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The Grand Rapids Press

March 27, 2006

Knowing our boundaries

Michigan doesn't have to fear a shooting war with Ohio or dig trenches along the Indiana border. But the state should be ready to defend itself in court, where modern-day border skirmishes have been fought.

Two bills in the state Senate, sponsored by Sens. Tom George, R-Portage, and Michelle McManus, R-Lake Leelenau, would help us do that. Lawmakers should pass them.

One measure would require that a legal description of state boundaries be written into law and included in the Michigan Manual, a government guidebook. The second would mandate that state-produced graphic representations of Michigan include the two peninsulas, the portion of the Great Lakes within our borders, and islands appropriate to size and scale. We have nearly 350 named islands. Forty percent of the state's area is water -- our water.

That point shouldn't be lost on anyone, not when the thirsty Southwest is looking greedily at the Great Lakes, the repository of the vast majority of fresh water in the United States.

Clarifying Michigan's boundaries and creating an accurate map aren't just interesting geography-buff exercises. More than half-a-dozen times since statehood, boundary ambiguities have led to changes. Three times in the 20th century, Michigan lost territory in these border beefs.

A 1926 U.S. Supreme Court dispute with Wisconsin resulted in Michigan relinquishing a wedge of land to that state at the Upper Peninsula's western edge.

In another court-settled dispute about the same time involving shipping channels, four islands on the eastern edge of Green Bay -- which Michigan had considered its own -- went to Wisconsin, too.

Yet another dispute revolved around a redrawn map of state boundaries from the U.S. Geological Survey in the early 1950s that changed our border with Ohio near Toledo. In the early 1970s, the U.S. Supreme Court resolved the case in Ohio's favor -- awarding Ohioans 150 square miles of Lake Erie that had been ours.

Michigan once printed boundaries in the state constitution. But the 1963 revision of that document omitted the description.

After that, the boundaries didn't appear anywhere in official literature. That could leave the federal government or other states to draw the lines. Having a full, accurate description in official state documents can be our first line of defense in boundary disputes, and touches on everything from mineral rights to homeland security, since some of the state's borders are international.

Augmenting -- and completing -- Michigan's map makes an important symbolic point. The Great Lakes state isn't just land. The lakes themselves are treasures, and a battle ground. The lesson should be impressed on residents and school children.

Credit for pushing this cause goes to retired Ferris State University Geology Professor Richard A. Santer of Big Rapids. As an educator, he long ago noted Michigan's historic land losses and the partial maps that omitted so much of the state. He urged lawmakers to do something about it.

Now they can, by passing these bills when they come before the Senate in late April or early May. Knowing who we are as a state begins with knowing where we are -- by our definition.

Pioneer

March 29, 2006

Prof: Minimum wage hike can be positive

BIG RAPIDS - While small businesses will face a rise in costs as a result of the minimum wage increase, the overall impact of the move could well be positive, according to a Ferris State University economics professor.

"In states where the minimum wage is above the federal minimum wage, research by the Fiscal Policy Institute shows the number of businesses actually grew and the number of (people employed) in those states also expanded," said Abdi Ferdowsi, a Ferris State economics professor. "Even the small businesses have grown."

Raising the minimum wage would result in higher operating costs for small businesses, Ferdowsi said, but those costs "should not be significant." Also, the increased costs should not lead to higher unemployment for workers as small businesses, he said, although the potential is there for small businesses to respond to the higher costs by hiring fewer workers.

The minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour was set in 1997.

The rate of inflation has increased without a corresponding increase in wages. As a result, the worker earning \$5.15 per hour has only \$4.25 of purchasing power; to get the same purchasing power in 2006 that minimum wage workers had in 1997, they would have to make \$6.75 per hour, Ferdowsi said.

Ferdowsi also mentioned an argument promoted by former President Bill Clinton's Secretary of Labor Robert Reich.

Reich argued raising the minimum wage would reduce the number of turnover for those positions, meaning people would remain at one job longer.

That, in turn, would reduce costs to the business for training new employees and would increase productivity.

Pioneer

March 29, 2006

FSU Public Safety commends Santilli

BIG RAPIDS - James A. Santilli Jr. of the Michigan Highway Traffic Safety Alliance (MHTSA) was presented with a plaque Friday from Chief Martin J. Bledsoe, director of the Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, at the Ferris State University Board of Trustees meeting.

The plaque reads: "presented to James A. Santilli Jr. in, appreciation for his many years of dedicated service to the Ferris State University community through his passion and vision for campus traffic safety."

"It has been my profound honor to work in partnership with Chief Bledsoe and his staff in an effort to enhance safety in the Ferris State University community," Santilli said to those in attendance. "Nationally, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death ages 3-33." The Ferris Board of Trustees meeting was held at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center in Big Rapids.

