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APRIL 2016



The March 10 groundbreaking ceremony included officials from Lee's Summit R-7 and UCM as well as Gov. Jay Nixon, community leaders and students.

Construction kick-off for new Summit Technology Academy/Missouri Innovation Campus

New facility is funded through no-tax-increase bond issue and unique partnership with R-7 and UCM

The Lee's Summit R-7 community celebrated the construction kick-off of a new facility designed to house several nationally recognized programs that are reshaping the way students experience education. At a March 10 groundbreaking ceremony, representatives from the Lee's Summit R-7 School District and the University of Central

Missouri (UCM) launched construction of a new Summit Technology Academy / Missouri Innovation Campus.

The one-of-a-kind school is made possible thanks to voter approval of a 2015 Lee's Summit R-7 no-tax-increase bond issue as well as a trailblazing partnership between the R-7 School District and UCM. The

approximately \$40 million facility will house Lee's Summit R-7 Summit Technology Academy; the Missouri Innovation Campus, a partnership involving R-7, UCM and Metropolitan Community College (MCC); and programs currently housed in the UCM-

INNOVATION CAMPUS | page 16

From the superintendent

COMMENTARY



Dr. David McGehee is Lee's Summit R-7 School District superintendent and a Lee's Summit resident

David McGehee

Celebrating a new school

There's nothing quite as rewarding as seeing a plan come together, a partnership flourish and a new school begin to take shape. All this happened in one afternoon earlier this spring at the groundbreaking of our district's new Summit Technology Academy / Missouri Innovation Campus. Held March 10, this historic event captured regional and national attention, placing Lee's Summit R-7 in the spotlight once again for these future-focused programs and our unique partnership with higher education.

MCGEHEE | page 18

One-to-one Chromebooks further engage students, raise level of critical thinking

Connect2Learn is helping students be more successful in school

Since its initiation last fall, the Lee's Summit R-7 Connect2Learn program is further engaging students in school while leveling the playing field for all students regardless of family income. Through this new program, students from kindergarten through high school received a Google Chromebook during August 2015 with more than 17,500 devices distributed during just a few weeks.

"Connect2Learn provides equitable access for all students and teachers both at school and at home," said Dr. Amy Gates, R-7 executive director of technology. "No longer do teachers have to schedule technology into their lesson and wait until they can reserve a computer lab. The technology device is always there for students and teachers to use to broaden the learning beyond the classroom and support the individualized needs of each student."

Dr. Kevin Daniel, R-7 associate superintendent of instruction and leadership, added that the district's teachers are constantly seeking to move students to think, process information, collaborate and consistently use problem-solving skills.

"Connect2Learn is raising the level of student engagement," Dr. Daniel added, "raising the level of critical thinking."

An important component of Connect2Learn's success has been comprehensive training offered for teachers to help them increase their ability to design lessons that are empowering and engaging in the one-to-one environment.

Misty Beichley, a first-grade teacher at Mason Elementary, said Connect2Learn has helped her students become more independent when it comes to extending their learning.

"They can take the concepts they are learning in class and continue to research, explore or practice the skills and ideas when they have time outside of the

classroom," Ms. Beichley said. "I am excited to see the excitement my students have when they cannot wait to come to school to show me something that they have found on their own about our unit of study."

Ricky Boedeker, Pleasant Lea Middle School science teacher, said that students are discovering new apps, resources and educational interactives to support their own learning each day. "However, I feel we are only beginning to see what students are capable of using this technology," he said. "We could be providing the intrigue or tools for future web programmers, entrepreneurs and scientists with this experience."

Ginny Blumhorst, Cedar Creek Elementary second-grade teacher, said she appreciates the ability to make technology purposeful and go deeper into the curriculum with the one-to-one Chromebooks.

"I love many different programs, sites and tech tools that I use on a regular basis," she said. "Some of the things I have done for the first time with my second-graders are things that many would be amazed that they can do. They continue to surprise me and themselves!"

Mr. Boedeker shared a recent example of how Connect2Learn is making a difference in his classroom during a lesson about planets that involved students working in teams. Students were asked to create a "vacation package" that offered a new and exciting trip to their planet. "Taking this a step further,



Pleasant Lea Middle School science students work on projects during class.

students created storyboards and scripts to film their 'infomercial' as a final product," he said. "The creativity of each group was amazing and they were able to record and edit video as well as voice-overs for their information."

Unfortunately one pair of students, crippled by illness, missed four of the five recording days. "During their time in class, the two students were able to connect over Google Hangouts and edit their storyboards, scripts and even video during the school day," the PLMS teacher added. "This was just one more example of how students stay connected."

In addition to building excitement

among students, Connect2Learn has been well-received by Lee's Summit R-7 families.

"I have received wonderfully positive responses to many of the projects we have completed with our Chromebooks," added Ms. Beichley, "and are then able to instantly share out to our parents so students can get instant feedback."

For more information about Connect2Learn, visit <http://connect2learn.lsr7.org/>. The website includes resources for students and parents including a frequently asked questions section.

Turn Your Life Inside Out

Driving into the Woodland Trails entry is your first realization this is unlike any housing development you've seen. There are enormous timber structures, natural stone, rolling hills and serene ponds, all connected by miles of paved walking trails. You immediately feel the breathing room, almost a small-town atmosphere, which is difficult to find in such close proximity to everything you need. There are no "cookie cutter" homes, only custom-built where unlimited choices have created the perfect fit to individual styles. Each home is distinct.

