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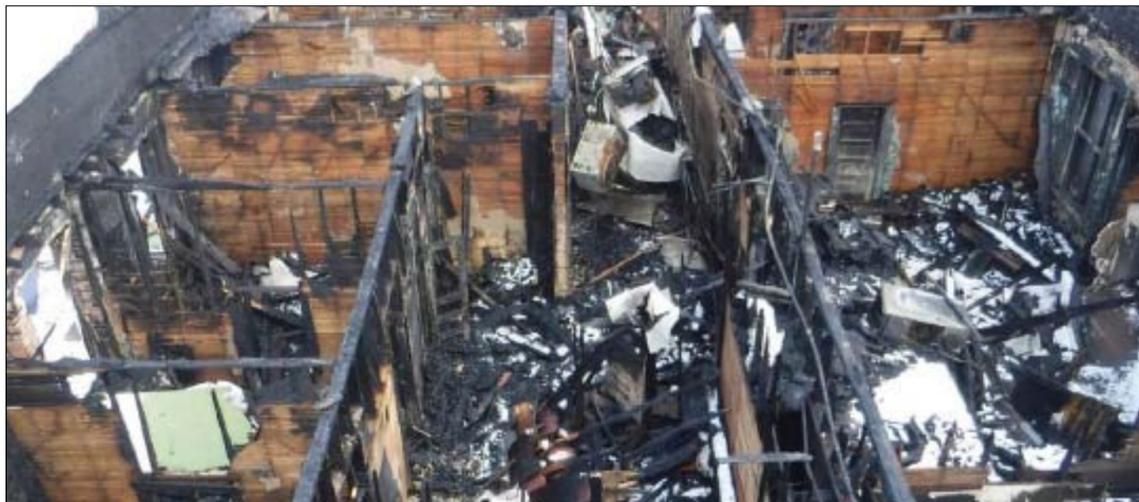
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The Kirksville Arts Center caught on fire Dec. 2, causing the loss of many types of artwork as well as the displacement of different events in the community which used the Arts Center as a venue. While the cause of the fire is undetermined it's likely thought to have been because of a complication with electrical wiring.

## Community mourns loss of Kirksville Arts Center

BY KIRA HINTZ  
Staff Writer

The loss of the Kirksville Arts Association building to a fire on Dec. 2 has brought both economic and personal changes that will affect the city and the community of Kirksville with the investigation of the fire closed.

Assistant City Manager Ashley Young said losing the Arts Center could possibly have a negative impact on The Square. Young said because people can no longer come to the Arts Center, the traffic of the downtown could decline. Young said having more people in The Square benefits the business owners downtown and that more traffic usually equals more revenue for the local downtown businesses. Although the Kirksville Arts Association is still committed to rebuilding, Young said the location of the new building has not yet been decided. Young said the new location could be in Kirksville or somewhere else, but that community and downtown business owners would be glad to have the KAA stay in The Square.

Young said an event meant to take place downtown also had to be relocated because of the Art Center's damage.

Young said a Founders Day Frontier Celebration was planned to be held between City Hall and the Arts Center.

"We were going to have festive lights strung between buildings and tables and we were going to have a kind of folk style band play and have a meal that would recreate the original meal that was served to celebrate the naming of Kirksville, which included venison and different frontier fair type at the time," Young said. "And those plans obviously will have to be changed, so we're looking to see what we can do within city government to continue to celebrate this important anniversary for our city."

Young said to the best of his knowledge the KAA directors have not yet made a decision about the relocation of the building. What they plan to do, Young said, is go through a deliberate strategic planning process for the building, which they had intended to do before the fire with received grant funds, but the process has now taken on a more significant purpose after the fire.

Ray Jagger, who has been the Kirksville Police Department's certified fire investigator for three years in Missouri and on the national level, has been helping the KAA identify the source of the fire.

Jagger said he was contacted shortly after the first officers were on the scene.

"It's like any crime scene," Jagger said. "The first thing I've always done is to make a lap to see what's burnt, what's going on with it. And then you try to talk to all the key players that are there now, make contact with the commander because you've got to work together on it. [The incident commander] has gotta put out the fire and you've gotta figure out

what happened. So the two of you have to work together. But mostly then what I try to do is try to document what the firemen are doing because that way I can use that information to determine what was done before they got there."

The primary goal of the fire investigator, Jagger said, is to get to the scene as soon as possible, establish what's happening, document it, and then let the documentation help piece the causation of the damage together.

Jagger said fire incidents are the only crime where the crime scene is tampered with before the investigation occurs. Also, Jagger said the KPD has to work well with the Fire Department to understand what damage was done to the building before the fire was put out so the KPD can prove the source of the fire in court.

The source of the fire is found, Jagger said, by deciding where the area of origin is, looking within that area of origin to determine what the possible ignition sources in that area are, then eliminating what couldn't have started the fire.

Jagger said the cause of the KAA building fire is undetermined, but likely was caused by the electrical wires.

"[The KPD] outlined what the area of origin was and I said that I had found one set of possible ignition sources," Jagger said. "What we found — I found — was some wires. When electrical wires short out, it creates a copper melt on those wires and creates a heat on the end of it. And that's how you know that there was a fire."

Jagger said it's impossible to for sure say the cause of the fire was electrical despite evidence of where the fire appears to have started.

"Did [the conductors] short out and create the fire, or did the fire destroy the insulation and then the insulation shorted out? Well, it's the question of what came first."

Jagger said he and the KPD did not go into the building to further identify any other ignition sources because they used one ignition source and decided how much money it would cost to go and analyze the others. Jagger said the cost would've been \$20,000 and because the police ruled it out as a non-suspicious fire, it didn't make sense to spend that amount of money to eliminate all causes.