"I congratulate Mr. Santilli on receiving recognition from Ferris... for his contributions to traffic safety in Big Rapids." said state Rep. Darwin Booher, R-Evart. "He has been extremely involved in all aspects of traffic issues through his participation on many boards and organizations, and the time he has invested championing the safety message, as well as forwarding new and innovative ideas for our travel methods, are a benefit to all Michigan residents whether they are behind the wheel or on foot."

Santilli entered the traffic safety advocacy world in 2001 after strongly motivated in traffic safety by Betty J. Mercer, who at the time was the director of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning and chair of the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission. Since then, he has been, and continues to be instrumental in leading the emergence of what is now known as the Michigan Highway Traffic Safety Alliance.

Santilli has focused on reducing injuries and fatalities that result from motor vehicle crashes, encouraging motorists to comply with laws that are designed to enhance safety, and promoting courtesy and respect in Michigan. His tasks have included: promoting and supporting roadway engineering, educational initiatives, and enforcement of traffic laws that will enhance safety; providing public information resources to organizations, educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, businesses, and traffic safety advocates; speaking at high schools and universities; distributing traffic safety materials at community events; and coordinating functions, including a mock traffic crash.

Santilli has also partnered with Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land on occasion to recognize businesses and individuals for their contribution to traffic safety through certificates of appreciation, was selected to speak to law enforcement, traffic engineers, public health, private industry, non-profit, and local, state, and federal agencies at the Michigan Traffic Safety Summit, and was a nominee for the Governor's Traffic Safety

Advisory Commission's Outstanding Traffic Safety Achievements During Calendar Year 2005 award.

Santilli serves on the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commissions' Impaired Driving Action Team, and the Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team. In addition, he serves on the Give `em a Brake Coalition, is a supporter and member of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, a member of the Coalition for a Safe and Responsible Michigan, a member of the National Commission Against Drunk Driving, a member of the National Troopers Coalition, and a representative on the Ferris State University Traffic Safety Team.

Santilli was trained at the Oakland Police Academy to become licensed by the state of Michigan as an Emergency Medical Services - Medical First Responder, is certified by the American Heart Association for Basic Life Support Healthcare Providers and has training in non-violent/violent crisis intervention, advanced cardiac life support, and various emergency medical services continuing education.

Santilli also has been trained in child passenger safety (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration curriculum), and is certified as a Child Passenger Safety Technician.

Santilli has been employed at Chippewa Valley Schools, the Macomb County Sheriffs Office, Macomb County Juvenile Justice Center (UAW member), Medstar Ambulance, Ferris State University Department of Public Safety, and the Big Rapids Department of Public Safety. He currently works fulltime at the Muskegon River Youth Home. Santilli has also interned with the Michigan Department of State Police, and received all exemplary ratings.

A lifelong resident of Michigan, Santilli was born in Detroit, raised in Clinton Township, and currently resides in Big Rapids.

He is completing a bachelor degree in criminal justice with a focus on human resource management through Ferris State University, and was the recipient of the 2005 Ferris State University Torchbearer Leadership Award. While at Ferris, Santilli served as a resident advisor, president of a residence hall, and also, as a more liberal minded republican, was elected president of the campus' Republican chapter, which he re-established.

Pioneer

March 29, 2006

Harris: Israeli elections 'interesting'

BIG RAPIDS -- One local man is keeping an eye on an election process half the world away.

Ferris State University's Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Harris, also a professor of political science, is an expert on public policy and public administration. For Harris, it is not a question of how the United States will get along with the new government leaders in Israel. He expects the current acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's party, Kadima, to win the election.

"Israel and the U.S. have got a long, strategic relationship," he said, adding the election would not affect that relationship. "It will continue to be stable and strong. ... If anything, the Bush administration will feel comfortable with ... Kadima."

The interesting thing for Harris will be to see if Kadima survives as a party for the next few years, with whom. Olmert forms a coalition and what happens regarding withdrawals from the West Bank.

Israel is a parliamentary democracy, Harris explained. That means the country is led by a parliament, called the Knesset. During an election, voters cast their ballots for a list of candidates belonging to a particular party, not for individual candidates, he continued.

The Knesset has 120 seats. Each party receiving votes is given a proportional number of seats based on the number of votes it received. For example, a party garnering 10 percent of the vote would receive 12 seats in the Knesset.

The prime minister is decided by the party winning the majority of seats. There are traditionally two major parties in Israeli politics, Harris said, the Labor party and the Likud. Kadima was formed in November by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has since suffered a massive stroke and been hospitalized.

For the first time since Israel's statehood in 1948, one of the two traditional parties will not be leading the government, Harris predicts.

"The interesting thing is, will the party survive four or five years down the road?" Harris said. "It's a very strange organization because it brings together people with many different political views."

He expects a degree of political instability in Israel as a result of Kadima's lack of a defined stance on many issues.