Along the unique trail system you see mothers pushing strollers, couples sharing a quiet walk and families exercising their dogs. People are visiting at the resort-style pool, sitting under the timbered cabana watching family enjoy the hot tub and water slide. Kids are playing on the interactive playground, while others kick soccer balls on the adjacent, neighborhood athletic field. It's like entering an "outdoor lifestyle community", someone has clearly made a huge investment in this land and infrastructure! What a discovery!



Developer announces Phase 3 at Woodland Trails

Woodland Trails is leading the housing boom just south of Lee's Summit, and the addition of the new Phase 3 lots ensures continued growth for the area. This is good news for home buyers because of the economic benefits:

- Woodland Trails is a large scale, multi-year development
- The Riffe brand ensures quality and financial stability
- It's within the award-winning Lee's Summit School District
- There are only a handful of lots left in Phases 1 and 2, and the amenity package is virtually complete

"The lots in Phase 3 are some of the most scenic and interesting, nestled among woods and rolling hills."

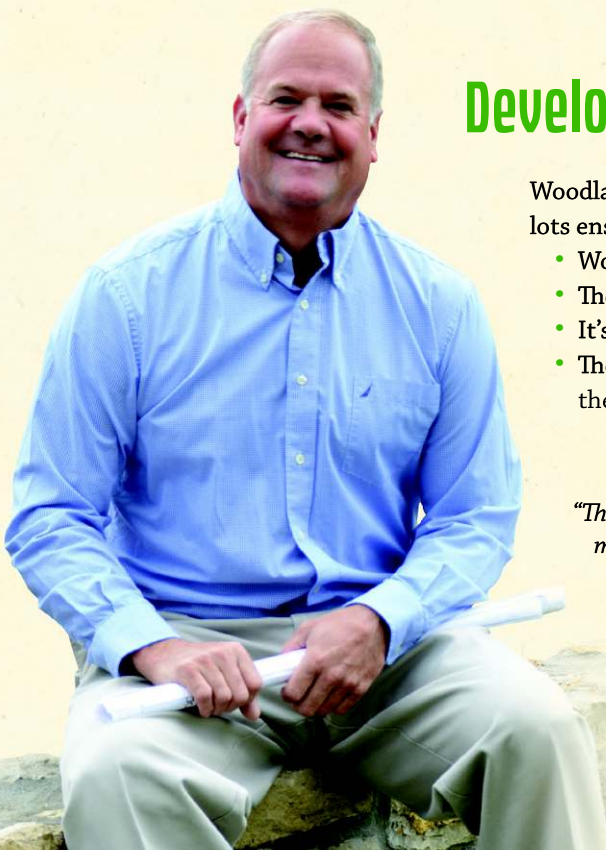
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Senior citizens tour Pleasant Lea Middle School as part of R-7 community program

Area senior citizens returned to school March 16 as part of a special program hosted by the R-7 School District. Through the district's Senior Citizens' School Tour program, the local residents visited Pleasant Lea Middle School.

The event included a tour of the facility, lunch with students and a performance by the school's Black and Gold Choir.

Since the district's Senior Citizens' School Tours began in 2007, more than 400 local seniors have participated in the program. The opportunities are provided to seniors two times each school year and are free to participants.

The tours for senior citizens are part of the R-7 School District's Comprehensive School Improvement Plan and were recommended by a community team. Plans call for a fall 2016 tour.



The Black and Gold Choir performs for the special guests at PLMS.

