

Truman hosts Farm to School workshop

BY PHIL ZAHND
Staff Reporter

With the rising national concern of children's health, Missouri farmers and schools are teaming up to improve student nutrition by providing fresh fruits and vegetables.

Truman is hosting a workshop for Missouri's chapter of Farm to School from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Jan. 21 in the Student Union Building.

The workshop is designed to educate farmers, food service providers, food service managers and consumers. The event will feature guest speakers from each of these perspectives.

Farm to School's primary mission is to connect farmers with elementary schools across the nation to improve children's diet by introducing fresh fruits and vegetables to school cafeterias, according to farmtoschool.org. The organization also seeks to improve nutritional standards in colleges, hospitals, nursing homes, day cares and after

school programs.

"Our goal is to increase the number of Missouri institutions serving healthy, locally grown food while also fostering new market opportunities for Missouri farmers," Bill McKelvey, project coordinator for Missouri Farm to Institution Project said.

Farm to School programs in America have skyrocketed from approximately 400 in 2004 to more than 2000 currently operating, according to farmtoschool.org. An estimated 80 school districts in Missouri have used locally grown food in their school meals.

"We're aware that the number of farmers' markets in Missouri has been increasing over the past few years, and this is also a national trend," McKelvey said. "What Farm to School does, for example is it may allow a farmer who is selling at a farmers' market to then sort of consider institutional sales as part of their business plan. It's an opportunity for new and beginning farmers to get into a new market area."

Rusty Lee of Truxton, Mo., a farmer who began providing food for several St. Louis public schools last year, estimates some of the produce takes as few as 24 hours from the time it is picked to the time it is served. This day-to-day freshness explains why so many schools are pleased with their installments of Farm to School programs.

"It tastes better," said Laina Fullum, director of nutrition services at Columbia public schools. "When it comes local it travels less. It is picked on time. It is seasonal. So when it tastes better, children are eating more of it, and faculty are eating more of it."

Fullum said she helped connect the Columbia Public Schools District to a Farm to School program last May. She will be one of the workshop's guest speakers. Her presentation will highlight some of the district's experiences with Farm to School and detail what schools can do to become involved.

"We also like the fact that



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At the University Farm Wednesday afternoon, Bill Kuntz explains that the equipment that is going to be used for the food prep kitchen (above) was salvaged from Barnett Hall before the renovation. The facility and equipment will be fully operational within the next two years.

it educates our children about what is available in Missouri and local," Fullum said. "It helps our farmers. It stimulates local economy. It also lowers our carbon footprint by not asking our food to travel so far."

The workshop is co-organized by McKelvey, Michael Seipel, assistant professor of agricultural science and Michael Kelrick, professor of biology. The event is a part of Seipel's and Kelrick's efforts to bring more local food to Truman. Kelrick said Truman already uses some local food such as milk, honey, apples and blueberries but hopes to see increased use of regional food in the future.

Seipel and Kelrick wrote a grant proposal to the USDA for local foods procurement, which was administered by the Missouri Department of Agriculture. The grant will also help fund the University Farm and small processing kitchen that will be at the farm. Kelrick said

the grant would fund a couple of student interns for the next two summers.

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Kelrick said that the goal is for the food produced from the internships and from the University Farm to be later purchased by Truman's food service provider, Sodexo.

"Their role would be to interact with local producers to learn as well as to assist those local producers in preparing their crop in appropriate way so that it can be purchased by Sodexo ... and at the same time planting their own crop for sale at the University Farm," Kelrick said.

The grant included the hiring of Truman graduate, Will Erker, as Truman's first Local Foods Coordinator.

Erker, whose first day was Jan. 18, has various experiences with local food as a student. Two years ago, he along with some fellow students, planted lettuce and spinach at the Farm. The produce was later sold to Sodexo to be used in the cafeteria salad bars. That profit was used to help start the Community garden.

"I think [rising interest in local food] is a good indicator that we've reached a critical point, a tipping point with a segment that are using vegetables, that are recognizing the value of local and local economic development," Lee said. "It is very encouraging to see that strides are being made and I think these workshops are an indicator of where a lot of people's minds are at."

Students are welcome to attend the event. Locally grown food will be provided for those registered before Jan. 14.

Water main breaks outside of Student Rec Center

BY JACKIE KINEALY
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Students who craved a post-workout shower or a cold drink from the water fountain at the Student Recreation Center last Thursday and Friday were out of luck.

The water supply at the rec center was shut off from Jan. 13 to Jan. 14 because a section of a water line between Centennial Hall and the rec center developed a leak.

Danny McDowell, building manager for the rec center, said he noticed low water pressure in the building a half-hour before the Physical Plant saw the leak and ar-

rived to repair it.

McDowell said the same section of leaky water line has broken two other times since it was installed in 1996, which he said is uncommon for pipes that new. He said the first break occurred shortly after the building opened in 1997, and the second leak was approximately three years ago.

"It's always an inconvenience because your water is out, but it's not like they're occurring one on top of another," said Sue Limestall, director of campus recreation.

The problem, McDowell said, could be "dirty backfill" around the pipe, which means there are pieces of old concrete in the ground rather

than just dirt.

"Before [the rec center] was built, there used to be houses around here, so who knows what's in the ground," Limestall said.

Bob Techau, systems trades supervisor for the Physical Plant, said the leak in the pipe was a result of normal wear and tear. He said there was a small hole in the pipe that was relatively inexpensive to fix with a stainless steel clamp.

"It's more inconvenience than real cost," he said. "The clamp was probably \$250, just the time and inconvenience it took everybody. If you had to hire somebody to do it outside of campus, year it'd be expensive, but since we're able to do it

on campus, it's not that bad."

While the water was shut off, the rec center provided free bottled water at the membership services desk, Limestall said. Some cases of the bottled water came from Sodexo and members of the rec center staff also bought water at Hy-Vee, she said.

As of Wednesday, Limestall still had not received the bill from Sodexo, but she said the total cost of water from Hy-Vee was \$120. She said the rec center bought 56 cases and used 49.

Limestall said that although the pipe was fixed Thursday, the day the leak was discovered, the rec center continued to provide bot-

tled water Friday.

"We just decided to be on the safe side and not have anyone drink the water for a while," she said.

The water main break also caused minor flooding in the north stairwell of Centennial Hall.

"Some of the water came in there and filled up the bottom of that stairwell, and may have seeped into the bottom of that stairwell, but my understanding is that it did not get into any student rooms that I'm aware of," said John Gardner, director of residence life.

Gardner said the Physical Plant quickly addressed the flooding problem in Centennial Hall.

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