



A broken finial at the top of a stairway in Porter Hall stands mute evidence Wednesday to some of the repairs that can't be made at Pittsburg State University because of a state directive that withholds needed maintenance funds from state universities. (Andrew D. Brosig/The Morning Sun)



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Wednesday, November 22, 2006

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Published November 21, 2006

KSU maint. needs grow

Will Klusener Staff Writer

Picture \$254.1 million. That's not chump change, and it's how much Kansas State University needs to bring its buildings and facilities up-to-date, according to the Kansas Board of Regents' most recent estimate of deferred maintenance needs.

That's a conservative estimate, though. Tom Rawson, vice president of administration and finance at K-State, said that amount isn't sufficient to bring K-State's buildings up to snuff.

"If the school were to get the full amount estimated by the regents, K-State would only be able to bring its buildings up to 90 percent," Rawson said.

That figure came as part of a recently updated study of the maintenance needs of state universities, which was released by the board on Nov. 16. The total amount estimated to be needed to get Kansas's universities into top-notch shape is \$727 million.

K-State leads the list of universities that are in a budget deficit. The University of Kansas, by comparison, is only \$208.5 million in the hole.

The problem, Rawson said, isn't that funds are being improperly allocated. It's that there just isn't enough money.

State-run universities in Kansas draw most of their maintenance dollars from the Educational Building Fund, which is also controlled by the state. That fund, which has been around since the 1920s, Rawson said, gets its money from a one-mill tax.

That tax level doesn't generate enough money anymore, Rawson said, and K-State is hurting because of it. K-State needs about \$28 million per year to keep its buildings in good shape.

"A good rule of thumb around the industry is to devote 2 to 4 percent of the campus replacement value, which is the amount it would take to replace the entire campus, to building maintenance," Rawson said. "For us, if we use 2 percent of that, that's about \$28 million. Right now we're only getting about \$4 million from the state."

K-State's campus replacement value is \$1.4 billion, according to Rawson.



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Rawson went on to explain that K-State uses about \$3 million of its own operating budget each year for maintenance. Still, that's only about \$7 million per year.

The 1 mill tax from which the building fund draws its money is not enough to finance the maintenance of the universities anymore, Rawson said. The cost of maintenance has gone up because of the age of the buildings on campus, Rawson said. He also said that when problems such as leaky roofs or broken steam pipes aren't fixed, the damage they cause gets worse and costs more to repair.

There's hope on the horizon, Rawson said, but it may take some time to get here.

"The board of regents introduced a bill last year that sought to increase the mill levy and state sales tax to fund the repairs, but that unfortunately wasn't passed," Rawson said. "Until something like that happens, we'll just have to continue using the Band-Aid approach and fix the worst things as they happen."

Rawson said the board is working on more legislation, and he's optimistic that money will soon begin to flow.

"Until then, we have no idea how much we'll get," he said.

You can reach Will Klusener by phone at 776-2300, ext. 246, or by e-mail at willk@themercury.com

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University maintenance needs reach \$727M

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An audit of deferred maintenance projects in the Board of Regents system showed the growing effects of insufficient funding. The state currently spends \$15 million on deferred maintenance projects annually, short of the \$84 million regents say they need each year to keep facilities from falling into disrepair.

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The regents estimated their costs for keeping buildings at 90 percent of their new condition. Replacing their properties would cost \$4.5 billion, they project.

Legislative leaders who recently toured the crumbling buildings agree it's time for action.

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CJOnline.com / Topeka Capital-Journal

Published Friday, November 17, 2006

Regent repair costs soaring

\$727 million to pay for deferred upkeep needed, legislators told

By John Milburn

The Associated Press

The cost of bringing state universities' 567 buildings up to snuff was pegged Thursday at \$727 million, up 24 percent from an estimate two years ago.

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Legislative leaders who recently toured the crumbling buildings agree it is time for action.

"We believe we have deferred this long enough," said Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dwayne Umbarger, R-Thayer. "If we're going to have these buildings, you're going to have to invest in them.

Umbarger said the issue isn't just structural problems: "It's about safety standards."

University of Kansas chancellor Robert Hemenway said taxpayers assume that because the campuses' buildings are owned by the state that the Legislature is maintaining them. Tuition pays for daily operations, and private contributions are heavily earmarked for specific uses.

"You can't expect donors to contribute to the Jones Memorial Utility Fund," Hemenway said.