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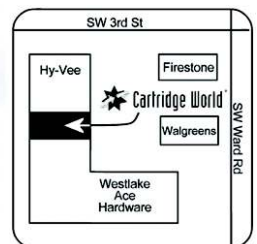
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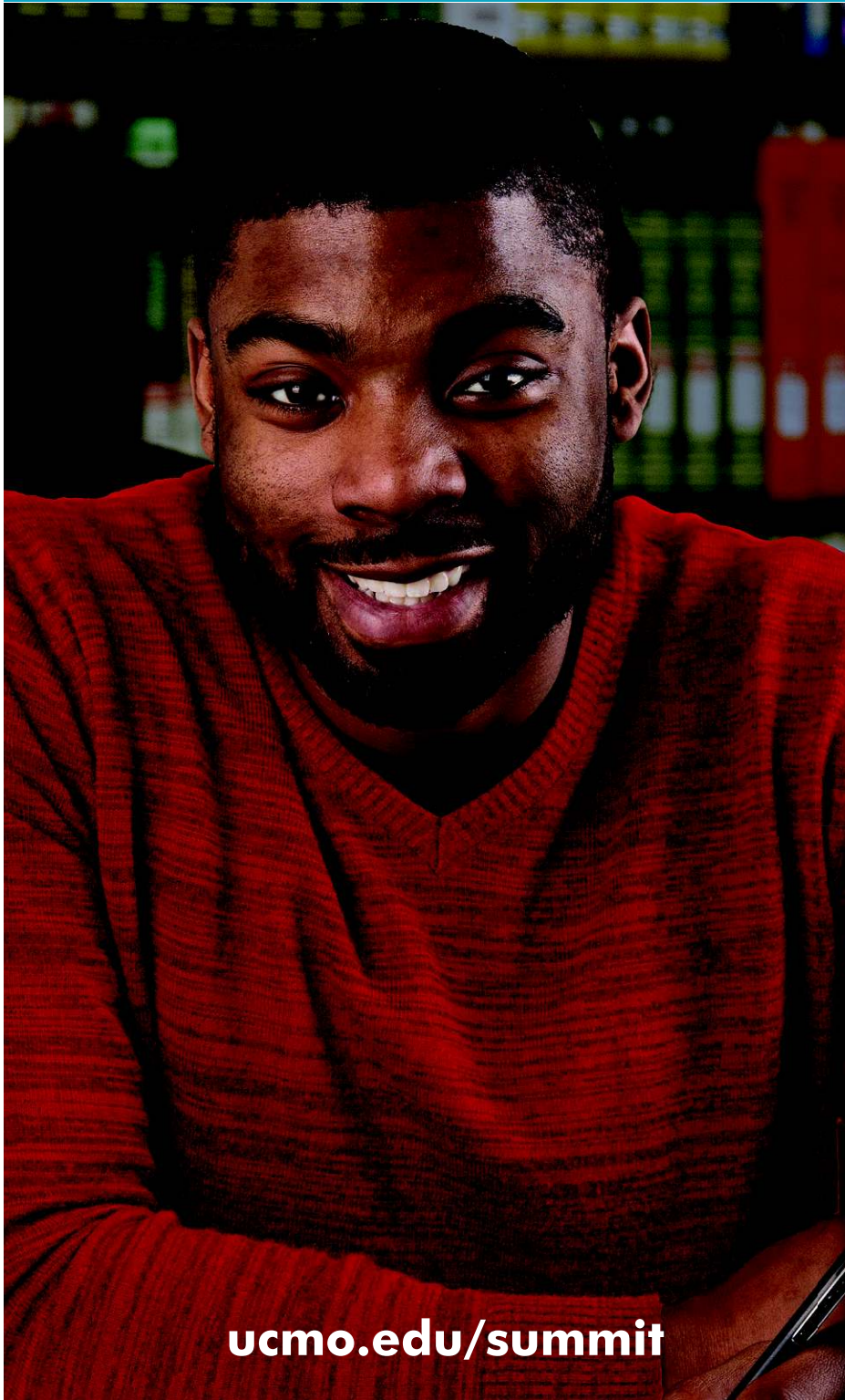
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LS Educational Foundation hosts 'Taste of Lee's Summit' to benefit R-7 schools and students

Annual event raises nearly \$115,000

The Lee's Summit Educational Foundation hosted the 17th annual Taste of Lee's Summit on March 5 to raise money in support of excellence in education in the Lee's Summit R-7 community. Held at The Pavilion at John Knox Village, the event raised nearly \$115,000.

The popular, sold-out event included both live and silent auctions, a Power Balloon Game Board, a Dine-Around Package, a PLINKO Game and an opportunity to help provide classroom PEAK Grants and technology through the Fund-A-Cause portion of the evening which showcased and exceeded a matching \$5,000 grant opportunity from the H.B. Oppenheimer Foundation. The Foundation also shared information on how to become a Legacy Donor through

estate and/or endowment gifts. Theme for this year's event was "Celebrating Champions: Our Students, Our Staff, Our Community."

More than 630 guests and 80 volunteers, including Music Parents from each high school and from Great Beginnings, also had the opportunity to sample cuisine from the following businesses: Andy's Frozen Custard, Bleu Burger, Costa Vida, Edible Arrangements, The Egg & I, Fig Tree Cafe and Bakery, Jason's Deli, Longhorn Steakhouse, Neighborhood Cafe, Outback Steakhouse, Summit Grill and Bar, Summit Hickory Pit BBQ, Ted's Cafe Escondido, Waldo Pizza, County Beverage Company, Hy-Vee and Post Coffee Company.

Volunteer event co-chairs were Bill

Baird and Chip Moxley, and the live auction was led by auctioneer Todd Hertzog. A number of area individuals and organizations also generously helped sponsor Taste of Lee's Summit, including annual Friends of the Foundation Sponsors at five different participation levels plus Taste of Lee's Summit Event Sponsors.

Ambassador Sponsor includes H.B. Oppenheimer Foundation.

Superintendent's Circle Sponsors include CCR Roofing, JE Dunn, Larry and Trish Frevert, Bob and Marlese Gourley, Guin Mundorf, Major Saver, Meyer Music, Paradise Park, Jane and Bob Rutherford, Summit Custom Homes, LLC, and Tingle Flooring.

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TASTE OF LEE'S SUMMIT | page 7

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TASTE OF LEE'S SUMMIT | from 6

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The Lee's Summit Educational Foundation is a non-profit, 501c3 organization established to raise and manage resources in order to expand and initiate educational opportunities for R-7 students and staff. For more information, visit www.lsedfoundation.com.



LS R-7 LET'S TALK! COMMUNICATIONS TOOL APPROACHES THE 500 DIALOGUE MARK

Through online tool, you are invited to submit questions, comments, suggestions, concerns and compliments 24/7

During fall 2015, the Lee's Summit R-7 School District took steps to make it even easier to reach school district leadership with the launch of a new, cloud-based communications tool, known as Let's Talk! Community members, staff and students are invited to contact the district with questions, comments, suggestions, concerns or compliments via www.lsr7.org.

As of late March, close to 500 individuals had used Let's Talk! to communicate with the Lee's Summit R-7 School District, and the number of

dialogues submitted is growing each day.

With Let's Talk!, individuals may visit the district's website 24/7 to communicate with various departments on a wide variety of topics.



