

KY TRIVIA

In 1865, The University of Kentucky was founded in Lexington.

Frankfort & Kentucky



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AROUND FRANKFORT

Singing Bridge closure delayed

Closure of the Singing Bridge has been postponed until mid-March, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet announced Monday.

The bridge was originally scheduled to be closed Thursday. G-Force Contracting, of Campbell, Ohio, was awarded a \$1.26 million contract by KYTC for repairs and repainting of the bridge.

Work was postponed pending review and approval of the rigging plans for the painting and an agreement for a waste disposal site.

Once an agreement is made, G-Force Contracting will notify KYTC and a public announcement will be made on the new date for the bridge closure.

Repairs and repainting are expected to take several months.

First lady didn't donate to breast cancer work

(AP) — Some people are calling on Kentucky first lady Jane Beshear to stop urging others to give contributions to breast cancer research if she's not going to make the same donation herself.

Beshear has urged people for two years to mark a box on their state income tax returns that supports research into breast cancer, but the Lexington Herald-Leader reports that she and her husband have not checked the box for the last two years, according to their 2010 tax returns.

Breast cancer survivor Diane L. Brumback participated in a news conference with Beshear last month urging taxpayers to check the box. Brumback told the newspaper that Beshear should stop telling others to take action "if she is not going to do as she says."

A spokeswoman for the Beshears said they make charitable contributions privately.

A state website for Beshear says the first lady is dedicated to fighting breast cancer and notes that she founded Horses and Hope, which provides education on breast cancer, screening and referral for treatment.

Brumback commended those efforts but said Beshear shouldn't urge others to check the donation box unless she's willing to do the same.

Tourism chief had to repay gift, records show

(AP) — A newspaper cites public records in reporting Kentucky Tourism Commissioner Mike Cooper let a state contractor pick up \$735 in his expenses on an overseas trip.

The gifts were in violation of state ethics laws, according to the Lexington Herald-Leader.

The Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet has ordered Cooper to repay the money for the unauthorized trip to London, England. The gift came from Gosh P.R. — a British marketing firm paid to promote Kentucky tourism within the United Kingdom.

Cooper declined to comment on the issue to the newspaper.



AP/JOHN DUNHAM

Buck makes a run for it

A white-tailed buck bounds across the road to head south through an open field Sunday at Chase Road and U.S. 60 just east of Reed, Ky. The buck and a doe brought up the rear of the herd. White-tailed deer are the smallest members of the deer family in North America.

AROUND KENTUCKY

LOUISVILLE

Transp. Cabinet inspector general dismissed

(AP) — A Kentucky Transportation Cabinet spokesman says department inspector general David Ray has been dismissed.

Ray told The Courier-Journal that he was surprised when Transporta-

tion Secretary Mike Hancock told him Friday that he was being fired.

Ray said he was not given a reason.

Cabinet spokesman Chuck Wolfe told the Lexington Herald Leader that said he couldn't comment on the reason for Ray's dismissal.

Ray is a non-merit employee and as such can be fired without cause.

Ray is a former Secret Service agent who has been the cabinet's inspector general for nearly eight years.

The job addresses allegations of wrongdoing within the cabinet.

VERSAILLES

Mayor pleads guilty and apologizes to community for DUI

One day after he was arrested for driving under the influence, the mayor of Versailles pleaded guilty Monday and apologized to the community.

Fred Siegleman was in Woodford District Court Monday to plead guilty to

one count of driving under the influence and one count of possession of an open alcoholic beverage container in a motor vehicle.

The court suspended his license for 45 days — 15 more than what the state requires for a first-time DUI offender, Woodford County Attorney Alan George told The State Journal.

The court also mandated that Siegleman enroll in an alcohol education program for first-time DUI offenders. He also has to pay a \$778 in fines and court costs.

Siegleman told the court he was sorry for his actions. "He apologized to the

judge, to myself, to the community, and said he had already apologized to his family," George said. "And he made a note of praising the professionalism of the Versailles Police Department."

Police stopped Siegleman after they saw him swerving on Marsailles Road around 1 a.m. Sunday, Lt. Daniel Clark, of the Versailles Police Department, told The State Journal Monday.

He refused a Breathalyzer test and was booked at Woodford County Regional Jail, Clark said.