Regents hosted a series of meetings and tours with legislators on university campuses. The regents plan more efforts, including having students write postcards to Gov. Kathleen Sebelius.

A spokeswoman said Sebelius is willing to take a look at the maintenance issue as she prepares her budget recommendations for next year, but she has no proposal of her own.

Kansas State University president Jon Wefald said legislators recognize the problem, but "I guess I didn't realize we had a challenge with the governor."

Robinson noted that neighboring states have recently committed to refurbishing their campuses,

including \$500 million in Oklahoma and \$250 million in Arkansas. A proposal in Missouri would spend \$350 million on its campuses.

Senate President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, said the regents' maintenance needs would be a priority in the 2007 session, which starts Jan. 8. He didn't know how the state would fund such a massive project but said it has to happen soon.

"We've got to find a way to do it. Every year it just gets worse," Morris said.

Tax increases stand little chance of passing the Republican-controlled Legislature. Last year, legislators snubbed a regents proposal to pay for maintenance through a temporary sales tax increase, bonding and other sources.

"I'm big on new proposals," Hemenway said.

There is some new money in the pipeline. The regents will be able to use \$8.5 million in interest from tuition starting next year.

Regent Christine Downey, a former senator, said legislators won't get serious about the issue until constituents speak up.

"I don't think they are going to do it because (university) presidents and regents ask for it," she said.

Regent Donna Shank compared the issue to the state's commitment to good highways, saying both higher education and transportation are important to economic development.

"It's such a huge problem, we can't put it off any longer. It's going to take years and years to get it done," Shank said.

University buildings date to 1863, and 80 percent are at least 20 years old. One of the most notorious infrastructure needs is the "Frankenstein" room at Kansas State, where employees have to use a 10-foot wooden pole to operate high-voltage switches. The room is so named because the equipment in the 1920 power plant resembles that of the famous horror movie.

Other projects include replacing utility tunnels, roofs, heating and air-conditioning units, and telecommunications.

Regents presidents warned that continued neglect could result in injury, death and the loss of millions of dollars in research and special museum collections. And such conditions are becoming an issue in the recruiting of students and faculty.

The audit found that 73 percent of students surveyed said facilities were a major factor in their college choices.

"What we have to have is an environment that shows respect for learning," Hemenway said.

Wefald rejected one suggestion that universities have old, excess property that could be sold to reduce the maintenance needs. He said the regents system was educating nearly 90,000 students, and vacating crumbling buildings isn't an option.

"We're maxed out. We are so short of classrooms it's almost critical," Wefald said.

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Kansas Universities Crumble

Nov 17, 2006 09:13 AM CST

by Sarah Pierik

Kansas's six state universities are crumbling, and the state is just ignoring the problem, says the Kansas Board of Regents.

The board determined there's a maintenance backlog of 727 million dollars at Kansas' universities. 44 million of that money is from Wichita State.

Students say they notice the problems, like the leaking roof with an unwanted skylight at Henrion Hall, the termite damage, and the water damage inside Wilner Auditorium.

WSU hopes the legislature will provide at least a down payment this year, to get the buildings back on track.



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Regents to encourage maintenance funding

Deferred maintenance bill increases on university campuses

A Board of Regents report revealed a back log of \$727 million in maintenance on state university campuses. The bill at the University of Kansas totaled \$209 million.

By [Jack Weinstein \(Contact\)](#)

Friday, November 17, 2006



TOPEKA, Ks. — Universities in the state of Kansas need money for deferred maintenance.

A lot of money.

At least, that's what the Board of Regents will be arguing to the State Legislature this year.

The Kansas Board of Regents on Thursday made public a report of state university deferred maintenance. The report was originally conducted in Fall 2004 and updated this past summer. The update revealed a backlog of \$727 million and a total ongoing maintenance bill of \$84 million annually to repair 567 state university buildings.

The University of Kansas alone needs \$209 million to repair damage to buildings on the Lawrence campus. The University of Kansas Medical Center needs more than \$75 million for repairs.

Two out of three state-owned buildings are located on university campuses. Of those buildings, 80 percent are at least 20 years old, out of date and are in need of maintenance.

Regents members and university presidents all agreed that this was a serious issue that needed to be dealt with. Regent Donna Shank said the regents needed to do everything they could to ensure the backlog was reduced.

"We've got to do something about this," Shank said. "Somehow, we have to step forward, the legislature needs to step forward and the governor needs to step forward to take care of this."