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R-7 citizens' groups host legislative breakfast

A group of R-7 School District community members recently participated in a legislative forum with state representatives serving in the Missouri General Assembly. Approximately 35 members of the R-7 Citizens' Advisory Committee, Business Roundtable and Board of Education attended the March 11 event, hosted by the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

All 10 state legislators representing the school district were invited to attend the forum with the following attending: Rep. Mike Cierpiot, Rep. Gary Cross, Sen. Rep. Rebecca Roeber and Rep. Sheila Solon.

The discussion focused on education topics such as funding for public schools, economic development to enhance state revenues, tax-credit reform, re-writing of the state's foundation formula for public schools and local control for Missouri school districts.

The Lee's Summit R-7 School District legislative platform is available at <http://www.lsr7.org/district/2012-legislative-platform/>. This webpage also includes contact information for local legislators, a toolkit for advocacy and sign-up opportunities for the R-7 School District's advocacy electronic newsletter.



Legislators participating included (from left) Rep. Cierpiot, Rep. Cross, Rep. Roeber and Rep. Solon.



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Two teams qualify for National CyberPatriot competition

Two Lee's Summit R-7 teams qualified for the CyberPatriot National Competition, including Summit Technology Academy's Team Sudo and Pleasant Lea Middle School's BSOD.

The students will compete with students from throughout the United States April 10 through 14 in Baltimore. At this event, they are placed in a red-team blue-team scenario where they have to secure their images faster than the red-team can hack into them. All team expenses to the national contest are paid by the CyberPatriot national program.

Summit Technology Academy also placed in the top third in the State Recognition Rounds. Team Sudo placed first, Team \$eri@l Killer\$ placed second and Kernel Panic placed third. Team Sudo is one of just 12 teams to advance from a pool of 1,638 open division teams. This is Summit Technology Academy's fourth straight year to qualify for the CyberPatriot national finals.

Four other R-7 middle-school teams also competed in the CyberPatriot competition with all four earning a spot in the semifinals round.



Team Sudo members include (from left) Christian Durst, Zane Brown, Tyler Waits, Justin Nitz, Isaac McGee and Jack Bliss.



BSOD Team members prepare for competition.



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Four seniors named to Missouri Scholars 100

Four Lee's Summit R-7 School District high school seniors were recently selected for the 2016 Missouri Scholars 100, a statewide program that honors 100 of Missouri's top academic students in the graduating class of 2016. Students will be recognized at a luncheon in Columbia on April 24.

R-7 students selected are Jordan Hoffman and A.J. Iversen of Lee's Summit High School and Vance Kelley and Jonghae Lee of Lee's Summit North High School. In ad-

dition, Davis Perry of Lee's Summit West High School received the Missouri Scholars 100 honorable mention award.

Missouri Scholars 100 is sponsored by the Missouri Association of Secondary School Principals. Schools across Missouri are invited to nominate candidates for this state-wide recognition. The selection is based primarily on a formula using the student's grade-point average (GPA) and ACT or SAT college-preparation score.

Three students named National Merit Scholarship finalists

Lee's Summit R-7 students recently named National Merit Scholarship Corporation finalists are Cameron Brock, Lucas Hall and Jonghae Lee, all Lee's Summit North High School. The students were named National Merit Scholarship Corporation semi-finalists last fall.

Recognized students have the opportunity to continue in the competition for approximately 8,200 National Merit Scholarship Awards, worth

close to \$33 million, to be offered this spring. There are approximately 15,000 finalists throughout the United States.

Nearly 1.5 million students throughout the United States entered the 2016 Merit Program as juniors by taking the preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test, which serves as an initial screen of program entrants.

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LS R-7 Kids Country preparing for Summer Camp

Planning is underway to bring fun, enriching, hands-on activities to the Lee's Summit R-7 Kids Country Summer Programs. Children will have the opportunity to explore science, literacy and art in a fun and creative environment. All curriculum is age appropriate and meets the needs of both younger and older students.

Science activities during "Weird Science" will focus on building skills in physical and earth sciences. Children will enjoy a variety of fun and innovative book titles and activities during "Story Builders" designed to delight and extend the learning experience of each book.

Weekly field trips are planned to locations such as Coco Key, Bump City, bowling, Summit Waves, movies and Paradise Park. Children will also enjoy socializing and friendly competition in the program's traditional I-Games (Intramural Games).

Online registration for the summer program is beginning in mid-March. To enroll, visit <http://bass.lsr7.org>

Individuals interested in working with children this summer may apply for full- and part-time opportunities. Visit www.lsr7.org to complete an employment application for school-age care site associate. You may also call (816) 986-3440 for additional information.