He also anticipates the future of unilateral withdrawals from the West Bank on Israel's part to be linked to the party Olmert finds to form his coalition. Harris predicts a coalition

with the left-wing Labor party would lead to continued unilateral withdrawals; a coalition with right-wing Likud would make it less likely.

"Many of the leaders of Kadima (were long-time members of Likud, which at least publicly opposes further withdrawals from the West Bank," Harris said.

Pioneer

March 29, 2006

Successful women to speak at Annual Leadership Conference

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University's Office of Student Government will host its fourth annual Women Investing in Leadership and Learning (WILL) Conference from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday in the University Ballroom of the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center in Big Rapids.

The two-hour program will feature a social reception with complimentary hors d'oeuvres and refreshments beginning at 6 p.m.

Admission is free. However, donations will be accepted to benefit WISE, a local domestic violence information and support service.

The highlight of the evening will be remarks by Michigan Environmental Council President Lana Pollack; Continental Basketball Association's Michigan Mayhem President and CEO Jannie Scott; and Michigan Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan. These successful Michigan women will share their stories and wisdom with students, faculty/staff and community members.

Ferris student and former Nashville Star candidate Ashley Grutter will make a special guest appearance. She will perform as well as mingle with participants before and after the conference.

The Office of University Advancement and Marketing is cosponsoring the event.

For more information, e-mail Abby Lund at abbylund@hotmail.com or Zack East, Student Government associate vice president of public relations, at StudentGovernmen@ferris.edu.

The Grand Rapids Press

March 30, 2006

Congress wants colleges to answer for tuition hikes

WASHINGTON - The House is expected to pass a measure today that would require colleges and universities to justify large tuition increases and let Washington know how they plan to hold down costs in the future.

Supporters of the provision, which is part of a broader higher-education bill, say it would give prospective students and their parents a better idea of how much they can expect to pay.

The legislation would create a "College Affordability Index," providing the public with access to data already compiled by the Department of Education. Any school receiving federal student aid funds that increases tuition by more than double the general inflation rate over a three-year period would have to submit a report explaining the reasons for the increases, as well as an "action plan" for avoiding them in the future. Nationally, the top 10 percent of schools with the highest rates of tuition increases would have to establish task forces to examine their budgets and compare them with other colleges.

For decades, the cost of higher education has outstripped inflation. Opponents of the legislation argue the new requirement is essentially an effort by Congress to set limits on tuition. They say it ignores spending cuts at the federal and state levels that put colleges in a financial bind.

The broader higher-education bill, sponsored by House Republican Leader John A. Boehner of Ohio, is scheduled for a final vote today. It would then go to the Senate, where a companion measure does not include the provision.

Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, R Calif., chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, has pushed the idea for several years.

"Costs at both public and private colleges are spiraling upward - and fast," he said Wednesday. "Colleges and universities must remain accountable to consumers of higher education."

Pioneer

March 30, 2006

WILL Conference replacement speaker announced

BIG RAPIDS - Local leader Susan Fleitman, plant manager for Yoplait in Reed City, will replace Michigan Mayhem President Jannie Scott on the speaker's list at the fourth annual Women Investing in Leadership and Learning (WILL) Conference today (Thursday).

The conference is today (Thursday) from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Hotel and Conference Center's University Ballroom.

The Yoplait plant is located in Reed City, a short distance from Big Rapids. Fleitman is excited to bring her experience working as an executive for a national corporation, as well as her local ties, to the conference.

The two-hour program will feature a social reception beginning at 6 p.m. featuring Ferris student artist and former Nashville Star regional qualifier Ashley Grutter. A question and answer session will follow the presentations later on in the evening.

The event is free of charge to all participants thanks to the Student Activity Fee as allocated by the Student Government's Division of Finance. Donations will be accepted to benefit WISE, a local domestic violence information and support service.

The WILL Conference is an annual event planned by the Student Government of Ferris State University and is being sponsored this year by University Advancement and Marketing.

Questions or comments regarding WILL Conference may be directed to Abby Lund by emailing abbylund@hotmail.com, or by contacting Associate Vice President of Public Relations Zack East at StudentGovernment@ferris.edu.

Pioneer

March 30, 2006

Hollywood director James Gartner to speak at Ferris

BIG RAPIDS - "Glory Road" director James Gartner will be the featured speaker at the sixth annual Ferris State University Video Festival Friday in Big Rapids.

The festival begins at 10 a.m. in the Rankin Student Center and is hosted by the Television and Digital Media Production program and the Ferris Media Communications Association.

Gartner will be speak at 1 p.m. in Business m. Video festival awards will precede Gartner's speech at noon in the Rankin Student Center Dome Room, with students participating in a panel discussion at 2 p.m. in the Instructional Resource Center television studio.

Gartner's most recent work is feature film "Glory Road." Made for Disney with Jerry Bruckheimer, "Glory Road" opened to positive reviews in February and topped the box office its opening weekend.

