

Customers receive tax break

BY BAILLIE JAMES
Staff Reporter

The Show-Me Green Sales Tax Holiday exempts Kirksville residents from paying state, county and city taxes on Energy Star-approved appliances through Sunday.

This government holiday and the Energize Missouri Appliance Rebate Program encourage Missouri citizens to replace old appliances with more energy-efficient machines, according to the Missouri Department of Revenue website. These concurrent programs encourage Missourians to support the environment while saving money on tax exemptions, lowering long-term utility bills and receiving appliance rebates for a limited time.

Energy Star appliances that qualify for the tax holiday include refrigerators, dishwashers, clothes washers, freezers, water heaters, air conditioners, furnaces and heat pumps. Some non-appliance products also sport the blue Energy Star logo, but those products do not qualify for the tax exemption, according to the Missouri Department of Revenue.

The Department of Revenue estimates consumers can save anywhere from 4.2 percent to 8 percent on En-

ergy Star appliances during this holiday. The state tax exemption applies everywhere in Missouri, but not all counties and cities have eliminated local sales taxes as well. The city of Kirksville and Adair County have opted to participate in the holiday.

Marilyn Anderson of Anderson Appliance in Kirksville said the rebates from the state have made this year's tax holiday more successful than the first Show-Me Green Tax Holiday in April 2009. She said consumers who normally would not seek out energy-efficient products have shopped this week explicitly for Energy Star products because of the huge incentives.

"Some people want [an appliance] that's going to save them money, and they don't mind paying a little bit more for a product that's going to save them money down the road," Anderson said. "Other people just want the cheapest [appliance] they can get at that time. They're looking at the bottom line today."

Anderson said a boost in the rate of sales is a result of consumers who waited to buy appliances until this week because of the incentives.

Rebates offered by the Missouri government range from \$75 to \$500 each. To qualify for the rebates, cus-



Mayank Dhungana/Index
Appliances that bare the Energy Star logo, such as this air conditioner, are eligible for a tax break in Missouri and Adair County through Sunday.

tomers must recycle an old appliance at an approved major appliance collection site or a retailer and must purchase a replacement Energy Star product. Consumers can apply online or call the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to reserve a rebate.

Denise Freels, co-owner of Sears in Kirksville, said she has witnessed an increase in the number of people interested in buying energy-efficient products in the past six months. She estimated that two out of five con-

sumers who come to Sears consider Energy Star a top priority when buying appliances.

"[People] may not be green, but they like saving green," Freels said. "That's what [the incentives] are all about — getting all these old energy-sucking machines off the market and getting more efficient ones that are easier on our utilities and resources."

Junior Danielle Zempel, president of Environmental Campus Organization, said her family recently reno-

vated their kitchen with more energy-efficient appliances, and they already have noticed savings in their utility bills. She said that although more efficient appliances require a higher up-front cost, savings on utility bills will help earn back that initial investment.

"A lot of times you're paying a lot of money and using a lot of electricity for not much output, so it's economically and environmentally inefficient," Zempel said.

She said people who live in older homes with the original appliances need to be especially aware and should consider replacing old appliances with new, more efficient products.

The Energy Star distinction is a joint program of the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Energy. Energy Star estimates in its 2008 annual report that it helped save Americans \$18 billion in 2008 and prevented the equivalent of gas emissions from 29 million vehicles.

The Show-Me Green Sales Tax Holiday is April 19 to 25. Nine counties, 58 cities and eight special districts have suspended local taxes on Energy Star appliances in Missouri.

Universities revise organ donation policy

BY COLETTE LINTON
Staff Reporter

Northeast Regional Medical Center will host "Celebrate Life" at 3 p.m. Wednesday in Denlow Park to promote organ donation at a time when donations across the country are low and the national organ allocation system is being revised.

Families of organ recipients, patients and keynote speaker Friday Ramsey will speak at the event to share their stories and to advocate donor registry.

"There are families that just want to raise awareness," said Lisa Archer, registered nurse and quality improvement coordinator. "Even though their loved ones are gone, they are continuing to live through someone else, and that gives them a lot of peace and satisfaction."

Making a match between a patient and available organs is difficult because it requires many considerations, including the ages of both the donor and recipient, cause of death and medical histories that could disqualify a registered individual as a donor.

"There is a national shortage of organs for all the people that are in need," Archer said. "We're making progress, but we are still far behind in the numbers of people who need organs and tissue and the number of people who are registered to be donors."

A collaboration of universities in Missouri that received federal funding are investigating and revising the national organ allocation system.

St. Louis University's Center for Outcome Research is the primary receiver of a federal grant, said Jay Everhart, director of Epidemiology at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Their goal is to revise the system, which is no

longer able to supply donated organs to patients with the greatest need because donated organs are kept within their region regardless of the needs of patients outside of that region.

Donated organs are distributed first within one of the 11 designated regions that divide the United States, Everhart said. Regions originally were created when a means of transportation could not move organs across several states without the risk of damaging them.

Committees within the United Network for Organ Sharing normally propose policy changes to the system, but in this situation NIDDK awarded a grant to SLUCOR for their scientific proposal and because of its economic potential, Everhart said.

This is an unusual situation due to era funding, funds meant to aid projects that would employ various workers in the current economy, Everhart said.

"These challenge grants, such as St. Louis University received, were because of the era funding, otherwise [research to revise the organ allocation system] would not have happened," he said.

SLUCOR's investigative research to change the organ allocation system will include a mathematical approach that will objectively determine priority among patients regardless of residence.