Meanwhile, when Jagger was investigating the fire's cause, people like Andrea O'Brien lost their artwork that was displayed inside the arts center because of the fire.

The KAA, O'Brien, president of Hands of Friendship Quilt Guild, said she and her club were asked to help assist with the Folk Art Society Conference which was to take place in November at the Arts Center. O'Brien said the KAA had asked the Guild to provide a Trunk Show for the event, which is when quilts are brought in a container and have their significance and story explained to the audience. The

exhibition displaying the quilts, O'Brien said, started the night before the fire and included about 35 quilts.

O'Brien said members of her Guild texted her and she and her friend went into town at 9 p.m. to see what was happening and if the quilts were okay. Arriving at the fire, O'Brien said she and her friend were nervous that the quilts might be lying on the street somewhere or might be ruined because they were not a priority of the firefighters trying to put out the fire. O'Brien said almost all the quilts were destroyed except for one, which was saved but has intense water damage and permanent soot stains.

O'Brien said seeing the fire and the damage to the quilts was devastating.

"The one quilt that was saved was one that I made from scraps that my grandma had left, and there's no way to recreate that," O'Brien said. "The fabrics are gone. The quilt itself is completely gone. What was saved is a burned piece of — it's a burnt piece of mess. The other quilt that I made was made from all brand-new fabrics and I made that quilt based on an inspiration that I had based on a picture that my son took of a sunset. I think the hard part is when you put so much time and energy into creating something really beautiful, it's not just a blanket you throw on a bed. It's made with so much love and so much care and so much attention to detail and it takes a lot of time. Hours and hours and hours of time. I probably put 160 to 180 hours just between those two quilts alone. So, they become a part of you and the stories that go along with them are a part of you."

O'Brien said all owners of the quilts were contacted and the KAA called her to identify the quilts. Some members are thinking of cutting out pieces, O'Brien said, and framing them in shadow boxes or possibly recreating their quilts.

The loss of the Arts Center, O'Brien said, will be felt by all of the community.

"The loss of the Arts Center is devastating to the whole community," O'Brien said. "The arts in Kirksville is something that really gives our community a lot of character. We have a lot of different types of artists in our community that people don't always think about outside of the painters, people that do sculpting and things like that. There are a lot of forms of art that when you think about art as a whole, there a lot of various skilled people in this community. To me, the Arts Center helps to bring them together in a place that celebrates the culture and the history and the talent that we have here. It also has helped to educate other community members and schools and anybody who has visited some of the exhibits that they've had, it helps educate them on the different aspects of what the art means, what it derives, what it represents from the cultures of the communities where it comes from and it really provides a great educational piece."

## Truman Board of Governors reveals presidential candidate expectations

BY JESSICA SHULTZ  
Staff Writer

In an email to the student body, Truman State University Board of Governors said it narrowed down semifinalists for the University president position and will proceed with interviewing the finalists with the Stakeholder Advisory Committee.

The email explained the benefits of having a closed search. One detail that was revealed was that two thirds of the semi-finalist applications would not have applied had the search process been open.

The confidential process, using the Stakeholder Advisory Committee to provide feedback about the candidates, resulted in a search that included a robust group of experienced applicants from across the country, according to the email.

The Board of Governors gave more context about qualifications they seek in the next Truman president.

Sarah Burkemper, former Board of Governors chair, said the presidential search process is moving along, and there is limited time for Truman students to express their thoughts about character qualities they want in their next president.

Burkemper said students are advised to submit the Constituent Survey on the Board of Governors' website or speak directly to Student Government President, senior JJ Dorrell, who is also serving as a Presidential Search Committee member.

## Steps taken to protect Hazel Creek Lake

BY NICOLAS TELEP  
Staff Writer

The City of Kirksville is applying for a state grant to fund a project to combat erosion at Hazel Creek Lake, one of the city's sources of tap water.

The City Council approved the city's application for the Source Water Protection Development and Implementation Grant, administered through the Missouri Department of Natural Resources on Nov. 21. The grant would provide the majority of the funding for reinforcing the lake's shorelines to prevent erosion with the city covering the remainder of the cost.

Kirksville City Engineer Len Kollars said the city is seeking a 25-75 percent matching grant with the state, for a total of about \$100,000. By the terms of the grant, the project will have to be completely finished by the end of 2017, but Kollars said he sees that as a reasonable goal. He said while the water quality at Hazel Creek Lake is good, wind and wave action are eroding sections of the shoreline of the 35-year-old lake. He said as eroded sediment falls down to the bottom of the lake, the capacity of the lake is reduced. Additionally, Kollars said, eroding sediment makes it harder for vegetation to take root, and leaves the banks even more vulnerable to damage.

"In order to keep the volume of the lake at its maximum peak we like to minimize the impact on sediment deposits and erosion into the water, but the quality of the water is very good in Hazel Creek," Kollars said. "The life expectancy of a lake should exceed fifty years or more."

Kollars said about half of Kirksville's water supply comes from the city-owned Hazel Creek Lake. It is especially important in the summer when the city's other source of water — Forest Lake in Thousand Hills State Park — is kept at a high level for recreational use.

Assistant City Manager Ashley Young said there has not been a maintenance project like this undertaken at Hazel Creek Lake since it was built in the early 1980s. Young said boat ramps on the north and south shore of the lake will be specifically targeted with funding from the grant. He said the lake is popular for fishing, hunting and boating, and the improvements on the shorelines would enhance the recreational experience at the lake.

Young said the project has "the goal not only of preserving the recreation areas but, of course ultimately protecting the water supply by reducing the turbidity [amount of sediment] of the water that we're taking into our water treatment facility."

He also said the less sediment there is in the lake, the less money the city has to spend on treating the water.

"It's a win-win for everyone," Young said.



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will return to weekly editions this semester.