Gartner's work before that includes a number of commercial campaigns for such companies as Coke, Pepsi, American Express and Visa. His ties to Ferris began a little earlier. Gartner arrived on the Ferris campus in September 1968 and immediately began working at the campus radio station then known as WFRS.

From WFRS, Gartner went on to work at WBRN in Big Rapids, WLAV in Grand Rapids and WQXI in Atlanta. He then worked in Los Angeles before settling down in Salt Lake City for almost 15 years, where he worked at an advertising agency, before making his home in Traverse City, where he lives today.

Pioneer

March 31, 2006

Oldfield named dean of College of Technology

BIG RAPIDS - Thomas E. Oldfield was recently named dean of the Ferris State University College of Technology after serving as the college's interim dean since July 2005.

"The College of Technology is a vital component of the division of Academic Affairs and Ferris State University's mission," said Ferris Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Harris. "I believe that Dr. Oldfield's leadership will enhance and advance the college.

"I appreciate his serving as interim dean this past year and I look forward to continuing our working relationship in his new position."

Oldfield's career at Ferris began in 1978 as an assistant professor. Since then, he has served as an associate professor, professor, biological sciences department head, assistant and associate vice president for academic affairs, as well as interim vice president for academic affairs.

He received his Ph.D. in biology from Utah State University after receiving his Master of Science in biology from USU and his Bachelor of Science in forestry from Michigan Technological University.

Pioneer

March 31, 2006

Enrollment increases not rewarded in state funding formula

Before voting on the \$1.8 billion higher education budget, Senate lawmakers compromised on one of the bigger disagreements-between Democrats and Republicans: how much money to give 15 state universities.

The state's big research universities - the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University - would get a 2 percent increase, as proposed by Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

The other 12 schools would get varying increases. The proposal was described as a compromise between a funding formula proposed -by the governor and a plan by Republicans to increase dollars for schools that have lagged behind others in per-student funding: Grand Valley State; Saginaw Valley, Oakland and Central Michigan universities: Ferris State University will receive a 1.8 percent funding increase.

FSU President David L. Eisler addressed the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education last Wednesday.

This fall FSU enrolled 12,547 students, an increase of 744 students or 6.3 percent -the largest increase in students, both in number and percentage, of any university in Michigan, Eisler said. State funding does not reward increases in enrollment, however.

"One thing on which the legislature and the governor agree is that higher education must grow to help our state," Eisler said in his statement. "The current (funding) approach provides disincentives for growth. An institution above the minimum amount per student receives no additional funding for enrollment growth."

State funding for FSU students has declined from 54 percent to 34 percent. The decrease is a result of both the impact of budget reductions and a funding approach that does not reward enrollment growth. The university receives 19.2 percent less funding from the state for a student that will graduate this year than it did four years ago when that student was a freshman.

In other states each increased student enrollment brings an additional piece of state funding to help support that student's education, Eisler said. He also urged the committee to create incentives for universities to expand engineering, health care and other degree areas by increasing funding for the more expensive programs.

The Detroit News

March 31, 2006

House takes steps to make college more affordable

New higher education law simplifies federal aid rules and presses schools to limit tuition increases.

Washington - The House on Thursday approved a bill aimed at making college decisions more clear and affordable for families. How much the measure would help, though, is still in dispute. The House approved the bill, 221-199, in a near party-line vote.

The education law is getting its first update since 1998. It hasn't been easy. The House bill took three years to reach the floor, and the Senate must pass its own version. The law governs the relationship between the government and the huge range of colleges and universities that receive federal aid.

What it does

It orders simplified steps for people seeking federal aid.

It places pressure on colleges to refrain from steep tuition increases. Colleges that increase tuition more than twice the rate of inflation over three years would have to explain why.

It calls for schools to provide clear information about their costs to the Education Department, to be posted as a tool for families.

The House pulled back on telling colleges when they can deny academic credit for transfer students. The bill now requires colleges to have transfer policies that are publicly disclosed.

Lawmakers rejected an amendment to make colleges report how race is considered in their student admissions.

GOP, Dems disagree Democrats and Republicans could not agree on the core point -- how the federal government should help people deal with rising tuition.

GOP view: Republican leaders said forcing colleges to be more accountable for costs will help families. They also touted an increase in the maximum Pell Grant, although Congress rarely approaches that limit when it appropriates money for the grants.

Rep. Ric Keller, R-Fla., said the Democrats offered no way to pay for their proposal to cut interest rates significantly.

"Why not interest-free loans?" he asked rhetorically. "It's crazy."

Democrat view: Democrats spent much of their time talking about a bill that Congress passed two months ago -- a deficit-cutting measure that slashed almost \$13 billion in student loan aid. They said the latest college bill would not succeed unless the House undid the damage. "This is a down payment on reversing the raid on student aid," said Rep. Dale Kildee, D-Mich., about the Democrats' version of the bill.

