

**VOLUNTEER**  
Fire department faces budget crunch as fewer members pay their bills

**Continued from Page 1**  
you don't know for sure if it was a fault of design where everything was put in or if it was just one of those things that was going to happen."

Trailer owner Carolyn Durham is a member of the Eastern Adair County Fire and Rescue, which means she pays \$60 in annual dues to the fire department. Her membership insures her for fire protection and rescue, Snyder said.

Eastern Adair County Fire and Rescue consists of 842 rural county members whose contributions help pay for equipment and repairs on the trucks.

"Out of those 842, we're lucky if we get 350 to 400 of them to pay their dues," Snyder said. "So we're operating on a budget per year that is less than \$28,000."

Failure to pay the annual dues could result in a post-fire bill of \$700 or more, he said. The state allows the department to charge a flat \$150 fee and an additional \$500 per hour for fire protection and rescue. Snyder said his team put out a fire for a non-member in Brashear last week, and the person faced a \$2,200 fee as a result.

Now the department faces a budget crunch because the economy discourages residents from opening their wallets. Snyder said they don't have many options for offsetting the budget shortfall, but if 90 percent of their members paid their dues, it would bring in the same amount of money as the quarter-cent tax recently passed by the Kirksville City Council to pay for a new fire truck for the city fire department.

"If we see a 20 percent decrease and that stays within the next five years, I mean, math tells us we're not going to have any members," Snyder said. "So then we have to decide, what are we going to do? Does the fire department close its doors, and there's no fire protection at all in Adair County?"

Snyder said he hopes to add at least 250 members to the department when he acquires the information of all of the area property



**Above: DRILL TIME**

owners from the city assessor's office. His current address list only includes the 911 dispatch center's addresses of residents who have structures on their properties, and this presents a problem when a patch of land catches fire but the landowner doesn't live in Kirksville. Then, the fire department doesn't know where to send the bill, Snyder said.

Both the rural and city fire departments work with the same regulations and guidelines. The National Fire Protection Act requires the volunteer fire department to make sure it has enough staff and equipment to meet the safety mea-

sures. Snyder said it has people doing ventilation, operating tankers and pumpers, filling air bottles and working as staging officers to tell the volunteers where they're needed.

Members of the rural fire district expect the same punctuality as they would from the city fire department, and Snyder said he thinks the volunteers manage to do this well.

"Just try getting up from the dinner table, getting in your vehicle and driving to any one of the fire stations that's out there and just time yourself," Snyder said. "You're gonna see, ... 15 minutes — that's pretty quick."

Wednesday afternoon, members of all of the emergency response crews of Adair County, including the volunteer fire department, met at NEMO Fairgrounds to train together with their equipment. Tim King, deputy chief of the police department, said it was a good opportunity for the departments to assess what worked and what needed repairing or what they were short on.

"I mean, we know how to use all of our equipment, and the fire department knows how to use theirs but we don't always have the time to get together, ... and today we did that," he said. "So when we get ready to respond to an incident in the community, everybody knows what's going on and what's expected and what's going to happen."

King said the personnel who couldn't make it to this meeting will attend another session in September, so everyone can go through the training before the end of the year.

**CAPITOL** | Students lobby for higher education level funding at Jefferson City Wednesday, gain knowledge of political process

**Continued from Page 1**  
"They didn't mind talking to us — they seemed to actually gain from it. Some of them weren't exactly sure what bill we were talking about. Some of them even learned something new."

McCaherty said he spoke to more than one legislator who already was aware of the budget issues for higher education.

"This is going to be a tough year," said State Representative Walter Bivins, R-St. Louis. "I know the governor initially said he was going to cut the budget for universities, but he's backpedaled on that. I'm aware the budget for the universities was cut a number of

years ago, and they really have not gotten back to the level that they were a few years ago."

The state will experience an almost \$300 million shortfall this year, so it's possible that everyone will have to cut back, Bivins said.

"Fortunately, we didn't spend everything that we had for the last preceding couple of years, and we had a lot of money in the bank," he said. "Had we not done that, we would be looking at a budget deficit of something over \$600 to \$800 million."

Students coming in and voicing their opinions on legislation alerts representatives of the issues and carries influence, Bivins said.