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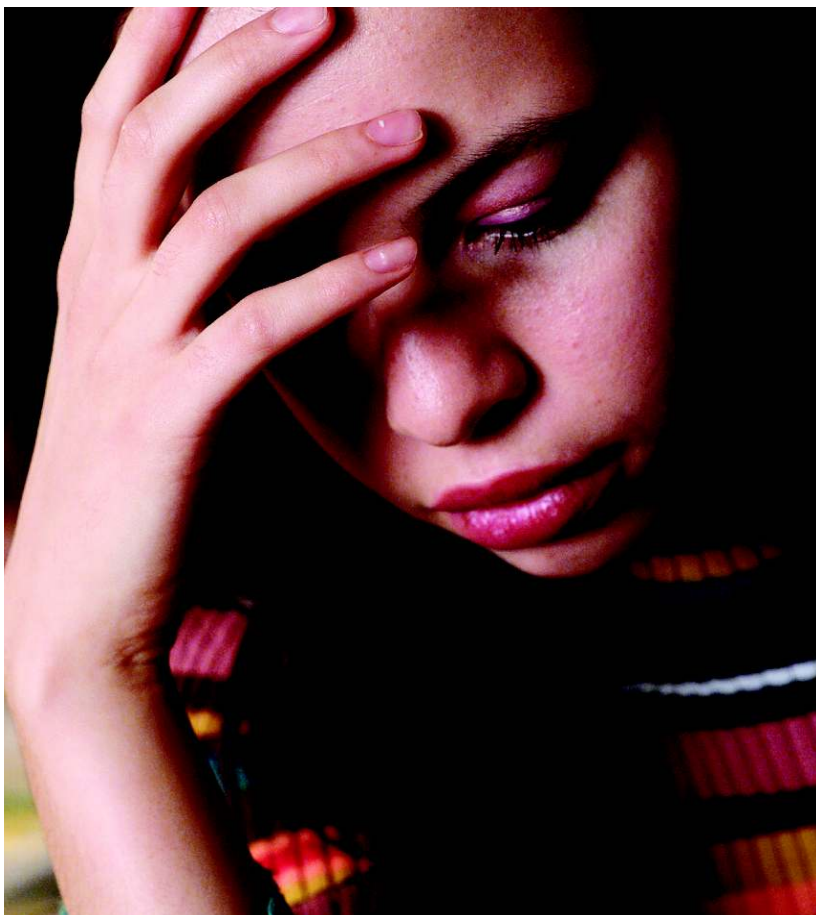
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Board of Education names new administrators for 2016-17

The Lee's Summit R-7 School District Board of Education approved the employment of several new district-wide administrators and principals at the organization's February and March meetings.

The following were approved at the February meeting:

Kristen Merrell, currently assistant principal at Great Beginnings Early Education Center, was named principal for Hazel Grove Elementary for the 2016-17 school year. She is replacing Dr. Chris Troester who is retiring in June.

Aaron Barnett, currently assistant principal at Comanche Elementary and Rising Star Elementary in the Shawnee Mission School District, was named principal for Pleasant Lea Elementary for 2016-17. He will replace Trish Alexander, who is retiring in June.

Greg Johnson, currently principal at Cordill-Mason Elementary in the Blue Springs School District, was named principal for Sunset Valley Elementary for the 2016-17 school year. He will replace Beth Trigg, who is retiring in June.

Andy Campbell, currently assistant principal at Summit Ridge Academy, will serve as principal at Summit Ridge in 2016-17. He replaces Burt Whaley, who is retiring in June.

Tracy Bertoncin, currently a teacher at Lee's Summit High School, was named assistant principal for LSHS. She is replacing Jamie Argotsinger, who is retiring in June.

Jereme Hubbard, currently an assistant principal at Lee's Summit West High School, was named athletics/activities assistant principal at LSWHS. He will replace Debbie Katzfey who is retiring in June.

The following were approved at the March meeting:

Dr. Rexanne Hill, currently assistant principal at Lee's Summit North High School, was named director of student services for the 2016-17 year. She is

replacing Dr. Matt Miller, who has resigned to accept a position in another school district.

Kayla England, currently an assistant principal at Clinton High School, was named assistant principal at Lee's Summit West High School. She is replacing Jereme Hubbard, who will serve as the school's athletics/activities assistant principal next year.

James Oyler, currently a science teacher at Lee's Summit High School, will serve as administrative intern at LSHS. This is a new position at LSHS.

Rhea Moses, currently Lee's Summit North High School lead physical-education and health teacher, was named administrative intern for LSNHS for 2016-17. This is a new position at LSNHS.

Jesse Dziurawiec, currently a teacher at Lee's Summit West High School, will serve as LSWHS administrative intern. This is a new position.

Ryan Town, currently a teacher at Summit Ridge Academy, was named assistant principal for Summit Ridge Academy. He will replace Andy Campbell, who was recently named principal of the school.

Jeanie Cook, currently a teacher at Pleasant Lea Elementary, was named assistant principal for Great Beginnings Early Education Center. She will replace Kristen Merrell, who will serve as principal at Hazel Grove Elementary in 2016-17.



Kristen Merrell



Aaron Barnett



Greg Johnson



Andy Campbell



Tracy Bertoncin



Jereme Hubbard



Dr. Rexanne Hill



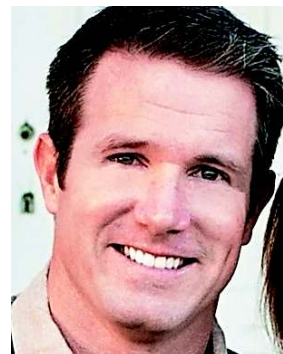
Kayla England



James Oyler



Rhea Moses



Jesse Dziurawiec



Ryan Town



Jeanie Cook

Dr. David McGehee featured in Ingram's magazine 2016 'Icons of Education'

Dr. David McGehee, R-7 School District superintendent, was recently featured in Ingram's magazine as one of 11 "Icons of Education" for 2016. The education leaders are profiled in the February issue of the regional magazine. The majority of the honorees work in higher education, and Dr. McGehee is the only individual recognized who is currently working in elementary and secondary education.

