



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index  
Senior Parviz Jabarov makes use of the laundry machines in Centennial Hall. Truman will need an extra \$46,000 to cover electricity costs on campus this year.

## Electricity costs climb in Kirksville

BY KRISTAL SANCHEZ  
for the Index

Where students live could determine if they have to reevaluate their budgets because of an electricity rate increase from AmerenUE that took effect June 4.

AmerenUE proposed the rate increase a year ago for the company to cover its costs. The increase affects residential, commercial and industrial areas across the state.

Mike Cleary, communications executive for AmerenUE, said customers should not see a large change to their billing statements.

"The average residential customer using 1,000 kilowatts of power a month would mean about a \$2.33 increase a month," Cleary said. "Even with this rate increase, our rates are 37 percent lower than the national average."

Most off-campus residents are not overly concerned with the electricity rate increase — in fact, some were not aware of it.

Senior Erin Hoover has lived off campus for more than a year and knew nothing about the proposed rate increase.

"Normally I notice things that have to do with spending money,"

Hoover said.

She said she did not notice a difference in her billing statements, but she tries to conserve energy as much as possible by not running the air conditioner unless she finds it necessary. She said she would not have noticed a difference unless the increase had been larger.

Graduate student Jenny Lamb compared her electricity bills from this summer to last summer's bills, which she splits with her roommate, and found only a \$3 increase. Lamb, like some other off-campus residents, was not aware of the statewide rate hike. She knew her bill had increased by a few dollars but did not know that other Missouri residents also were paying more.

Off-campus residents are seeing only a small change to their billing statements, but students living on campus could see a more substantial difference to theirs. Physical plant director Karl Schneider said most buildings on campus had a 3.1 percent increase in the cost of electricity this year. Schneider said the rate increase doesn't seem like much, but the total electricity budget for the year is \$1.5 million. Annually, Truman will need about

\$46,000 more to cover the extra costs. Schneider said he does not think finding the extra money will be a problem.

"Every budget year we try to predict what the costs are going to be, but we can't always predict with real accuracy, so usually there is a little bit of cushion in the budget," Schneider said.

Dave Rector, executive director of institutional research and budgets, said the budget should not be a problem. If there is not enough extra money to cover the additional costs, the University can pull more from its contingency fund, which is reserved for such emergencies.

Tuition and room and board were increased for the 2007-08 academic year because of several factors including the higher cost of electricity. The University Board of Governors approved an \$8 per-student increase to tuition. Room and board increased by 4.5 percent for a standard two-person room. University administrators proposed increases in tuition and room and board last spring when the electricity rate increase was approved by the state. Rector said there shouldn't be any more raises to tuition and room and board for

utility costs as long as usage stays about the same.

"We would like everybody to conserve as much electricity as possible because that helps the overall bottom line, so anything students can do in their residence halls and elsewhere to cut back on usage, that helps," Rector said.

Costs for AmerenUE have jumped significantly during the past several years. Cleary said the price of coal alone has increased by 42 percent since 2000, when previous rates were established. The price of overhead wiring has gone up by 95 percent. The cost increase of these resources, as well as improvements to facilities, resulted in the increase of electricity rates, he said. Future electricity rate increases are likely because of a continuous rise in the cost of resources, Cleary said.

Neither Hoover nor Lamb said she is concerned about future rate increases. Both off-campus residents realize inflation and minimum wage are going up, and both of those could affect the price of utilities.

"I am not worried because I am expecting, to some extent, for the cost of all resources to go up in the future," said Lamb.

## Blunt unveils health care plan

BY MARIAH BOHANON  
Staff Reporter

Because of a new proposal from Gov. Matt Blunt, nearly 200,000 Missourians might soon be covered by private insurers for basic necessities, such as trips to the emergency room and prescription drugs, but some already are doubting the practicality of such an ideal solution to the state's health care crisis.

"When I analyze the figures, from my perspective, they just don't make sense," said Rep. Rebecca McClanahan, D-Kirksville.

Insure Missouri would reduce the number of workers without health care coverage by 30 percent, using \$46 to 47 million already in the state's budget, according to a press release from Blunt. There currently are 719,000 uninsured Missourians, 106,000 of whom are children.

There are three phases to Insure Missouri, which are planned to occur over the next 15 months. The first phase is set to begin in February 2008 and will focus on providing affordable insurance to working families that have an income that is up 100 percent of the poverty level. The second phase will be aimed at working adults and families that earn an income which has yet to be set by the General Assembly. The third phase to be implemented will provide

small business owners with health care premiums their employees can afford.

The poverty level for a family of four is \$20,650 annually. About 54,000 Missouri residents will be eligible for Insure Missouri's first phase of coverage.