Pioneer

April 1 & 2, 2006

Professor of Pharmacology to deliver presentation Thursday

BIG RAPIDS - Dr. Christopher K. Daniels, a professor of pharmacology and director of the Idaho State University Biomedical Research Institute, will be the featured speaker for a Research Funding Symposium titled "Developing a Research Culture - Lessons Learned" at 4 p.m. April 6 in the Ferris State University Rankin Student Center Whitney Room.

Daniels will discuss "Lessons learned" as FSU built its culture and infrastructure to support extramurally funded research. Idaho State University was a fledging doctoral research intensive university with less than \$1 million in extramural funding 23 years ago. Today, extramural funding exceeds \$23 million annually.

Discussion will include the importance of collaborative efforts, the need to identify core resources, defining areas of expertise on campus and the role of undergraduate research. While the funding aspirations of a Master College/ University II might be less ambitious, this symposium will serve as a springboard as Ferris looks to develop extramurally funded scholarship.

The symposium and reception are cosponsored by the colleges of Allied Health Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Optometry and Pharmacy. Only limited seating available for this event.

Pioneer

April 1 & 2, 2006

Making Sacrifices

After the state of Michigan cut funding for math/science centers by 75 percent in 2003, Paul Bigford, age 56 of Branch, retired early from education so that he could work for two thirds of his previous pay and receive no benefits. Why? Because he believes in the Mecosta Osceola Intermediate School District's Math, Science and Technology Center (MSTC).

Since retiring, Bigford has continued to work as director of the MSTC, commuting 44 miles one way about four days a week to the center which is located on the campus of Ferris State University in Big Rapids. There are currently 99 math and science centers in the United States. Of the 33 centers in Michigan, seven, including the MSTC, offer a high school program. Today, those seven centers are comprised of 1,250 students with 104 attending the MOISD center.

With close to 100 students attending the MSTC's recent eighth grade orientation, it's clear that the program is popular among local students. Because the MSTC is a half day program, the center receives half of each attending students' state foundation allowance (\$6,850). Therefore, the MSTC has become more of an issue for school district's with the recent budget crisis.

"We have a great math/science center system in place in Michigan," Bigford said, "but it's dependent on the foundation allowance from the local school district and the math and science center grant from the state."

When the MSTC began in 1987, two of the first programs it offered were the Science Van for elementary students and Monday Night Technology for seventh and eighth graders.

Both programs, which have since been eliminated due to a lack of funding, had been awarded the National Excellence in Education Award by the National School Board Association.

Bigford, who retired in 2003 as the MQISD director of general education after close to 30 years in education, and his wife Maude live in Lake County. They have raised three children who are now ages 21, 29 and 27.

On Tuesday, Bigford testified before the Michigan House K-i2 Education Sub Committee of the Appropriations Committee to urge the committee to restore funding to the math/science centers throughout the state.

"If we get funding back, we may be able to bring back Monday Night Technology or the Science Van," Bigford said.

"I'm trying to stay optimistic, but this is the fourth year in a row that I've testified and funding has been static for three years."

One way the MSTC is working to bring more students into the MOISD is by offering the MSTC to students participating in School of Choice. Currently there are two freshmen in the program who are attending Morley Stanwood Community Schools through Schools of Choice in order to attend the MSTC.

The MSTC also is looking for possible help from Washington. Congress is considering a federal program (PACE), which has 60 co-sponsors in the state Senate. Among other initiatives, PACE would fund specialty math and science high schools.

"The No Child Left Behind Act tends to put everyone in one box. There needs to be programs that challenge everyone, otherwise No Child Left Behind becomes the No Child Left Bored Act," Bigford said.

"The MSTC allows all students to be challenged, gives them a chance to build their academic resume and brings them more opportunities.

The MSTC is our way of providing a service to the local schools that is not feasible on a school-by-school basis."

Anyone interested in making a donation to the MSTC may contact Bigford or MOISD Superintendent Curt Finch at (231) 796-3543.

Pioneer

April 3, 2006

Ferris State, CCA work to provide experience, save money

BIG RAPIDS - Heat, light, gasoline - energy costs are steadily moving upward and the impact on the bottom line is felt from the family budget to the corporate accounts office.

Crossroads Charter Academy is no different. That's why when the Ferris State University Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning and Refrigeration program offered to do a free energy audit, school officials granted permission.

Joe Pacella assistant professor in the HVACR department divided the students in his Energy Analysis and Audit class into four groups to conduct four separate energy audits of the Crossroads elementary building. Each group of fourth-year students then conducted a separate energy audit for the building each coming to its own conclusions and making recommendations for the school to better conserve energy and money.

"They spent a couple of weeks on and off ... they did an extensive job, crawling in duct work, looking at the boilers, everything," said CCA Superintendent Dave Vander Goot.

"It didn't cost us anything."