Within Dr. McGehee's profile, he discussed his years in education as well as his childhood and his motivation for becoming a teacher and a school administrator. The first in his family to go to college, the R-7 superintendent began his career as a teacher before be-

coming a principal and superintendent in a small district in rural Missouri. He has served as the Lee's Summit R-7 superintendent since 2006 and previously served as the superintendent of the Raymore-Peculiar School District and Sparta School District.

An educator since 1987, Dr. McGehee has earned several other honors during his career, including being named New Superintendent of the Year by the Missouri Association of School Administrators (MASA) in 2000, Superintendent of the Year by MASA in 2013 and Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award winner from eSchool News in 2011.

FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR HEAD START PRESCHOOL ENCOURAGED TO CONTACT LEE'S SUMMIT R-7 SCHOOL DISTRICT

Families with preschool-age children who may qualify for services through Head Start are encouraged to contact the Lee's Summit R-7 School District. Head Start is a comprehensive, income-based, early education program. All areas of development, including cognitive, language, motor and social-emotional, are addressed. Head Start also provides support and resources to meet family needs.

Preschool services are free with an approved application. For more information, please contact Great Beginnings Early Education Center at (816) 986-2497.

Head Start is a half-day program offered for children who are from age 3 to age 5, and 2016-17 students must be 3 by July 31. Preschool is offered four



days each week, and breakfast and lunch OR lunch and a snack is provided daily. In addition, transportation (in a limited service area) and school supplies are provided at no cost to qualifying families.

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Financial assistance for this project has been provided by the Missouri Arts Council, a state agency. For more information about Truman Heartland Community Foundation, visit www.thcf.org.

Nancy Frick and Pam Wining receive LS R-7 Learning for Life Awards

Nancy Frick and Pam Wining each received the Lee's Summit R-7 Learning for Life Award. Mrs. Frick is a secretary at Lee's Summit High School. Mrs. Wining is a fifth-grade teacher at Trailridge Elementary

The award is presented to one employee each month who is nominated by co-workers and selected by a staff committee.

"Nancy has a way of making each student feel important and valued," said a colleague about Mrs. Frick. "I have honestly never met a more sincere, genuine person in my life. She epitomizes kindness and sincerity."

"She is always happy to share ideas and is the first one to jump in and help if anyone needs it," said a colleague about Mrs. Wining. "She is always looking for the good in others and is always looking to celebrate others."



Nancy Frick



Pam Wining



PRAIRIE VIEW ELEMENTARY PARTICIPATES IN DAY OF SERVICE

Goal for students and staff is to make the world a better place

Approximately 900 students and 112 staff members from Prairie View Elementary dedicated an entire day to helping others on Feb. 26. Through the school's first-ever Day of Service, students and staff members participated in a variety of community-service activities, partnering with local businesses and organizations.

Community organizations and businesses involved in the event included Heart to Heart International, Tannies for Kids through the Community Service League, Lee's Summit Parks and Recreation, Missouri Highway Patrol, Truman Medical Center, Abundant Life, Harvesters, John Knox Village Care Center and Lee's Summit Social Services. The students were able to select from a variety of activities designed to help others and build connections through leadership and learning. The day ended with an all-school assembly.

HONOREES TO BE INDUCTED INTO LEE'S SUMMIT HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

Five distinguished alumni are being inducted into the Lee's Summit High School Hall of Fame on April 9 at Lee's Summit High School. Alumni being honored for the 2015-2016 school year are Mary Ann Rhoads, Class of 1966; Lt Col Joseph B. Walter, Class of 1982; Brian Clark, Class of 1987; Robert R. Dunning, Class of 1957; and Kim Headley Fritchie, Class of 1977.

Lee's Summit High School has inducted distinguished graduates

into the school's Hall of Fame for 20 years. Approximately five alumni are inducted each year during a dinner ceremony. Plaques featuring the honorees are also displayed on the wall of fame at Lee's Summit High School.

The LSHS Hall of Fame inductees are selected by a committee of graduates and staff. Alumni are eligible for this honor 10 years after graduation. Nomination forms for the 2016-2017 year are available by calling (816) 986-2000.

Students selected to attend Missouri Fine Arts Academy

Lee's Summit R-7 students recently selected to attend the Missouri Fine Arts Academy are Susan Flower, Lee's Summit High School; Meghan Bell, Lee's Summit North High School; and Ally French, Lee's Summit West High School.

The Missouri Fine Arts Academy is a unique three-week, residential summer program for exceptional Missouri artists who have completed their sophomore or junior year of high school. Initiated in 1996, the program offers students

the opportunity to enhance their skills in such fields as dance, visual arts, theatre and music while participating in a stimulating series of interdisciplinary and co-curricular activities. Students are nominated by their high schools to attend the Academy, complete an essay and submit a portfolio.

The academy will be held this summer at the Missouri State University. It is funded through program fees, grants, endowments, scholarships and private donations.

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INNOVATION CAMPUS | from 1

Lee's Summit.

Gov. Jay Nixon was a special guest at the event, calling the project a pillar of excellence that will stand as an example of how to successfully prepare students to compete in the world economy.

"We stand here ready to turn these shovels to begin to do something that's never been done before in the United States of America," Gov. Nixon said.

"We have been eagerly awaiting this groundbreaking day," said Dr. David McGehee, R-7 superintendent. "With this state-of-the-art facility, we can build on our already successful programs. I am looking forward to having the opportunity to better prepare students for their future through this creative approach that involves educators and industry partners working together in an innovative and collaborative environment."