State Rep. Rebecca McClanahan, D-Kirksville, said she already was well aware of the issues Truman students have because she represents them, but having students at the capitol handing out flyers could help sway the less informed.

"I think always having people here in the capitol influences the process," McClanahan said. "Because of the budgetary constraints this year there have been a lot more people in the capitol, so it's really important that people be here to make their voices heard."

Many students took a break from discussing issues to take advantage of educational opportunities that were offered, including the Missouri House of Representatives meeting at 10 a.m.

"It was really cool to see how everything works and with the attitudes of the representatives — how they work with each other,"

sophomore Brianna Haefner said.

She said she enjoyed a heated argument between State Rep. Trent Skaggs, D-North Kansas City, and State Rep. Tim Jones, R-St. Louis, regarding a liquor law.

"They were verbally abusing each other in a very polite way, which was really interesting," she said.

At 2 p.m. the Education Committee hosted a hearing regarding budget cuts. The Representatives ranked different aspects of education from most important to least important, Haefner said. They then reported those findings back to the Budget Committee. They didn't propose any budget cuts, Haefner said, but now they know where to start if it is necessary.

"We were talked to [State Rep.] Martin Rucker [D-St. Joseph], and he said that if things keep going the way they're going, there will be no cuts to higher education," Haefner said.

She said she enjoyed a heated argument between State Rep. Trent Skaggs, D-North Kansas City, and State Rep. Tim Jones, R-St. Louis, regarding a liquor law.

"They were verbally abusing each other in a very polite way, which was really interesting," she said.

At 2 p.m. the Education Committee hosted a hearing regarding budget cuts. The Representatives ranked different aspects of education from most important to least important, Haefner said. They then reported those findings back to the Budget Committee. They didn't propose any budget cuts, Haefner said, but now they know where to start if it is necessary.

"We were talked to [State Rep.] Martin Rucker [D-St. Joseph], and he said that if things keep going the way they're going, there will be no cuts to higher education," Haefner said.

**WEB** | Former Truman student designs Web site for internet rankings after inspiration from Seinfeld episode, promotes idea on Truman's campus

**Continued from Page 1**  
based on the opinions that matter to you."

Russell said a SmartSearch feature will allow specific demographic searches about most anything. Users will also be able to view preferences by network and region, he said.

Russell said the site went public this past Tuesday. Before, there were about 70 beta testers, and roughly half of them were at Truman, he said. Russell said that although the site has multiple features, it is

currently like an empty shell, and as it is used more it will become more valuable.

"I view it in the same manner as I would Facebook," Russell said. "Facebook was an empty shell. When it had three people on it, it was just those three people looking at each other."

Russell said he will set up tables in the Student Union Building and Violette Hall to promote WebbChange until Spring Break. Russell said he will be hosting an open forum at 8 p.m. Wednesday, March

4, in the SUB Down Under.

WebbChange CEO Bill Clanton said he first met Russell at another company they were previously involved with. Clanton sent Russell to Australia for three months to work with database experts to take the site from concept to reality.

"We really built a team around Travis that had the expertise and the global basis to build an application that could do what he had envisioned," Clanton said. "It was genuinely a global collaborative effort. It's an interna-

tional company in its infancy, and Travis is the face of the company."

Clanton said one of his favorite features of WebbChange is the level playing field created for all the site's users. He said other rating site users have an infinite number of ratings and there are no limitations, but WebbChange users all receive the same amount of currency to invest, which creates a value system.

Clanton said Russell will be spending more time on Truman's campus in order to gen-

erate interest and receive feedback on ways to improve the site before its official launch to the technology world at the South by Southwest Festival March 13. The company is looking to the early adopters of the site to improve the user experience, he said.

"We need help from a community that's willing to serve as early adopters to contribute and have some vision beyond where the application is today to show how to get the momentum going," Clanton said.

**Vista Heights Apartments**

Now renting for this semester

- January move in dates available now
- Hurry very limited availability
- One- and two-bedroom units still available

Call Kelli Nigh for more information at 665-9224 or 626-3914

Updated units, pets welcome with pet agreement, first and second floor units, quiet and safe neighborhood, off street parking, laundry facility on site, shuttle service daily to TSU.

Can you see through the clutter?

www.trumanindex.com