Ky. school aggressively fights Twitter criticism

Western Kentucky officials briefly persuaded social media outlet to shut down parody account

BY BRUCE SCHREINER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A Kentucky university is aggressively fighting parody and criticism of school officials and policies on Twitter and other social media sites, which advocates and students say is an attempt to silence any negative comments.

Western Kentucky University's president has used Facebook to lecture students about social networking etiquette, and officials persuaded Twitter to briefly shut down a parody account dripping with sarcasm and criticism with posts marked "(hash)wku." Officials deny charges of censorship, but observers say the school appears to have immersed itself in social media deeper than many others around the country.

WKU junior Autum Calloway, a psychology major from Russellville, said she will tweet about things going on around campus. But she chooses her words carefully.

"I don't ever criticize the school on Twitter because I don't want an ordeal made," she said, noting friends have been scolded by officials for postings deemed poor representations of the school.

To be sure, it's common for universities to moni-

tor cyber-chatter. But WKU president Gary Ransdell has jumped into the fray himself, taking to Facebook to scold students about inappropriate posts. And officials say they're considering a new handbook policy that would be aimed at preventing online harassment.

Hanni Fakhoury, a staff attorney with the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a civil-liberties group based in San Francisco, sees it as an attempt by WKU to immerse itself into the flow of ideas on Twitter and Facebook. Students may wind up choosing their words more carefully — like Calloway — to avoid running afoul of the rules.

"If you don't know whether what you're going to say is going to get you in trouble, you're better off just not saying it and not getting in trouble," he said. "And there you have it right there, speech is chilled."

Any new policy also raises the question of whether a school could limit what students post when they're off campus and not using school equipment. Many schools have anti-cyberbullying policies, but most of those apply only to school-owned servers and equipment, said Adam Goldstein, an attorney advocate with the Student Press Law Cen-

ter in Arlington, Va.

The school has not yet drafted any language for the handbook or set possible punishments for violators, WKU spokesman Bob Skipper said. The school already has vague rules against "accessible communications deemed inappropriate."

Violators of a new rule may face sensitivity training, but the idea is not to limit speech among students, said Stacey Biggs, WKU's chief marketing officer.

"The point is not to tell them what they can or can't say, or what they can or can't say about WKU," she said.

Still, critics have cried foul. The campus newspaper recently wrote a lengthy article under the headline "WKU trying to pull strings on social media." And the parody account — temporarily shut down because it wasn't clearly labeled as a parody — recently tweeted, "Campus police department has been renamed to twitter patrol."

Student criticism prompted an official response that appeared recently in the campus newspaper. Biggs wrote that the intent is not to censor students but said the university "has to offer some amount of protection to its students."

School officials have vigi-

lantly searched for fake accounts filled with inflammatory comments, though Biggs said the school tries to have accounts taken down only if they use the university's name or logo and don't clearly state that they are parodies. In her commentary, she said such efforts are aimed at protecting the school's reputation and brand.

Other schools do remind students that posts can reflect poorly on them in the eyes of a prospective employer, for instance. Some, such as the University of Kentucky in Lexington, limit that to a set of recommended "best practices."

"You don't really regulate conversations in a coffee house, for example," said UK spokesman Jay Blanton. "The same principles apply here."

UK's existing campus policies applying to legal and ethical conduct extend to communications, including social media, he said.

At WKU, Ransdell weighed in on social networking in a Feb. 15 message on Facebook. He warned about the lasting consequences for irresponsible posts.

"We, at WKU, have become particularly aware lately of some who are misusing social media and us-

ing some poor judgment," Ransdell wrote. "So my message here is 'Be smart.' Use social media thoughtfully; always remember what you send is permanent and can be viewed years from now. Employers do their homework. They can and will track ways in which prospective employees have used social media. We, at WKU, track such things as well."

Such efforts amount to attempts to "stop students from offending the government-paid administrators," said Goldstein, the attorney advocate with the Student Press Law Center.

"Any institution that invests substantial effort into shutting down obvious parody accounts richly deserves to be parodied, because any institution with a good reputation for doing the right thing most of the time isn't worried that obviously silly statements might be confused with its genuine policy," he said.

Goldstein said he's never seen a college president get so personally involved in the give-and-take in social media.

"I guess it's good that he's paying attention, but I wonder if this is really the best use of his time," Goldstein said.