Terri Harmon, R-7 Board of Education president, thanked the school district's voters who approved the April 2015 no-tax-increase bond issue by approximately 80 percent. This \$40 million bond issue is also funding facility improvements that are positively impacting each R-7 school.

"Our innovative programs are already changing the way students experience high school and college, and this school will allow more students to benefit while saving money for our taxpayers by allowing us to share resources with UCM," Mrs. Harmon added.

The 140,000-square-foot facility includes spaces dedicated to the Summit Tech / MIC programs, spaces for the UCM-Lee's Summit programs and shared space that will be used by both organizations.

"Since collaboratively opening the MIC four years ago, we have broken new ground in redefining education and student success," said Dr. Chuck Ambrose, University of Central Missouri president. "We look to the future excited about taking our partnership to the next level through this shared facility, and the opportunity to extend elements of the MIC model into other parts of the metropolitan area and the state."

The March 10 construction kick-off was attended by approximately 120 community



Elaine Metcalf of Summit Technology Academy is pictured with middle-school students (from left) Dan Martin of Summit Lakes, Lauren Wiley of Bernard Campbell and Ethan Winger of Pleasant Lea.

members. The actual groundbreaking involved the governing boards from Lee's Summit R-7 and UCM; Gov. Nixon; Dr. McGehee; Dr. Ambrose; Dr. Kirk Nooks of MCC-Longview; Dr. Brent Blevins, R-7 deputy superintendent; Lee's Summit Mayor Randy Rhoads; Bill Brown, chairperson of the Lee's Summit Economic Development Council; and one student from each of the Lee's Summit R-7 middle schools.

Summit Technology Academy opened in 1999 with the purpose of offering a highly focused academic program in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Missouri Innovation Campus, opened within Summit Tech in summer 2012 thanks to the partnership between Lee's Summit R-7, UCM and MCC as well as the involvement of more than 40 business partners.

Recognized by President Barack Obama in 2013, the MIC focuses on preparing students for high-demand careers while accelerating the time it takes to complete a college degree and greatly reducing the cost of a college education. The first cohort of MIC students, who graduated from high school and received their associate degree from MCC in 2014, will graduate from UCM with a bachelor's degree in May 2016. In addition to graduating at least two years ahead of their high-school classmates, the students participate in multi-year internships with industry leaders beginning in their junior year of high school. The majority of the students in the first cohort have already received job offers from these recognized companies.

"The MIC program means a lot to me," said Trevor Brixey, Missouri Innovation Campus student and intern at Cerner. "I

love the innovative learning environment that gets me on the job experience while taking college courses."

Located on 15 acres near Ward and Tudor Road, the new 140,000-square-foot facility is scheduled to open in August 2017. Through the school district's partnership with UCM, Lee's Summit R-7 is paying approximately 40 percent toward the new school with UCM paying the remaining 60 percent. Based on an agreement between both organizations, the R-7 School District will be the sole owner of the facility with UCM paying its portion through a rental agreement.

For more information about Summit Tech / MIC and the April no-tax-increase bond issue, visit the Lee's Summit R-7 web page.

Pleasant Lea Middle School student wins county spelling bee, qualifying for national competition

Sophia Hoffman will make second trip to national bee

Sophia Hoffman, a seventh-grader at Pleasant Lea Middle School, captured first place Feb. 27 at the Jackson-Clay County Spelling Bee, qualifying for the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Sophia will travel to Washington, D.C., for the national competition, scheduled for May 22-27.

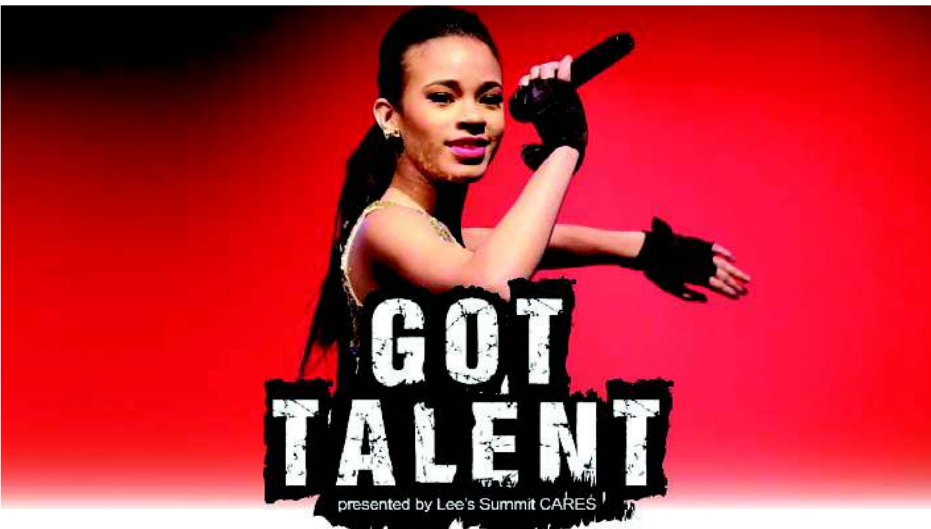
Three R-7 students have held the Jackson County Spelling Bee title for six out of the last seven years. In addition, all three students -- Sophia Hoffman, Meah Wilburn and Jordan Hoffman (Sophia's sister) -- have attended both Highland Park Elementary and Pleasant Lea

Middle School.