The state of Kansas allocated \$15 million to address deferred maintenance for the six state universities in 2007 — 18 percent of the annual funding the state universities would need to adequately maintain its buildings.

Regents President and CEO Reggie Robinson, who presented the report, said it was

important to deal with the deferred maintenance to meet the needs of the 90,000 students at Kansas universities preparing to enter the job market.

dical Center

Chancellor Robert Hemenway said the maintenance of campus buildings was important in recruiting faculty to the University because they paid attention to the state of the buildings they'd be teaching in. Hemenway added that it was "constructive in a way" that the microburst last March caused so much damage and caught the public's attention.

"We had to have a natural disaster for people to realize there was a need that needed to be addressed," he said. "People responded well. I'd like to see the same urgency for deferred maintenance."

The Board of Regents will work closely with Governor Kathleen Sebelius to "encourage her to make a down payment" on deferred maintenance for the state's budget in 2008, said Kip Peterson, director of government relations and communications for the Regents. The Kansas legislature will then decide if more funding will be allotted to state universities when the legislative sessions begin in January.

"Any additional or new funding on this is a step in the right direction," Peterson said. "The reality is the longer it's ignored, the more expensive it will be."

Kansan staff writer *Jack Weinstein* can be contacted at jweinstein@kansan.com.

— Edited by *Erin Wiley*

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49 ABC News Topeka

Crushing weight of building repairs hurts state universities

Story by [Natasha Trelfa](#)

10:52 p.m. Thursday, November 16, 2006

Emporia — University buildings around Kansas are crumbling as the the board of regents, and university leaders are calling on the state for help.

The Kansas Board of Regents reported today that universities around the state are crumbling under \$727 million worth of unattended repairs.

The cost of fixing up universities around Kansas is no drop in the bucket. It takes \$84 million a year just to maintain buildings.

But with the state only pouring \$15 million into repairs this year, the Kansas board of regents says the funds to fix up campuses have dried up.

"We're just in a situation where the resources available from state support dedicated to maintain on an annual basis, has for many years, been too small a revenue stream," said Reginald Robison, Kansas Board of Regents President.

With the six state universities lacking the funds to keep up with repairs, there are now \$727 million worth of back logged repairs going far beyond the cracked windows and chipped paint.

"So many of the problems are behind the scenes. They are things that don't immediately meet your eyes," said Ray Hauke, Emporia State spokesman.

But there may be a light at the end of the tunnel. Ray Hauke says the university was allowed to keep interest earnings from tuition and fees to put towards repairs.

"It didn't happen over night. It only gets worse as time goes on and the public has an investment in these buildings that it wants to protect," said Hauke.

The Kansas Board of Regents is also pitching, urging legislatures to make a room for a down payment for repairs in their 2008 budget...to help stop the crumbling buildings.

"These are assets that belong to the people of Kansas and it's irresponsible to let these assets deteriorate," said Robison.

The two state schools with the highest repair price tags are Kansas State and KU, each with more than \$200 million worth of repairs.

Emporia State is facing a price tag of more than \$44 million.

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Regents Say Repairs Needed At State Colleges

Posted: 9:27 PM Nov 16, 2006

AP

The Kansas Board of Regents says \$727 million is needed for repairs at state universities. That's a 24 percent increase from an estimate two years ago.

Regents say they need \$84 million a year to keep facilities from falling into disrepair. The state currently spends \$15 million a year on deferred maintenance projects.

Some legislative leaders who recently toured campus buildings agree it's time for action.

Republican Senator Dwayne Umbarger of Thayer says maintenance has been deferred long enough.

Senate President Steve Morris of Hugoton says campus maintenance will be a priority in the 2007 legislative session.

University buildings date to 1863, and 80 percent are at least 20 years old. The universities have a total of 567 buildings.

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Needed maintenance climbs to \$727M

Regents to push for budget to fix state university buildings; KU repairs total \$209M

By Sophia Maines

Thursday, November 16, 2006

If you ignore the problem, it will only get bigger.

That's the message the Kansas Board of Regents is sending with its latest report indicating that the cost of building repairs at the state's six public universities has climbed by \$143 million since 2004.

"Delay in addressing this issue is costly, and we need to step up and try to come to grips with it," said Regents President Reggie Robinson.

The Board of Regents will review a new "deferred maintenance" report at the board's meeting today in Topeka.