The FSU students applied industry standards set by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers. While they were hoping to find ways for the school to save money, they also were looking into quality of life issues, such as indoor air quality and light levels.

"In a lot of cases, light levels are too high ... you can relamp the lights and bring the energy costs down," said Mike Feutz, HVACR department chair.

The work involved in the audits included looking at not only the building's built-in heating and lighting systems, but also additional electronic devices brought in by staff, past utility bills and water lines.

"When you do an energy audit, you look at the entire building," Pacella began. "You try to find ways to hopefully limit utility costs...."

It's not just heating and cooling "- you look at the entire building. Heaters under the desks, extra coffee pots..."

Crossroads was already aware of many of the problems, Pacella said.

"They just wanted somebody to validate their observations and explain what was happening," he said.

As the use of a facility changes, its energy needs also change. Sometimes, those changes result in inefficient systems for the new uses.

"The building originally was designed with a full kitchen and showers for the old gym," Pacella said. "Now, (the showers) are a storage room and they bring lunches in... (The water needs) are drastically different than what the building was designed for."

One of the recommendations students made was to switch the existing two-inch water meter for a smaller one, saving money on the rate the school would pay on the water.

A historical look into school utility bills showed the district had paid tax on the gas it used for heat. Schools and government buildings are exempt from taxes on utilities.

CCA was able to contact the gas company and get a refund of those dollars after students found the tax had been paid.

Cost-saving suggestions ran from the inexpensive - shutting off electronic devices not in use or ceasing to utilize extra lamps or heaters - to the very expensive - replacing the boiler system with a newer, more efficient one.

The low-cost suggestions already have made a measurable difference for the school. During the Christmas break, school personnel turned off everything that wasn't absolutely necessary.

"It made a \$1,100 difference in our light bill," said Trudi Green. CCA assistant superintendent and financial manager for the district. The high-cost suggestions may result in the best energy efficiency, but aren't necessarily practical for the school to implement right away, Vander Goot said. For example, changing the boiler system would be ideal, but CCA doesn't have the funds to undertake that kind of project.

"We're doing as many little things as we can, gradually," he said.

For example, CCA plans to change the lights over to a different, more energy-efficient kind as the older, less efficient lights fail, rather than completely overhauling the system all at once.

"We save money by doing it that way," Vander Goot said.

It's that kind of consideration that makes these hands-on experiences so valuable for students, Feutz said.

"In school, it's always a perfect world," he began. "When they get to the real world, they find that's not the case."

Perhaps there has been a lack of maintenance, or an audit turns up inoperative equipment or, as in CCA's case, the best solution is cost prohibitive.

"If the capital's not there, it's not there and the students see that kind of thing," Feutz said.

Overall, everyone believes the experience was positive. CCA officials obtained valuable information at no cost, while FSU officials were able to obtain valuable experience for their students.

"It was a great experience for the students to experience firsthand, to do this kind of energy audit in a building that's older," Vander Goot said. "They were just great, worked around our schedule. The students were very respectful. I wouldn't have a problem if they brought them every year."

Pioneer

April 3, 2006

FSU and BRHS team up to investigate wind generated power

BIG RAPIDS - With school budgets tighten, people are looking for innovative ideas to implement in order to save money. At Big Rapids High School the staff thought that the school would be a good location for a wind generator.

"The wind is always blowing. Wouldn't it be great to be able to use the wind to supply some of the energy to the school?" said BRHS science teacher Sue McCullen. "We hope to be able to place a windmill on the school property, generate some electricity and be able to use it to model to students energy conservation, alternative energy sources and the processes used to produce electricity."

Ferris State University students Edwige Fute and Leo Cardenas have taken this idea for their senior design project. Both students are seniors in electrical electronic engineering. The computerized equipment they are using records wind direction, wind speed and the strength and duration of the wind as it's measured by instruments on the roof of BRHS.

What if the experiment shows that high school's location would support a wind generator? The next step might be to investigate possible energy grants that could allow the construction of a wind generated turbine at the school.

Pioneer

April 4, 2006

'After Innocence' documentary coming to FSU Wednesday

BIG RAPIDS- The award winning documentary, "After Innocence" will be shown at Ferris State University in the Pharmacy Auditorium Wednesday from 6 to 8 p.m.

The documentary examines the cases of seven men wrongly convicted of murder and rape exonerated years later by DNA evidence.

The Ferris State University Social Work Association, with support from Samuels Law Office, has arranged to show this outstanding documentary which is only available in limited release. The Social Work Association, with support from the Student Activity Fund, also is sponsoring speaker Ken Wyniemko, exonerated after 10 years in prison on Thursday at 11 a.m. in the FSU Rankin Center Dame Room.

This is big. We are very fortunate to be able -to show this movie here," stated Attorney Jim Samuels, chair of Cooley Law School's Innocence Project.

In a recent New York Times film review, Stephen Holden writes, "it is impossible not to imagine yourself in their shoes and wonder how you would feel if the best years, or decades of your life had been lost to a wrongful conviction."