This is Sophia's second time to qualify for the national bee. She also won the county bee in 2015 as a sixth-grader at Highland Park Elementary. In 2014, Sophia won second place in the county event after she and another student gained national attention during a 95-round marathon. Sophia and a Kansas City middle-school student appeared together on "Good Morning America" and several other national shows, and Sophia was featured on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show."



Sophia Hoffman



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MCGEHEE | from 1

The new school is replacing classrooms and labs currently located in leased space and will allow us to take these successful programs to the next level. Having our own facility -- one specifically designed to meet the needs of these high-tech programs -- gives us the tools we need to grow, innovate and better serve students. Additional benefits include significant cost savings for our taxpayers and a meaningful boost to workforce development endeavors in our community and region.

In a little over two years, this facility has gone from “what-if” discussions to the planning stage to reality thanks to our community’s supportive voters and a highly effective partnership involving our school district and the University of Central Missouri. During our initial discussions, we frequently heard that successful partnerships between public K-12 schools and higher education are extremely rare and often difficult to maintain. I’m proud to say we have proved to be the exception to this rule thanks to the visionary leadership at both UCM and Lee’s Summit R-7.

Not only are the programs offered at Summit Tech / MIC changing the way students experience education, the school is serving as a model for superior workforce development, setting the stage for an even more positive economic environment in our community.

The many organizations and individuals involved in this project has been nothing short of remarkable. Both UCM and Metropolitan Community College have worked with Lee’s Summit R-7 to successfully develop the Missouri Innovation Campus, capturing national attention by accelerating the time it takes to earn a bachelor’s degree, greatly reducing the costs of higher education and connecting students to business through long-term internships.

Our staff at both Summit Tech and MIC has been exceptional in helping design, develop and implement these recognized programs. School staff members have worked closely with businesses to incorporate their input into hands-on, relevant curriculum. The more than 40 businesses involved in the MIC and the more than 200 businesses working with Summit Tech students have also been critical.

Organizations that helped provide early feedback regarding the plan for this school as well as the successful 2015 no-tax-increase bond issue include our Citizens’ Advisory Committee, Business Roundtable and PTA Council. Without the support of these three organizations as well as thousands of voters, we would not be celebrating the launch of this new school.

Finally, I want to thank the individuals who are a major reason these unique educational programs have prospered. Students at Summit Tech and MIC have been willing to step away from the traditional high-school environment to help us blaze this innovative trail to success. Their dedication to these programs and to their own goals has placed Summit Tech / MIC and our school district on the map once again. I am looking forward to seeing this school open in fall 2017 and to watching what the future will bring for our students.



Lisa Keezer receives flowers from Rhys Burke.

LISA KEEZER OF GREAT BEGINNINGS HONORED BY DOWN SYNDROME GUILD OF GREATER KC

Lisa Keezer, Great Beginnings Early Education Center teacher, was recognized March 2 by the Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City. Ms. Keezer received the organization’s Commitment to Excellence Award for her outstanding advocacy and support of individuals with Down Syndrome.

Each year, the guild recognizes 21 community champions to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day, which is March 21.

Nominated by a parent of a child at Great Beginnings, Ms. Keezer was praised for being an advocate for students, for seeing the value in each child and for enhancing the individual strengths of each of her students.

“Ms. Keezer is not just a great teacher, but a true visionary,” wrote the parent nominating her. “The students in her class learn to value their differences and look for each other’s positive qualities.”

R-7 staff members receive Reflections of Character Awards

Several Lee's Summit R-7 staff members were among 12 local citizens receiving Reflections of Character Awards at the Jan. 21 Lee's Summit Mayor's Character Breakfast. The awards are presented to community members who are nominated based on character traits. R-7 employees presented with the award were Kevin Holman and the Lee's Summit High School staff and Willard Parks.

Mr. Holman, campus supervisor at LSHS, coordinated a team of school employees who worked together to assist Sighris Sharber, a highly involved LSHS senior with special needs. Sighris was named homecoming king in fall 2015, and high-school staff members joined forces to create a memorable experience for Sighris including purchasing new clothing, arranging for a convertible for the parade, coordinating a video, taking Sighris out to dinner and taking Sighris' mother for a make-over. The LSHS staff

members were recognized for the character trait of cooperation.

Mr. Parks, a Lee's Summit R-7 bus driver, was nominated by a student and a teacher at Hazel Grove Elementary, one of the schools he serves. Known as "Big Will" to the students, he was praised by students and staff members for his caring attitude as well as the way he positively interacts with each student. He serves as a role model to students at the school and exhibits numerous positive character traits. Mr. Parks received the Reflections of Character Award for kindness.

Several R-7 students were also recognized with Reflections of Character Awards including Charity Hathcock of Lee's Summit North High School for compassion, Brian Galvez of Highland Park Elementary for courage and Trevor Allen and Tyler Butler of Lee's Summit West High School for citizenship.

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Info line: 816-986-1001. Web address: www.lsr7.org

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Lee's Summit R-7 is an exemplary school district, graduating students who are college and career ready with the competitive advantage necessary to be successful. Lee's Summit R-7 reflects a culture of respect and acceptance. Collaboration is an expectation that fosters mutual understanding and a focus on student achievement and staff development. Lee's Summit R-7 encourages innovation and creativity, recognizing student learning as our fundamental purpose.

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