

A HOT MEAL

A proposed bill would allow those who are elderly, homeless or disabled to use SNAP benefits at qualifying restaurants

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TIGERS ON TOP

Missouri men's basketball collected another SEC win against LSU Wednesday in close fashion, final score 81-76

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

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Kris Thrasher, left, hugs long-time friend Rebecca Meisenbach before picking up passes for the True/False Film Festival on Wednesday at the Sager Reeves Gallery in Columbia. Thrasher has been first in line to pick up True/False passes for multiple years in a row.

MINH CONNORS/Missourian

City hopes to establish new park

BY HAILEY PECK
news@columbiamissourian.com

Columbia's Parks and Recreation staff is hoping to create a new must-see spot downtown.

The city bought a 2-acre property at 210 Orr St. in 2021 with the plan to turn it into a park. Whether it becomes a simple plot of green space or a major destination depends on whether the city can land a lucrative federal grant. They hope to turn this property into a park. The city has applied for a grant to help make the vision come true.

The property is now a gravel lot surrounded by a chain link fence, and it's littered with the structural frames of old buildings. Parks and Recreation Director Gabe Huffington, however, believes it has a bright future.

Huffington said one thing frequently discussed is making the park a spot on the map.

"If we have visitors coming to Columbia, one of their stops needs to be the Orr Street Park," Huffington said. "You're going to go eat a local spot, like Brooches and go to the Columns at Mizzou, and then you may stop by the artwork at Orr Street Park to get your picture taken before you leave town."

Huffington said he and his staff have discussed how to incorporate the importance of art within the park, which is in the North Village Arts District. They hope to have permanent art displays, seating areas and a designated area for a mobile music stage and special events.

The budget for the park is \$200,000, split evenly between fiscal 2023 and 2024. That's enough to create a green space where the community can gather. The city, however, has applied for a Community Revitalization Grant through the U.S. Department of Treasury Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds that could boost the budget for the park's development by more than \$1 million.

Grant awards will be announced early this month.

"We will either move forward, spring into summer with the public input process for a \$200,000 project to be able to complete the cleanup of the site, or we have the potential to talk about a much larger project closer to the range of \$1.25 million," Huffington said.

The demolition of buildings on the lot began in December and is nearly finished. A crew was on site Wednesday doing some of the last of the demo work.

The area was previously home to

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What to know ahead of True/False

BY SAM WILLS
news@columbiamissourian.com

Eager attendees of True/False Film Fest waited Wednesday outside the festival's box office to pick up their passes as volunteers set up art displays and corralled guests. The 20th installment of True/

False is March 2-5 in downtown Columbia, and features 33 feature films, 25 short films and a litany of other live events — from a parade to music showcases. The annual "March March parade will take place 5 p.m. Friday, beginning at the Boone County Courthouse and ending outside the Mis-

souri Theater on Ninth Street.

Films will be shown at five venues in town, including the Missouri Theater, The Blue Note, The Picturehouse at the Missouri United Methodist Church, The Globe at the First Presbyterian Church and Ragtag Cinema. Parking downtown will be accessible for

these venues, and hourly limits at meters will be waived.

The block of Ninth Street between Locust and Elm Streets will be closed for most of the festival. During the March March parade, the police will

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MU weighs impact of ChatGPT

BY MOLLY RHODES
news@columbiamissourian.com

Innovations in artificial intelligence have higher education institutions like MU considering impacts on course design and academic dishonesty.

ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence system developed by Open AI, is the latest popularized advancement: It can produce text answering a variety of questions, from essay prompts to chocolate chip cookie recipes.

J. Scott Christianson, the Director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Trulaske College of Business at MU, said that professors should be aware of how ChatGPT can affect the development of

homework assignments.

"I think in some ways, it has the potential to be good," Christianson said, pointing to a Princeton student newspaper essay that challenged faculty to design less-susceptible assignments. "If an AI can do our homework, then maybe you aren't designing homework well."

Assignment design

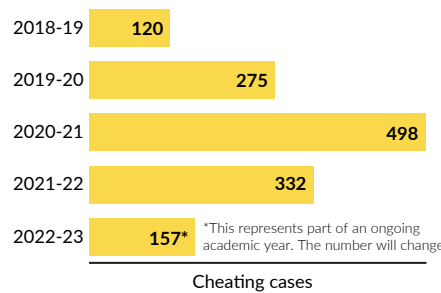
The type of assignment can influence how easily a program like ChatGPT is able to produce a passable response, said Ben Trachtenberg, the director of MU's Office of Academic Integrity.

"If we think about ChatGPT, if I make an

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MU cheating cases since 2018

Over the past five years, cases for cheating have fluctuated, according to data from Maxient, a database software that is used by MU to track student conduct cases.



Source: Missourian reporting

CELA MIGAN/Missourian

CORRECTION

Kimberly Masters said a bill like Senate Bill 255 would save her family about \$800 a month on a private tutor. A story on page 1A of Wednesday's edition misstated this amount.

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House committee inspects catalytic converter bills

BY EMMET JAMIESON
news@columbiamissourian.com

A House committee considered three bills Wednesday that seek to tamp down on catalytic converter thefts.

Rep. Don Mayhew, R-Crocker, is sponsoring House Bill 555, which would make it a felony to possess a catalytic converter with the intent to sell it.

Catalytic converters filter out harmful pollutants from vehicle emissions, and thieves target them because they are easy to remove and valuable to sell, as they contain the rare earth metals of palladium, platinum and rhodium.

Mayhew's House Bill 532 would require someone selling a converter to prove they are a "bona fide auto repair shop" or have otherwise legally acquired it. It is currently illegal to knowingly buy a stolen converter, but the bill would also criminalize unknowingly purchasing one as a misdemeanor. Mayhew advanced a version of the same legislation last year.

House Bill 751, sponsored by Rep. Aaron Crossley, D-Independence, restates these provisions.

Mayhew said thieves are stealing catalytic converters at "epidemic levels throughout the state." He added that the profit thieves make from selling converters to fences is also feeding the state's fentanyl problem.

"Getting a handle on it is imperative, not just for the damage that it causes to those folks who get a catalytic converter stolen, but also to help in the fight against illegal drugs," Mayhew said.

Trent Ford, a lobbyist on behalf of the mid-America chapter of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, testified in support of HB 555, but in opposition to HB 532.

He said HB 555 would help law enforcement prove that a catalytic converter has been stolen, but he argued the second was unnecessary because scrap metal dealers "have every bit of record keeping" they could possibly have.

Shannon Cooper, a lobbyist on behalf of Advantage Metals Recycling, said additional record-keeping would overburden law enforcement, who are understaffed and overworked. He said any law against stealing or selling converters would not deter

thieves "one iota."

"When you pull into our facility, from the moment you arrive, we begin taking photos of you, your vehicle, the product you're selling us," Cooper said. "We take a photograph of your driver's license, we take a photograph of you receiving your payment. So we have every bit of information necessary for our friends in the law enforcement world."

Kevin Hillman, the prosecuting attorney of Pulaski County, said both bills would give him the tools he needs to prosecute converter thefts. He said the documents of proof, like the affidavit HB 532 requires, would make it easier for officers to identify whether converters are stolen or legitimate.

"It's very difficult when we find somebody with just a couple of catalytic converters in the back of the car," Hillman said. "They're clearly up to something fishy. They have no real legitimate purpose, but we can't trace where those came from, and we can't trace where they're going."

Rep. David Tyson Smith, D-Columbia, said he was concerned that the bill leaves

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