The movie is a chilling confirmation of the worst fears about the weaknesses in our criminal justice system.

Admission is free to both events, however seating is limited.

Pioneer

April 5, 2006

'Into the Woods'

BIG RAPIDS - The Ferris State Theater program will be performing "Into the Woods" this Thursday through Sunday. Show times will be 8 p.m. with a 2:30 p.m. matinee showing on Sunday. Tickets are \$8 for general admission, \$6 for Senior Citizens, \$4 for students and are available at G. Mennen Williams Auditorium, and online at <<https://www.ferris.edu/arts/Woods.cfm>>. The performances will be held Thursday through Sunday.

Pioneer

April 5, 2006

One-of-a-kind FLY Dance Company to perform at FSU

BIG RAPIDS - The FLY Dance Company is a one-of-a-kind performance group that blends break dancing with Bach, flips with Flamenco and pops with classic pop music for a fun-filled showcase of high-energy head spins, windmills, funky footwork and comic improvisations set to bold choreographic inventions.

The dance company will be bringing its brash humor and risk taking feats, which have delighted audiences throughout the United States and Europe, to G. Mennen Williams Auditorium on the campus of Ferris State University at 8 p.m. April 10.

Hailing from Houston, Texas, FLY's technique is primarily hip hop - very creative, gymnastic and highly masculine. The contemporary dance company consists of four young men performing to a variety of music, including classical, jazz, pop, experimental, drumming and live sound effects. They dance on point while semi-crouched in hightop sneakers. Their seamless choreography, made up of corkscrew turns, fast footwork, amazing break dance moves and sheer limber legged strength, together with their streetwise charm and subtle humor, make FLY absolutely entertaining.

Expanding dance audiences wherever they go, their appeal cuts through age, gender, ethnic and cultural boundaries. Indeed, FLY's touring schedule bears this out. Last year, FLY performed 59 concerts and more than 100 outreach workshops in 19 states, including an appearance at the Kennedy Center Theatre Lab in Washington, D.C. FLY has a mission: They want to educate audiences about hip hop and make a positive impact on their community. "There is more to hip hop than rap music and graffiti," dancers said.

Part of FLY's appeal is their harnessed athleticism. Like ballet dancers pulling off extra pirouettes or loftier jumps, they strive to balance longer, spin better or lift each other higher in a formation. "We want you to experience the good parts of hip hop," they said.

"We want you to see that even though it's a street culture, it's a culture for everyone."

FLY began in 1993 when veteran choreographer Kathy Wood met the dancers of a street crew performing at a Houston street festival. Impressed with their unusual talent, she invited the group to come and work with her. Adapting hip hop movement to classical music by the baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi, she developed the range and skills of the dancers, creating a unique style that led to their quick emergence on the national contemporary dance scene.

Tickets are available at the G. Mennen Williams Auditorium ticket office, located at 901 S. State St. in Big Rapids. The ticket office is open Monday through Friday from m a.m. to 4 p.m. and one hour before performance times. People needing special

accommodations to attend this performance may call the auditorium office at (231) 591-3676.

Pioneer

April 5, 2006

Rankin Gallery unveils 'Them: Images of Separation'

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University's Rankin Art Gallery will host the premiere of "Them: Images of Separation," a traveling exhibition that showcases items from popular culture used to stereotype different groups April 10 through 28. The negative imagery - found on postcards, license plates, games, souvenirs and costumes - promoted stereotyping against such groups as Asian-Americans, Hispanics, Jews and poor whites, as well as those who are "other" in terms of body type or sexual orientation.

The exhibition follows up the success of the "Hateful Things" exhibition, comprised of artifacts from Ferris' Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia Ferris professor of Social Sciences David Pilgrim said "Them" responds to questions he received from people who saw the previous exhibition, which focused specifically on imagery demeaning to African-Americans. "In the past we had people ask why did we not have objects that dealt with groups other than African-Americans," Pilgrim said. "For this show, we took our direction from Martin Luther King's famous quote, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.' This is the next logical step for the Jim Crow Museum."

Through more than 30 separate framed pieces (some with multiple items, such as postcards), "Them" tackles some of the most contentious, cultural hot-button issues: anti-Arab sentiment, Holocaust denial, "don't ask, don't tell" and immigration.

The exhibition also includes items demeaning to African-Americans, but that is only a part of the exhibition's larger picture. "I'm hoping 'Them' shows discrimination and stereotyping is not just a black/white issue - it's more pervasive than that," said Pilgrim.

In addition to building and showcasing its second traveling exhibition, the Jim Crow Museum is fundraising to construct a pennant facility on the Big Rapids campus to make the museum's displays more accessible to the public.

"Them" begins with an opening reception on Monday, April 10, beginning at 4:30 p.m. Ferris' Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Harris will speak at 5 p.m. This event is free and open to the public.