Dwindling financial support has caused buildings and classrooms on the university campuses to deteriorate.

At Kansas University, the repair list totals \$209 million with another \$76 million needed at KU Medical Center.

KU officials in recent months have given tours to the media and lawmakers, pointing to broken retaining walls, rusty lab spaces, warped ceiling tiles, uneven floors and crumbling sidewalks.

"It's getting more urgent," KU Provost Richard Lariviere said. "It's one of those things — if you don't fix the leak in the roof, the house starts falling apart."

A 2004 report found that the universities needed \$584 million to address the list of needed repairs and \$74 million was needed for annual facility maintenance. Two years later, the bottom line is \$727 million, with \$84 million needed for annual upkeep.

The bottom line figures have risen in part because the buildings have gotten older, construction costs have increased and more building space has been added to the list, according to the Regents.

Eric King, Regents facilities director, said the colleges have received about \$15 million per year, a fraction of the \$74 million that the Regents in 2004 said was needed for annual upkeep.

"That increases the backlog," he said. "You need to be spending \$74 million or \$84 million and you're only spending \$15 million. The difference goes into the backlog because there are things that aren't getting done."

Last year, the Regents proposed a plan — squelched by the Legislature — to raise taxes to deal with the problem.

As a new legislative session nears, Regents are pressing their case again.

“Last year was an election year,” Regent Donna Shank said. “We knew that nothing would happen last year, but we knew that we had to raise the issue and bring it forward. We are really hopeful that this year something might be done because (state) revenues look good and this is not an election year.”

Shank said the biggest challenge is finding the funding to make repairs.

“The obstacle is always money,” she said. “That is a huge amount of money, and there is no way that the state can just write a check to address that problem. It’s going to take a long-term solution, and it’s going to take additional revenue. And to find that kind of revenue is not going to be easy.”



Posted on Thu, Nov. 16, 2006

Regents: University maintenance needs have reached \$727 million

JOHN MILBURN
Associated Press

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Umbarger said the issue isn't just structural problems: "It's about safety standards."

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A spokeswoman said Sebelius is willing to take a look at the maintenance issue as she prepares her budget recommendations for next year but she has no proposal of her own.

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Robinson noted that neighboring states have recently committed to refurbishing their campuses, including \$500 million in Oklahoma and \$250 million in Arkansas. A proposal in Missouri would spend \$350 million on its campuses.

Senate President Steve Morris, R-Hugoton, said the regents' maintenance needs would be a priority in the 2007 session, which starts Jan. 8. He didn't know how the state would fund such a massive project but said it has to happen soon.

"We've got to find a way to do it. Every year it just gets worse," Morris said.

There is a little new money on the horizon and tax increases stand little chance of passing the Republican-controlled Legislature. Last year, legislators snubbed a regents proposal to pay for maintenance through a temporary sales tax increase, bonding and other sources to pay for the maintenance backlog.

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"We're maxed out. We are so short of classrooms it's almost critical," Wefald said.

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Editorial Board: University buildings must be repaired now

By Malinda Osborne (Contact)

Friday, March 31, 2006

If you see broken windows, missing ceiling tiles or chipped facades on buildings around campus, don't worry, the maintenance department knows. Well, then again, maybe you should worry because they can't do much about it. These problems are called "deferred maintenance projects," and they fill a list that goes on for about 30 pages and chronicles 10 years worth of window, masonry and roof problems.

Last year, an evaluation conducted by the Board of Regents revealed the six state universities needed \$584 million to take care of all the maintenance and repairs. The KU campus in Lawrence alone would require \$168.5 million.

Then the microburst hit and the University sustained an additional \$4 million in damages. In comparison, this fiscal year the University received \$4.36 million in repair and rehabilitation funds from the state legislature. To repair a single damaged roof — the University has 42, according to Mark Reiske, associate director of design and construction management — it would cost about \$500,000. Normally, that is the amount in the budget that goes specifically toward roof repair each year. Reiske said his department was trying desperately to do temporary repairs on the roofs now. They have had limited success.

"They shouldn't leak if it rains, but that's about it," Reiske said.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius' request for federal aid for repairs is a step in the right direction. The amount she requested, however, would barely cover a fraction of what is needed, and who knows if we will actually receive any money.

