Missouri State Highway Patrol Headquarters by calling either of those numbers.

Internet phone calls make connections cheaper, easy

BY STEPHANIE HALL
Staff Reporter

Texting can cause arthritis, instant messaging can bring on grammatical nightmares and the traditional phone call has become more and more expensive. But with the growth of technology, Internet phone calls are becoming more prevalent.

Online phone calls more commonly are referred to as Voice over Internet protocol or VoIP. These programs, like Skype, Yahoo Messenger and Voip.com, offer software that makes calls not from a typical telephone line but from Internet connections, according to Skype's Web site.

The biggest business in the VoIP market is Skype. With a free download of this program, anyone can start calling.

In these types of programs, there are two calling systems — PC-to-PC phone calls and PC-to-landline phone calls.

With Skype, PC-to-PC calls are free if both users have the Skype program. For calling PC-to-cell or landline phones a \$3 comprehensive fee covers a month of unlimited calling anywhere in United States and Canada. For international calls there is an initial charge of about 4 cents with a variant charge depending on the county of the call's destination. For example, Nepal is 33.9 cents, Spain 2.1 cents and Japan 2.3 cents, according to Skype's Web site.

Students have found the international calling program especially helpful while they are studying abroad. More than 500 Truman students participate in the study abroad program every year, according to Truman's Web site.

Junior Brett Barstow currently is studying abroad at Kingston University in England and uses Skype to keep in touch with people back home.

"I heard about it from my parents who use Skype to keep in touch when traveling abroad," Barstow said in an e-mail.

Barstow said he owns a Macintosh and that the setup procedure was completely painless, although his parents had a harder time setting up their PC. Barstow had a Bluetooth headset he used to talk with people.

"Within a few minutes Skype was up and running," he said.

Although it is a cheap source of communication, innovations such as Skype do have some drawbacks.

"The call quality drops significantly if I am using a lot of bandwidth while talking on Skype, so I have to pause any downloads before making a call," Barstow said.

Matt Farwell, assistant director of ITS, said he also is familiar with advantages and disadvantages of using VoIP.

"Reliability and quality are

two of the most common problems with VoIP," he said. "911 emergency services and power outages can also be a concern when using VoIP."

However, Farwell said most of these programs were easy for the average person to use, and hardware and software versions only take a few steps to set up. There can be concerns for one's computer, though.

"The new program could conflict with existing software or install software you do not want such as spyware or a root-kit," Farwell said.

Although this technology seems to be popular for study abroad students, some students at the University are less than impressed with it.

Freshman Grace Lowe uses Skype to talk to her dad, who has been stationed in Iraq since August.

"I have had it since the beginning of the year and only used it

about four times," she said. "It's just not that enticing."

Lowe said she is not a very big fan of Skype and that she would rather use other programs like Yahoo messenger.

"It's just not very user-friendly and doesn't have the amenities I would like," she said.

Lowe said she has trouble navigating the program and figuring out how to use the amenities. She said she also struggled to figure out how to text and make a profile on the Skype program.

"I only call between PC-to-PC because everything else costs and it is just not very usable," Lowe said.

As with Lowe, many people are turned off by Skype's lack of mobility and versatility. However, new technology is coming out that might make VoIP more available to the masses.

Companies like Skype and Voip.com as well as major phone

companies like Vonage and T-Mobile are beginning to create cell phones that work on Wi-Fi. For these types of phones, the user has to be in the area of a Wi-Fi router.

But people should be careful when purchasing a VoIP phone. Some phones like Vonage's work strictly with Wi-Fi, while some phones by T-Mobile will switch to regular mobile connection if moved out of the Wi-Fi area, according to Vonage and T-Mobile's Web sites.

As of October 2007, more than 1,800 additional Wal-Mart stores started to carry Skype accessories, according to a USA Today article. The Kirksville Wal-Mart also carries Skype products.

Students interested in Skype can receive more information at a workshop hosted by ITS from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Friday in the Student Union Building room 320.