

# New bill focuses on clean energy

BY MICHELLE MARTIN  
Staff Reporter

The recent Farm Bill, also known as the Food Conservation and Energy Act, will soon affect farmers and agricultural producers nationwide with its policies supporting conservation, renewable fuels and improved financial assistance for farmers, according to an analysis by the American Farmland Trust. Joe Koenen, Northeast Missouri Agricultural Business Specialist, said the Bill, passed during fall 2008, might take effect within the next 60 days.

One of the key effects of the Farm Bill is a program called Average Crop Revenue Election, which improves food supply protection through farmers' safety nets, according to the American Farmland Trust. ACRE gives producers a choice between different safety nets or government support systems for bad crop years. In addition, ACRE will save about 20 percent of the funds spent in previous years.

"It's a new program that allows producers to decide if they want the current crop safety net, if you will, or if they want to take a look at this," Koenen said. "... If we do have a bad year, it's probably going to pay better than our current crop program."

Another major component of the Bill is the Supplemental Revenue Assistance program, which clarifies what sort of government insurance farmers can expect in the case of a disaster.

"A lot of agricultural leaders in the past have had a past disaster, and when it happened, no one knew exactly what would be possible or what kind of program it would be," he said.

The Bill also enables the CCC Bioenergy Program for Advanced

Biofuels, which provides incentives for the development of biofuels, such as biodiesel and cellulosic ethanol. Loans and grants will enable more biofuel refineries.

"Assuming that ethanol and some of those things continue to be promoted which, in this current administration, Obama seems to be really pushing crop prices are likely to continue to be higher, which means livestock prices and meat prices are not likely to come down anytime in the near future," Koenen said.

This recent legislation puts a greater emphasis on alternative fuels such as biodiesel and ethanol, which could prove helpful to crop farmers in the future.

"If we can get some grass and things to be used for fuel that would help farmers in this part of the state, I think that would be very positive," Koenen said.

Another energy initiative by the Farm Bill includes a program enabling biomass research and development.

"Biomass crops make land less erosion prone because they provide cover for perennial crops and annual crops that are more prone to erosion," said Michael Seipel, associate professor of agriculture. "I think those next generation fuels, as they become more technologically feasible, will have benefits for both the environment and consumers at large."

Seipel said if farmers eventually become owners of biomass production, they might benefit greatly. This depends on who controls the commodity where it is most profitable.

"Farm owners can become owners and investors in more of these new processing technologies that are coming out," he said. "They can capture



Dr. Michael Seipel, associate professor of agriculture, said farmers can benefit greatly from switching over to biomass production. Biomass crops make land less prone to erosion. Mayank Dhungana/Index

more of the profit and keep their profit more stable."

Seipel said he thinks the new Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, might continue to implement environmentally friendly agricultural policies.

"He's progressive enough to give some of the more reform minded folks in agricultural policy a little hope that the direction may change," Seipel said. "[Vilsack is] a little more cognizant of the organic mar-

ket, having some familiarity with the biofuel industry."

Biofuels recently have been an important part of Adair County Agriculture, said Philip Ayers, county executive director of Adair's Farm Service Agency.

"With an ethanol plant in Macon, that's where most of the corn that we grow in this county goes," Ayers said. "And it appears that we're going to have some wind turbines put up in the western part of the county

in a few years, so that's going to be important to us also."

In coming years, Adair County producers probably will continue to fare well despite the state of the nation's economy, he said.

"The last four or five years have been exceptional for Adair County," Ayers said. "We've had good prices basically, and we're going to continue to go forward and keep some of those prices."

# Travelers to be renovated into apartments

BY JARED YOUNG  
Staff Reporter

Spring cleaning might not be a top priority for some, but for Carlson Gardner Inc., it's the first step in renovating the Traveler's Square Hotel.

Carlson Gardner received notification in December from the Missouri Housing Commission that it could start drawing up plans for remodeling the historical building. Carlson Gardner Inc. works with the Missouri Housing Development Commission Program to create high-quality, affordable housing statewide.

Tammi Creason, who works for Carlson Gardner in development, said work on the building is scheduled to start as soon as possible.

"We're in the process of getting the final plans and all the behind-the-scenes stuff," Creason said. "We're hoping that by early spring we'll be in the position to physically move the team out on site and start on the rehabilitation."

Carlson Gardner plans to turn the Traveler's Hotel into affordable apartments. Most of the apartments will be designated for those coming from moderate- to middle-income households.

"There are 34 total apartments," Creason said. "Thirty of those will be affordable units and four of them will be market-rate units."