UNOS, SLUCOR and NIDDK said that, in addition to low organ supply, regions in the U.S. are experiencing uneven supply-demand ratios, and patients with similar illness or severity can experience different waiting times, according to physicians dealing with organ allocation.

"Where you live will often determine whether you would get a kidney or a liver transplant rather than on how sick you are," Everhart said. "How

sick you are is critical, but for patients living in different parts of the country, one person may get a transplant much earlier than another patient because of the current organ allocation system."

Organ preservation today eliminates the once tactical strategy to promote local donation and to pair an organ with a patient quickly.

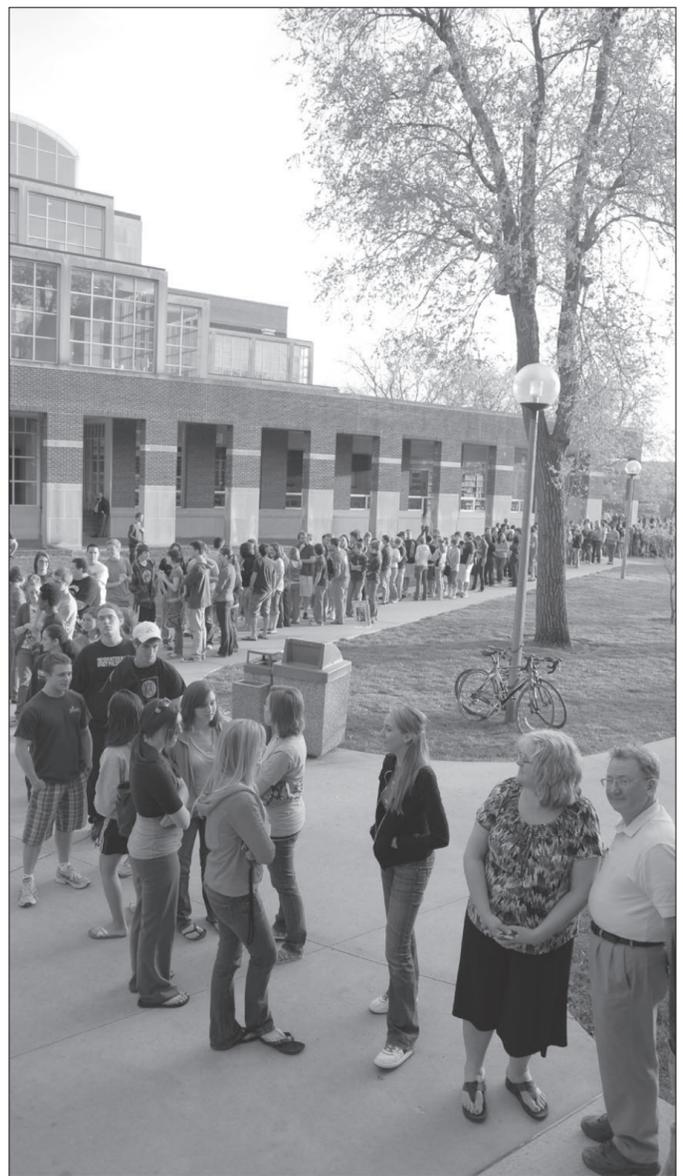
The aim of SLUCOR's research is to construct an integrated database to account for economic implications, said Krista Lentine, associate professor of internal medicine and principle investigator at Saint Louis University's school of medicine. It also would include costs as well as combine clinical information with financial data from Medicare and private insurers.

"We hypothesize that a more equitable organ distribution system that reduces extremes in waiting times, disease severity at transplant and lowers the need to use non-standard organs in high-risk recipients will be net cost-saving overall," Lentine said. "The main economic problem that is going on is that centers — not only are they undersupplied but they are transplanting patients at a more severe level of disease — they are relying more heavily on non-standard donors."

For the research to eventually become the new allocation system, it would need to prove its utility and gain public acceptance via the UNOS committees in each of the 11 donation service areas.

"Despite the need for change, there is likely to be significant opinion-based and economic resistance to any proposed change in organ distribution policy," Lentine said. "Patients in well-supplied regions benefit markedly under the current system, and centers in well-supplied areas are protective of their resources."

Waiting for Nye



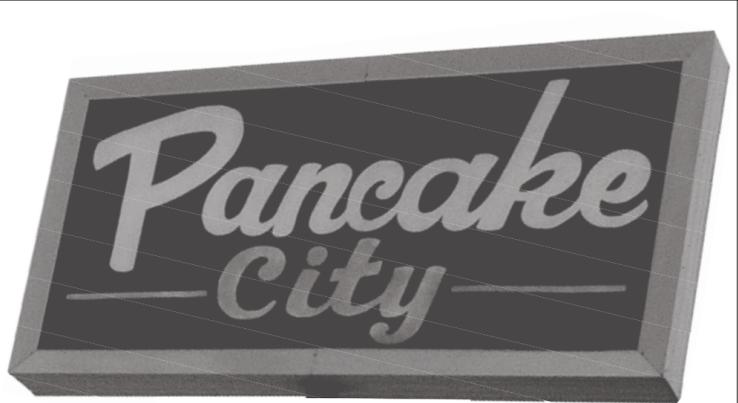
Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index
Students and community members stand in line outside of Baldwin Hall on Friday evening, waiting to enter the building to see Bill Nye. The Student Activity Board originally scheduled Nye to perform once, but an overwhelming positive response prompted the organization to add a show earlier in the evening. The 7:30 p.m. show sold out.



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