The gallery's regular hours are Monday through Friday, m a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, contact the Rank-in Art Gallery at (231) 591-2536.

Pioneer

April 5, 2006

CSI consultant to speak at Ferris Tuesday

BIG RAPIDS - Gary Telgenhoff, a consultant for the hit CBS series "CSI; Crime Scene Investigation," will speak Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Ferris State University's G. Mennen Williams Auditorium as part of the arts and lectures series.

Telgenhoff also is employed as a forensic pathologist and deputy medical examiner for the Clark County Coroner's Office in Las Vegas. He sees approximately 1,000 bodies per year, 450 of which he autopsies. Of these cases, 45 are homicides. His presence is often required in court with regard to his findings and determination of cause and manner of death.

Telgenhoff is Michigan born, growing up in Cadillac and attending Cadillac Senior High School. He then attended Spring Arbor College, where he earned a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry. From there, he earned a masters of science degree from Eastern Michigan University and attended medical school at Michigan State University.

For more information about Telgenhoff, visit www.skinnerrat.com. General admission tickets are \$5 and will be available at the door.

Pioneer

April 5, 2006

Ferris State University welcomes Vietnamese delegation

BIG RAPIDS - Ferris State University will welcome five An Giang University leader., today through Saturday while the delegation is visiting the United States to further enhance educational opportunities in Vietnam.

An Giang University is located in Long Xuyen, Vietnam, the capital city of An Giang Province in the Mekong River Delta, about 124 miles from Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon).

While at Ferris, An Giang's Rector Dr. Xuan Tong VO will present the Ferris Fulbright Lecture at 11 a.m. Thursday in science room 102 on "Sustainable Food Production for All: Vietnam as a Model for the 21st Century."

Xuan received his doctoral degree in the field of agriculture in Japan and has written several books, as well as numerous articles and scientific reports, on various topics dealing with rice production and farming systems in Vietnam and the Philippines. He also is on the board of the Rockefeller Foundation.

The delegation is visiting Michigan under the U. S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership program to learn more about curriculum development, education assessment and accreditation, graduate programs and transfer programs with U.S. institutions. An Giang's leadership efforts coincide with the university's five-year vision to increase its student population, the number of faculty and raise AGU to world standards.

One of three key institutions in the Mekong River Delta, An Giang is a relatively new university, beginning as a two-year technical college and being established as a university in 1999.

An Giang is the primary provider of teachers, medical, agricultural and environmental personnel to the Mekong River Delta and biotechnological personnel to the nearby Cuu Long Rice Research Institute.

The university is undergoing rapid development and currently has approximately 341 faculty and 7,500 students. During the previous five years, Dr. Pltillip Watson, a professor of biology at Ferris' has made many contacts with Xuan. Watson also spent a sabbatical semester teaching in the biology and agriculture departments and took a study abroad class to An Giang.

Leaders from An Giang also will be visiting universities in California and North Carolina before returning to Vietnam.

Pioneer

April 6, 2006

Local FSU student named top sophomore ROTC cadet

BIG RAPIDS - Reserve Officer Training Corps. (ROTC) Cadet Robert James, son of Dean and Lorianne James of Big Rapids, has been named Ferris State University's top sophomore cadet by the American Legion of Morley.

James, 22, of Big Rapids was voted top cadet in his Ferris State University military science II class and was presented with an award by the American Legion of Morley.

As a sophomore student in FSU's criminal justice program, James was nominated for the award by the senior cadets and Major James Blick, head of the FSU military science department. During the nominating process, the senior cadets take into consideration the students' grade point average, physical fitness and effort.

"His experience and background as a Marine is one of the reasons he is one of our top cadets. I expect great things from Cadet James," Blick said.

James is a 2001 graduate of Big Rapids High School. After high school, he served in the Marine Reserves from Jan. 2002 through Oct. 2005 and during that time from Jan. 2003 to Sept. 2003 he was on guard duty in Djibouti, Africa. It wasn't until he returned and began college at FSU that he realized Ferris had an ROTC program, which he joined along with the National Guard.

"It's an honor to be selected for this award, I was surprised," James said, "but I put a lot of work and effort into the program and time."

James expects to graduate from Ferris in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. After graduating, he would like to become an officer in the military.

Pioneer

April 7, 2006

Festival of Cultures set for Sunday

BIG RAPIDS- Approximately 40 countries will be represented during Ferris State University's 18th International Festival of Cultures on Sunday.

The event will take place from 1 to 5 p.m. in the Rankin Student Center Dome Room.

It is free to attend and many countries will have traditional food prepared to sample. Samples cost 50 cents each. Students with a Ferris ID get three free sample tickets.

There will also be entertainment representing several countries, including typical dances, singing and fashion shows and a piñata, among others.

Each year about 2,000 people, including students and community members, attend this event, hosted by the International Students Organization.