Lobbying team planning April day at the Capitol

By NORA KELLY
Staff writer

The student lobbying team will be working with Eastern's lobbyist, Chris Merrifield, to get an "Eastern Day at the Capitol" for legislators in Springfield to increase awareness about Eastern.

Keith Ryniak, director of the student lobbying team, said the team is hoping to hold the visit in mid-April to help the legislators get a better understanding of what the university has to offer students. He said he hopes once the legislators have a better understanding of the school they will be more willing to increase state funding to Eastern.

Ryniak said he is hoping for many students to come to Springfield with the lobbying team.

"We've seen a lot of apathy in the past," Ryniak said. "A lot of money does come from the General Assembly, and I hope going to Springfield will help increase their awareness of our needs as a university."

"The lobbying team represents all the students and will have a significant impact on making legislators aware of Eastern," Merrifield said.

Merrifield said setting a day to go to Springfield may be difficult because the General Assembly should be in session on the day they visit in order for the visit to be effective. Before the visit in April, Ryniak said he hopes the lobbying team will be able to visit Springfield and talk to its legislators from its home town.

Ryniak said he also wants the lobbying team to write a letter to Gov. Edgar to encourage him to pass the budget bill, a piece of legislation that would increase money coming into Eastern.

Merrifield said she also wants the lobbying team to meet privately with Edgar to focus on the budget and the need for funding for deferred maintenance on campus.

Merrifield said she will be working privately with the governor to schedule a meeting time for the lobbying team.

Independent governing board not such a new idea to some

By BETSY COLE
Administration editor

Eastern's new Board of Trustees has long been touted as the first independent board to oversee the university. But some remember otherwise.

In 1895, when Eastern was founded, another independent board was in charge. Illinois Gov. John P. Altgeld appointed Eastern's first Board of Trustees the same year the General Assembly created the school, according to Eastern Illinois State College: Fifty Years of Public Service, written by Charles Coleman.

In 1895, the state appropriated $50,000 for Eastern, which was then called Eastern Illinois State Normal School. That board's job, among others, was to decide a location for the school.

Central Illinois officials subjected board members to various techniques to get Eastern to build in their cities. Bidding wars on the location broke out between Mattoon, Charleston, Paris, Danville, Shelbyville and Elgin, according to Coleman, for whom Coleman Hall is named.

In order to win the approval of the board, Charleston's fire department pumped four streams of water from opposite corners of the square so they arched over the courthouse dome.

At the same time, the Knights of Pythias band gave a concert and search lights swept over the square. Needless to say, Charleston was chosen.

After selecting a site, the board's major project was getting a building built. "The board didn't have a problem finding sites (for the college), but they had a problem getting buildings," said Dan Thomburn, a retired Eastern professor.

The first board also chose Eastern's first president, Livingston Lord. Thornburn said a lot of correspondence took place between Lord and the first board.

"Lord became a community man right away," Thornburn said. "He was very highly respected and he had an excellent reputation that still lives on today in the minds of his former students of Lord."

Eastern's first Board of Trustees consisted of five members, appointed by the governor for four-year terms.

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Ordinance dropped

Inspection proposal met with heavy opposition from residents

By KATIE VANA
City editor

Mayor Dan Cougill Thursday night dropped a proposed property inspection ordinance after about 100 residents packed the Charleston City Council Chambers to voice their opposition to it.

"You can’t take this back and sugar coat it and expect these people to swallow it – we need to drop it," said John Williams, a Charleston property owner. "The proposed ordinance is a slap in the face to every landlord who takes care of their property. If it’s not broke, don’t fix it."

Cougill said he would still form a committee consisting of city officials and property owners to examine what can be done to clean up some poorly managed properties and to ensure the safety of tenants.

After the meeting, several property owners volunteered to sit on the committee, and Cougill said he would announce all the members at the next City Council meeting.

Thursday night’s Board of Zoning, Appeals and Planning meeting was held as an open forum to discuss a proposed ordinance that would make it mandatory for all properties, rental and privately owned, to have an inspection.

See ORDINANCE page 2a

‘Black Womyn’ play scheduled for tonight

Just after AIDS Awareness Week, a realistic play about three black women with AIDS will be performed in conjunction with Eastern’s African American Heritage Celebration.

“What About Black Womyn?” is a two-act play by James Chapman about the lives of three women living with AIDS.

The play starts at 8 p.m. tonight in the Grand Ballroom of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union. Dessert will be served at 7 p.m. until the curtain call.

The admission charge is $3 for students with a valid Eastern ID, and $5 for the general public. The cost of dessert is included in the ticket price.

The dessert theater is sponsored by the UB Performing Arts committee, and the play is sponsored by the UB Human Potential committee.

This “dark comedy” tells the personal stories of Billie, a transvestite; Ruth, a 22-year-old crack addict; and Naomi, a 40-year-old widow.

Last year’s African American Heritage play, “Our Black Men Are…” is a two-act play by James Chapman about the lives of three black men living with AIDS. The play is sponsored by the UB Human Potential committee, and the play is sponsored by the UB Performing Arts committee.

See WOMYN page 2a
To boost on-campus minority concerns throughout the state, Eastern is hosting a breakfast in Springfield Thursday inviting all minority state legislators and some university officials to discuss minority enrollment, staffing and other related issues, said Eastern Lobbyist Chris Merrifield, who is organizing the event.

The breakfast will be held at 9 a.m. Thursday in the capitol building Rathskeller in Springfield.

“We’ve invited all Hispanic and African-American state legislators – there are about 25 – to talk to them about minority admissions, peer counseling and simply acquaint them with Eastern and our minority programs,” Merrifield said.

So far, 15 legislators have confirmed they will attend, and it is likely more will commit by Thursday morning, she said.

Merrifield said the event is not a result of the recent racial tension on campus but has been planned for months.

“This has been part of my long-term planning that I put together a while ago,” she said. “That is what I’m paid for.”

All departments in Buzzard building, except for the department of educational psychology and guidance, will take over the International House on Ninth Street once residents move out Dec. 15.

The move of about 109 faculty members to the International House is being conducted to allow for the beginning of a two-year renovation of Buzzard.

The department of educational psychology and guidance will stay in Buzzard until the first phase of the project is completed, said Physical Plant Director Ted Weidner.

“I can’t relocate everyone at the same time,” Weidner said. “There aren’t enough places on campus.”

He added that he hopes the phase involving educational psychology will be done over the summer because they have a lot of expensive audio equipment and it will be difficult to set it all up again.

Many faculty members who hold offices in Buzzard are ready for the move.

“The whole renovation is going to be an inconvenience, but looking ahead to the vision of a beautiful place makes it all worth while,” said Journalism Professor Peter Voelz. “It’s delayed gratification.”

Even though Voelz and many other faculty have sympathy for the 25 residents being forced to leave International House, they said little could be done about