

## Iron Dogs practice



Joyce Wong/Index

The Iron Dogs Olympic lifting team practices on the first floor of Pershing in a temporary practice room. When construction finishes this spring, they will move downstairs. The team has practice everyday at 3:30 p.m. and Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 7:30 a.m. Iron Dogs has alumni and current members who have qualified and competed in national and world Olympic lifting competitions.

## BUDGET | State of the State address leaves questions unanswered, talk of higher education funding

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next year, or about 5 percent of the total budget. The only time Nixon addressed budgets for higher education during his speech was when he said some higher education institutions might "impose modest tuition increases next year."

He also said last night that K-12 education will have "stable, even funding" for 2011 and 2012. Nixon did not extend that statement to higher education.

"Even in a difficult year, we will protect our investment in K-12 classrooms," he said.

Nixon also addressed cuts to the total state budget.

"With the cuts included in my budget tonight, I will have reduced government spending by more than \$1.8 billion since I took office," Nixon said.

In his State of the State address last January — after his first year in office — Nixon said he had cut \$600 million out of the state budget for the previous year.

## ROADS | Despite the snow and ice, roads have been safe for drivers so far this winter

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is responsible for 96.5 miles of street and has a process of getting all the roads clean. There is an estimated cost of \$80,000 for the necessary removal of ice and snow in an average year, according to the street maintenance homepage. Six trucks, each responsible for a section of the city, plow the streets. They begin with main roads and then move to secondary ones, Sandstrom said.

The amount of salt the city has for this winter might be enough, depending on the amount of snowfall, he said.

"We have roughly 600 tons of salt left for use this winter and we have tanks of Geomelt stocked in case we need to order more salt," Sandstrom said. Geomelt, a sugar beet-based product, increases the snow and ice melting efficiency of salt, according to [www.geomeltusa.com](http://www.geomeltusa.com). Geomelt is used to retreat the salt and it takes six gallons to treat a ton of salt, Sandstrom said.

All the agencies responsible for driving conditions agree on one thing that could prevent accidents.

"The biggest thing is just slow down," Johnson said. "Leave a little extra space between you and the person in front of you, because if they stop suddenly, you may not slow down suddenly and rear-end them. Just take a little extra time getting where you are going. Plan for a little more time."

## SPEED | A local mother petitions

Kirkville citizens and the city to force the MODOT to reduce the speed limit along the road

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sway MODOT's opinion on the issue.

"If we got the petition from her, I don't think that would change our opinion on what it should be," Sandifer said. "If people don't go the speed limit it doesn't help to lower the speed limit. We did talk with the city of Kirkville about increasing the amount of enforcement in there and they said they didn't have the time or the personnel to sit out there and watch it and try to enforce the speed limit."

## EMPLOYMENT | Kirkville's unemployment rate has risen in the past decade but is still lower than the state average —

Truman, A.T. Still and the hospital help provide employment

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to cut costs. Tate said Kirkville should focus on industries like education that cannot outsource jobs.

Truman, A.T. Still University, and Northeast Regional Medical Center are the top three employers in Kirkville and Sodexo food services is the fifth largest employer, according to a Business Resource Guide published by the City of Kirkville in 2010.

Charlene Boys, the director of Truman's Small Business Development Center, said Kirkville is appeal-

ing to small businesses because of the workforce coming out of the institutions of higher education.

Still, the unemployment rate has more than doubled since 2000 when 3 percent of Kirkville workers were out of the job, according to DED statistics.

Since 2000, several major employers in the region have closed their doors or cut their workforce.

Tate said the job loss in Kirkville is part of a national trend of manufacturing jobs moving to low-wage countries like Mexico, China and Japan. When businesses

can cut costs by relocating outside the United States, he said, it is a challenge for Kirkville to compete.

Tate said that four years ago the Japanese-owned corporation Ortech laid off the majority of its 500 employees from its Kirkville factory and renewed its contract with a Mexican company.

"Those jobs clearly and directly just went offshore," Tate said. "[The Kirkville Ortech factory] just lost their main contract, and it went to a lower-wage operation in the country of Mexico."

The Macon-based Toastmaster factory also relo-

cated its production to cut costs, Tate said. When the company learned it would take \$1 million and one year to make necessary updates to the Macon plant, but only 30 days and less capital in begin operations in China, Toastmaster relocated to China he said.

Because Kirkville cannot compete with other countries for the lowest wages, the educational and medical institutions are a major asset, Tate said.

"Kirkville won a national competition for a DNA forensics laboratory, and it was the educational resources of

this community that allowed us to win," Tate said.

Truman said A.T. Still offered to send undergraduates, graduates and post-doctoral researchers to the company, he said, which was a major incentive for the California-based company to relocate in Kirkville.

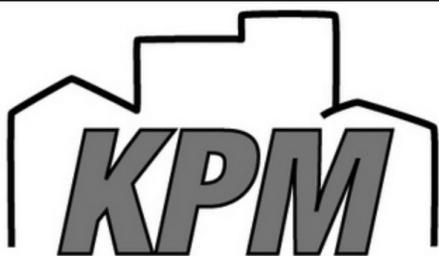
Despite the initial appeal of Kirkville, the DNA lab has still not opened or hired any employees in Kirkville because many of the initial investors pulled out after the 2008 stock market crashed, Tate said.

Tate said there still is a chance the project will

move forward if it gets more private funding.

"A lot of people think the project's dead," he said. "It's not dead. It's probably on life support."

Tate said a future source of employment and revenue for the city could be a dental school at A.T. Still University. He said Kirkville is currently competing against San Diego and Orlando to be the site of the dental school. "The economic impact [of the dental school] on this community could be the strongest we've seen in the past 100 years here," he said.



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