Harvesting Stories
KU radio reporters cover agricultural and health topics that affect Kansans

REPORTERS ERIC DURBAN AND BRYAN THOMPSON OF KU’S KANSAS
Public Radio cover a lot of ground: the entire state, in fact.
Durban, based in Garden City, focuses on agribusiness, farming practices, food and fuel production, and local and national agriculture topics.
“I highlight the important issues facing farmers, ranchers, and consumers today,” Durban said. “There is a wealth of stories out there.”
He’s covered winter farmers markets, federal support for wheat research, and winter-weather stress on livestock as a contributor to Harvest Public Media, a consortium of public broadcasters in Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Nebraska. You can read and hear his reports at harvestpublicmedia.org, KPR and High Plains Public Radio.
Since 2000, Thompson — who’s based in Salina — has been educating and informing Kansans about issues relating to their well-being, from national health-care reform and veterans’ medical care to providing dental services in underserved areas.
Thompson’s series, “Kansas Health: A Prescription for Change,” is broadcast weekly on 20 stations throughout the state, and KPR provides the series free to any Kansas radio station that wants to air it. Archived reports are at kpr.ku.edu.
**Going the Distance**

KU educational institute opens the world to lifelong learners

**AN INNOVATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR OLDER ADULTS**

Adults that expanded from northeast Kansas to Hutchinson Community College in 2008 now operates at two more community colleges and, since last fall, at Kansas State University in Manhattan.

KU’s Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, affiliated with KU Continuing Education, offers courses, day trips, and other learning opportunities for adults 50 and older. About 95 courses a year are taught in three-week sessions at the colleges or partner retirement centers and museums in 11 cities. Courses are presented either on-site or through interactive video broadcasts by instructors who are faculty members or community experts.

“Hutchinson was our first partnership, and it remains very successful,” says Elizabeth Black, outreach coordinator for Osher.

A course recently offered there, “Getting a Handle on Handel,” was taught by a couple who are longtime participants in “Messiah” in Lindsborg, presented each spring for 130 years.

Other courses this spring include World War II prisoners in Kansas, the tallgrass prairie, Thomas Jefferson, and Rodgers & Hammerstein.

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**Breaking Through**

KU research center offers training for parents and teachers of children with autism

**A KU AUTISM PROGRAM HAS PROVIDED FREE TRAINING** to parents and teachers in Hays, Hutchinson, Garden City, and other Kansas communities.

“The impact that intervention has on families is well-established,” says Linda Heitzman-Powell, director of training for the Kansas Center for Autism Research and Training, affiliated with KU’s Life Span Institute. “We now need to identify how to more fully include these children in their communities and what strategies benefit older children and young adults. There is still work to be done.”

Workshops, lectures, and interactive video sessions provide a range of opportunities for educators, caregivers, speech pathologists, and parents to learn skills that can improve behavior and communication in children with autism, Asperger’s syndrome, and other disorders. More than 220 persons have been trained since the program began in 2008.

Besides a Medicaid waiver program, grants from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research support training of parents of children with autism who live in rural regions.

One parent who took a 6-day K-CART course noted that it gave him “knowledge and behavioral techniques that have already helped our son progress. Starting out on this journey has been overwhelming at times, but I know we’re on the right track.”

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**MORE INFORMATION**

OSHER.KU.EDU

KCART.KU.EDU
Taking Care
KU’s Respite Services provides in-home support for families of people with disabilities

Richard and Mary Weathers have been together for 59 years, but “together” means something very different now for the Pittsburg couple.

Seven years ago, Mary was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, a progressive deterioration of physical and mental functions. She can remain at home because Richard, a retired Pittsburg State University professor, is her daily caregiver: tending her needs, keeping house, shopping, cooking.

Five or six times a year since 2007, however, he leaves Mary with a caregiver from KU’s Southeast Kansas Respite Services to attend board meetings or other functions.

“It’s been a life-saver for me,” Weathers says. “I don’t really have anyone to look after Mary. I don’t really take a day off.”

Those breaks are the point of Respite Services, says coordinator Diane Salyers. “Sometimes it’s just so (clients) can go shopping, although we hope it’s a more genuine break,” she says.

A trained staff provides in-home support — usually weekly or monthly — to caregivers of persons with mental and physical disabilities. Over the years, Salyers says, many of the staff have built deep relationships with people they assist.

More Information
sekrespitesservices.org
Parsons.LSI.KU.edu

Pittsburg

Richard Weathers is the caregiver for his wife, Mary, who has Alzheimer’s disease. He is able to leave her periodically for meetings and events because Southeast Kansas Respite Services provides an interim, in-home caregiver for her.

Parsons

Southeast Kansas Respite Services

Founded in 1990 as a program of the KU Life Span Institute in Parsons.

About 220 families in 13 Kansas counties receive services from 90 staff caregivers trained in CPR, first aid, and other relevant techniques.

Funded by state and federal grants and contracts with United Way and social-service agencies.

Partners

- KU Center on Developmental Disabilities at Parsons
- Parsons State Hospital and Training Center
- CLASS LTD
- Tri-Valley Developmental Services
- Southeast Kansas Area Agency on Aging
- Crawford County Mental Health Center
- Four County Mental Health Center
- Labette Center for Mental Health Services
- Southeast Kansas Mental Health Center
- Spring River Mental Health & Wellness

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