What's worse is the current situation that the regents and the University are in again with funding from the state legislature. Just last week, the Regents proposed a financial package of a tax increase and bonds to subsidize the accumulated repairs at the six state schools to the State Senate budget committee. The package included a statewide \$1 million property tax, \$150 million in bonds and an increase in sales taxes ending in 2016.

In all likelihood, this proposal — while realistic and necessary — probably will not be approved because it includes one dreaded word: Taxes. Senators claim right now there is an anti-tax climate, but that is just political jargon for "election year." Essentially, Kansas schools are being told, once again, just wait another year and hope the buildings don't crumble too badly.

The deferred maintenance situation is a problem that needs improvement soon — not next year or even a few months, but now. Who knows how long the temporary roof repairs will hold up? As students, we should let the University, regents and state legislature know we do not pay so much money to learn in classrooms with leaky roofs and broken windows. We deserve better.

— Malinda Osborne for the editorial board



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Thursday 30 March, 2006

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Opinions

Time to play catch-up

Bob Sigman, Opinion Page Editor

March 30, 2006

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As any visitor to the Kansas Capitol in Topeka knows, the grand old building is undergoing a much-needed, from-the-ground-up renovation. The work, started earlier in the decade at a cost of \$135 million, is in order; the Legislature had neglected the structure, parts of which date to the 1860s, for decades.

Too bad legislators don't share the same concern for the scandalous \$584 million maintenance backlog at the state's six public universities. Perhaps if they were as familiar with the campus building needs as they were with the one they inhabit, legislators might not be neglecting the education facilities.

Legislators need to get out more.

Were they to inform themselves, they would know that employees at Kansas State University must use a 10-foot wooden pole to operate electric switches in a 1920s power plant for fear of being injured by arcing from high voltage, antiquated equipment. Or that temporary heavy gauge steel screens have been installed at three K-State structures to protect students from falling chunks of masonry.

Similar dangers have been reported at other universities, including a break in an 80-year-old hot water pipe at the University of Kansas Medical Center that caused extensive damage. The break two years ago need not have occurred had the Legislature provided funding for replacing the pipe when it should have been replaced - years earlier. Restoration cost \$570,000, not including lost staff time in moving and other inconveniences.

Last week legislators were briefed on the dangerous conditions by Reginald L. Robinson, president and CEO of the Kansas Board of Regents, the governor-

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appointed board that oversees higher education.

He spoke with members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, which holds the purse strings in the upper chamber, on building needs and on a plan to fund renovations.

"To prevent further backlog," Robinson said, "\$74 million per year is required, without factoring inflation, to adequately maintain the university campuses. Only \$15 million was available in fiscal year 2006 (the current year).

"If this problem is not addressed, today's deferred maintenance backlog of \$584 million will grow to nearly \$800 million by fiscal year 2014."

The Legislature is ignoring a huge state investment: 537 buildings, not including residence halls, student unions and parking garages, with 20 million square feet of floor space. Replacement value is \$3.9 billion, the board official said.

Robinson's testimony revealed that more than plummeting slabs of masonry are a danger. Funding is earmarked for improvements to meet state fire code requirements and to comply with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The projects include remodeling of existing buildings and new construction.

For funding, the Board of Regents would finance the \$584 million deferred maintenance backlog with a \$150 million bond issue, funds from the state Education Building Fund and a one-tenth cent sales tax increase that would end after 10 years. The \$74 million annual building maintenance outlay would be covered with revenue from a permanent 1-mill increase in the existing Education Building Fund.

Even though legislative neglect fueled the large backlog, it does not appear there is widespread backing for a solution around the Capitol. Early conversations indicate that broader support could be built by including other post-secondary education institutions, among them community colleges.

If more campuses were in the mix, so this thinking goes, the constituents of additional legislators would benefit, thus increasing the number of votes for the maintenance program. That is a political approach that might work.

However, there are issues that should be considered here. While the state owns the university buildings, it does not own community college property. That asset belongs to the people in the community college district.

Question: Should tax money raised from all Kansas taxpayers be used at the 19 community colleges? Certainly the expenditure on property not owned by the state - and the issue of fairness to all taxpayers - should be part of the debate.

Open, too, is the question of who, the state or the colleges, would make decisions on design, construction and other matters related to the projects.

Under Kansas law, the Board of Regents is authorized to coordinate community college education programs. Legislators need to determine whether that limited role involves capital improvements.

Clearly, the universities' \$584 million maintenance backlog demands action. That should be the objective; broadening the scope of the mission could bring

unnecessary complications.

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