According to the press release, Insure Missouri will use state and federal funds to subsidize health insurance premiums, to which eligible workers will have to contribute small co-payments that do not exceed more than 5 percent of their income. The state will send bidding contracts to private insurance companies sometime in October or November, said Sara Anderson, a spokesperson for Dept. of Social Services (DSS) and MO HealthNet.

About 400,000 Missourians lost Medicaid coverage either partially or completely in 2005 when Blunt limited the program's budget, McClanahan said. The state's rate of increase for people without health insurance is three times the national average, she said.

Anderson said the new insurance plan is designed to help adult workers who might not qualify for MO HealthNet, which recently replaced the state's Medicaid program. Those who think they may qualify for Insure Missouri will be able to fill out an application online at the program's Web site, she said.

"We want to make this program as

convenient as possible for people to check their eligibility," Anderson said, adding that those without internet access will be able to go to their local DSS office to apply.

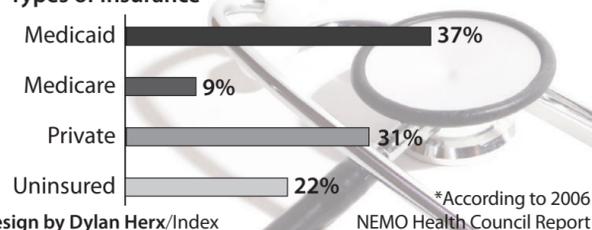
MO HealthNet was created to be a cost-effective plan that would focus on prevention and maintaining good health, whereas Medicaid focused almost solely on treating diseases, Anderson said. MO HealthNet and Insure Missouri both originated from the Missouri Health Improvement Act of 2007, Anderson said. Under the bill, MO HealthNet was provided with extra funds so that Insure Missouri could be properly budgeted without allocating funds that were not already in the state's health care budget, Anderson said.

McClanahan said she thinks Insure Missouri is not the best way to increase the number of Missourians with adequate coverage and that Blunt's proposed number of 200,000 people is probably inflated. Insuring that many people with a budget of \$47 million would not be very plausible, she said. McClanahan had formerly proposed an amendment that would have restored health care benefits to 150,000 to 180,000 people that had been affected by the reduction in Medicaid coverage, for \$155 to 56 million.

McClanahan, a former nursing instructor at the Truman, is part of a health care policy group in the legislature. She

## Health Exam

### Types of Insurance



Design by Dylan Herx/Index

said the group looks at other state's examples as a basis to build an efficient insurance program for Missouri.

Many of our surrounding states are showing a high commitment to providing most of their citizens with basic insurance, she said, and some states like Illinois and Massachusetts are exemplary in their efforts, McClanahan said. Illinois has provided coverage to every child in the state, and Massachusetts has been able to provide basic coverage to every single resident of the state. McClanahan also said other states that have tried to utilize private insurance programs have not been effective and are usually more costly to the state overall.

McClanahan said she and many of her fellow legislators approve of Blunt's efforts to increase the number of insured

Missourians but still think that there is a better way to increase coverage without resorting to subsidized private premiums. She said that based on the research of the legislative health care policy group, the state's budget would be able to cover more people if it were distributed differently.

"If we can do that, then we should do that, and we must do that," McClanahan said of the legislature taking steps to ensure that as many people in the state receive coverage as possible. "There's a big moral choice in that decision."

Anderson said the plan will tackle both sides of the health care crisis by increasing both the number of working adults and small business owners, along with working families, that can afford insurance.

## An anniversary event you will never forget.



### Join the fun on Saturday, October 20.

Our anniversary event will feature Suzanne Metzger, Ph.D., who for the last 20 years, has been captivating audiences with her keynotes and training sessions. Specializing in communication, Suzanne's goal is to help people understand the incredible power of soft skills through each customized presentation.

#### Saturday, October 20

Truman State University Student Union Building

- 4 to 6:30 p.m. FREE Women's Expo**  
Pampering sessions, exhibits, demonstrations, health information, giveaways, and much more!
- 6:30 to 8 p.m. Dinner with National Speaker, Dr. Suzanne Metzger**  
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# RED BARN

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Saturday, October 13th  
9:00 am – 4:30 pm  
Downtown Kirksville

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Free Admission  
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Kids' Corner  
Food Court



**KIRKSVILLEarts**  
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#### EVENTS

**9:30** – Marsha Taylor Dance Company  
**10:30** – Julia Peterson and Miss Ginny Dance Companies  
**12:00** – True Men (Truman State A Cappella Men)  
**1:00** – Gumbo Jazz  
**2:00** – Deadwood (blues band)  
**3:00** – AWARDS  
**3:15** – Redwing (Country/Bluegrass)

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