

From Lincoln to Obama, MSU's G. Robert Vincent Voice Library is home to historic voices

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NICK DENTAMARO/THE STATE NEWS

The State News

HOCKEY

Conboy leaves MSU, Tropp's future still not certain

By Alex DiFilippo
THE STATE NEWS

MSU hockey team captain and senior goaltender Jeff Lerg sat down with sophomore forward Corey Tropp Monday to talk about his future as a hockey player. By Tuesday, it was unclear whether that future would include MSU.



Tropp

Lerg and Tropp's chat came as a result of MSU head coach Rick Comley's decision to suspend Tropp and freshman forward Andrew Conboy from the team for the remainder of the season following their actions in Saturday's 5-3 loss to No. 1 Michigan at Yost Ice Arena.



Conboy

Conboy has since decided to withdraw from the university, but Tropp is still weighing his options, Comley said.

If he decides to stay enrolled, Comley said he "would be willing to sit down with (Tropp) in the spring and discuss his status further." But Comley didn't say what would come of the meeting or if Tropp would be allowed back on the team next season.

Lerg said he and former Spartan Justin Abdelkader stepped up and tried to advise Tropp.

"(Tropp) went home to talk to his parents and try to get a feel for what's a better situation," Lerg said.

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KEYING ON SAFETY



PHOTOS BY GABRIELLE MOORE/THE STATE NEWS

Top: Social relations and policy sophomore Brieanna Gribble talks on the phone Monday night while guarding the main doors in East Holden Hall.

Bottom: Gribble takes a student's ID Monday night at East Holden Hall. Gribble and other night receptionists camp out by the main doors from midnight to 7 a.m. to check students in and enforce dorm safety.

MSU officials consider increasing hall security after recent incidents

By Kyle Feldscher
THE STATE NEWS

Crimes in residence halls during the past two weeks have led to increased safety concerns among students and are forcing university officials to consider different ways of keeping residents safe. An electronic key card system, requiring students to scan their student ID to enter living wings, was installed in Holden Hall days after two on-campus sexual assaults were reported in two days, and a week after police shut down an alleged scam that preyed on students living in residence halls.

"It's sort of scary trying to go to class or even leaving a group meeting or something at night," said Courtney

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ENERGY

PRICE DROP TRIGGERS MSU SWITCH TO NATURAL GAS

By Justin Harris
THE STATE NEWS

The MSU Power Plant began burning natural gas instead of coal last week after prices for the fuel remained lower than university officials expected.

Bob Ellerhorst, director of utility services at the power plant, said the university rarely burns gas as an economic choice.

"We're burning some natural gas because natural gas prices are really soft today," he said. "Traditionally, gas is more expensive than coal over the long run. But you get these spikes like right now, when it's cheaper."

Although usually cheaper, coal releases more carbon dioxide emissions than natural gas.

While only 7 percent of MSU's fuel comes in the form of gas, Ellerhorst said the university diversifies its energy portfolio through short- and long-term agreements in order to defend itself against volatile markets.

"We try to take advantage of the market," Ellerhorst said. "But nobody avoided the run-up in energy prices that occurred over the past two years. Everybody's been exposed to it."

Through varied-length contracts, the university buys the majority of gas and coal it will need in the future. For example, of the 250,000 tons of coal the university uses per year, 220,000 tons comes from term contracts. The university purchases the energy MSU needs for its functioning supply.

"Sometimes the long-term contracts are favorable for us, sometimes they're not," Ellerhorst said. "You win some, you lose some, but on the average it works out for the best because it gives you a regular supply."

However, some fuel is purchased as the market changes, such as the natural gas being burned now.

"You're still at the mercy of the coal market or natural gas," said Fred Poston, MSU vice president for finance and operations.

In 2007-2008, the plant burned coal for 93 percent of its fuel. Ellerhorst said that number will probably be lower this year.

Ellerhorst said the plant will burn gas until the end of the month, but no decisions for February have been made yet.

Poston said because MSU produces most of its own energy, power the campus, it's less sus-

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THE EAST LANSING CITY COUNCIL MOVES CLOSER TO A VOTE ON A HISTORIC DISTRICT FOR FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES, page 2A

Weather
Snow showers
High 22° | Low 13°
Three-day forecast, Page 2A

FUNDING

E.L. could get share of stimulus bill for projects

By Allison Bush
THE STATE NEWS

East Lansing is among the cities across the nation that are eagerly submitting their proposals to get their cut of the funding from President Barack Obama's proposed \$825 billion stimulus project.

The package before the U.S. Congress could be voted on as soon as Wednesday. It passed Tuesday in the Senate Appropriations Committee, and could receive a Senate vote by early next week.

East Lansing City Manager Ted Staton said the city has drafted a list of potential projects that could use funding from the stimulus package. The list totals about \$46 million.

One of the proposed projects is the reconstruction of the entire length of Harrison Avenue, Staton said. It would cost about \$2,500,000 for repairs between Mt. Hope Road and Kalamazoo Street.

"We've had this on the list of projects to pursue for a couple years now," Staton said. "The stimulus plan would allow us to get it all to be reconstructed in 2009."

The city's original plan for Harrison Avenue was to phase in reconstruction during a three-

year time span, beginning in 2010, he said.

Michigan could receive up to \$4.6 billion through the stimulus plan, according to the Michigan Municipal League.

"We're one of the neediest states right now," said state Rep. Mark Meadows, D-East Lansing. "I believe we'll get that amount of money."

East Lansing has several other infrastructure projects on its wish list, along with economic development projects, public facility projects and environmental initiatives.

"Over the past eight years, we've continued to receive less and less money on state and federal levels," said Todd Smeethen, director of public works for East Lansing. "This would help us to catch up on things we haven't been able to afford to do."

The stimulus package would make funds available through Sept. 30, 2010. Half of infrastructure funding would be required for spending on projects that could begin within 120 days of the package's enactment.

The stimulus package's 120-day condition is intended to help states now, not provide funding for future projects, Meadows said.

About \$20 million-worth of

Possible East Lansing stimulus package projects

- 1 West Road project to connect East Lansing to Eastwood Towne Center. Cost currently undetermined.
- 2 Harrison Avenue renovation from Trowbridge Road to Kalamazoo Street \$1,750,000
- 3 Albert Avenue realignment \$2,500,000
- 4 Bogue Street bridge repair over the Red Cedar River \$220,000

SOURCE: MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

GRAPHIC BY HAILLEY SCHAALDACH SN

East Lansing's proposed projects could be under construction in the first 120 days, Staton said.

Although officials said it is too early to tell when the money would get to the communities whose proposals are accepted, it will be a top priority once the amount of money coming to Michigan is identified, Meadows said.

"Say it happened now," he said. "I'd say by the end of April, the money would be out in the revenue stream."

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