The goal of creating affordable housing is to target those who are working low-paying jobs in the area. These apartments will be specifically for them, providing a good place to live at a price below the market rate.

Although the Traveler's Hotel is relatively close to campus, these units are not intended for student housing.

"The program is not designed to be student housing," Creason said. "That said, there are a lot of consid-

erations. There are scenarios where it works great for students."

Situations in which students would be considered as potential residents include single parents going back to school and married students.

Carlson Gardner plans to begin renovations in early summer, though they will begin cleaning the building soon. Once the project is underway, Creason expects the plan to come together quickly, he said.

"It's usually just about a year," Creason said. "Every project is a little bit different. Until we really get in there and start on the interior, you don't know what you're going to find. We work[ed] really hard on the pre-planning process to try to anticipate those things."

Kirkville Codes Administrator Brad Selby said that once plans are submitted to the city, Carlson Gardner will receive the building permit, allowing it to begin the renovation process.

"So far, I think all they are doing is cleaning the building out," Selby said. "We have not yet received those plans."

During the renovation process, Carlson Gardner will be conscious of the historical aspects of the building, blending the old with new living conditions. The outside of the building will be cleaned up but will remain largely the same.

Selby said he's looking forward to the renovation of the Traveler's Hotel.

"Any type of building that's going to be used, and bring people to the downtown area to live, we think

that's great," Selby said. "People can walk to different things. There's restaurants and bars, a movie theater and entertainment downtown on the Square in the summer. These people are going to be right there."

Sophomore Andrew Hughes said he thinks the soon-to-be apartments should be available to all Truman students. He said

keeping certain types of students from renting apartments, especially ones that are close to campus, does not seem fair.

"If we're going to look at it on a financial need basis, for married students or students with kids, then I think we should look at all financial situations ... and assess whether or not that apartment complex might be a place for them," Hughes said. "There are students who are pretty bad off here, especially in these economic times, that could benefit from having those apartments."

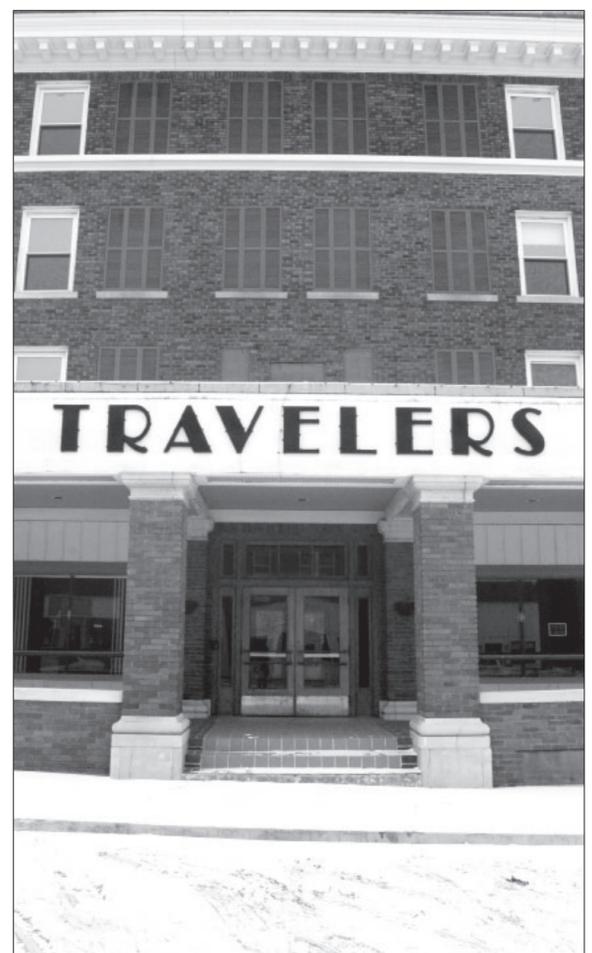
Hughes said he thinks everyone should be given a fair chance to prove why they would be in need of apartments below the market rate.

Although Hughes said he disagrees with the proposed living situation in the future Traveler's Apartments, he said he does see a great benefit from the building being brought back into use.

"The more people we get in [downtown] Kirksville, the better," Hughes said. "Personally, I like Kirksville the way it is, but I wouldn't mind some more people moving in [the Traveler's Hotel] ... especially if they are going to keep the building in its historical context."

"We're hoping that by early spring we'll be in the position to physically move the team out on site and start on the rehabilitation."

Tammi Creason  
Carlson Gardner Development



The Travelers Hotel sits empty just off the square. Carlson Gardner Inc., an architectural firm, plans to begin work on the building this spring. Krista Goodman/Index

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