

All aboard: The Michigan Princess Riverboat has cruised the Grand River for more than a century

FACES+PLACES, PAGE 1B



JASON CHOU/THE STATE NEWS

The Michigan Princess Riverboat currently is docked at Grand River Park in Lansing and awaits the ice to clear to serve patrons in the upcoming season. The boat has been winterized to preserve it during the harsh weather conditions.

# The State News

Mark Dobson's time as RHA president draws to a close after almost 3 years

Residence Halls Association President Mark Dobson, right, and RHA Vice President Kevin Fleury, middle, listen to Doug Estry, associate provost for undergraduate education during an RHA General Assembly meeting Wednesday in the Union. Dobson is set to graduate this spring after almost three years as RHA's president.

SEAN COOK/THE STATE NEWS



## ECONOMY

### Obama eases fears in speech to Congress

By Allison Bush  
THE STATE NEWS

America's economy is going to be OK — at least according to the address President Barack Obama delivered to Congress Tuesday. "The answers to our problems don't lie beyond our reach," Obama said in his first speech to a joint session of Congress. "They exist in our laboratories and universities, in our fields and our factories."

"What is required now is for this country to pull together, confront boldly the challenges we face, and take responsibility for our future once more."

MSU economics professor Charles Ballard said Obama made clear the severity of the country's economic situation but didn't want to make the country seem desperate.

"One speech isn't going to change what people think about the situation, but it helps to have someone who is upbeat," said Nick Molen, an anthropology graduate student.

Obama laid out his goal to reduce the nation's \$3.1 trillion deficit by the time his first term ends, largely by cutting funding to the war in Iraq.

MSU assistant political science professor Matt Grossmann said a budget deficit cut in half would be bringing the deficit to what it was when President George W. Bush came into office in 2001.

"He's the one who has to get rid of it, although that's not to say he caused it," Lyman Briggs sophomore Daniel Chavez-Yenter said. "But I'm just glad to see he's going to do something."

Obama's address followed a White House conference Tuesday where Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke said although the economy will continue to recede for the next six months, the recession should end this year, according to The Associated Press.

But economic forecast is notoriously inaccurate, especially in this unprecedented situation, Ballard said.

"None of the people providing the forecasts have ever seen anything like the current economic downturn," he said.

"Having said that, it does seem like a concession is among economists that there's a very good chance that before the end of 2009, we'll at least have bottomed out."

Whether the stimulus succeeds at creating jobs and, therefore, tax revenue will have much to do with a recovery, Ballard said.

"The first thing we need is to get the economy out of the recession," he said.

## Residence Halls leader moving out

"RHA has been a member of many decisions MSU has made, and I don't think (RHA) would have been included without him. He's made MSU better for students."

Paul Goldblatt, MSU director of Residence Life

By Chris Vannini  
THE STATE NEWS

When MSU Residence Halls Association began nominations for next year's president on Feb. 11, a nomination for current president Mark Dobson caused a roar of laughter from the assembly and an ear-to-ear grin from Dobson. After almost three years as RHA president, it seemed as though the Spanish and political theory and constitutional democracy senior would never leave the organization. But since Dobson, a Trenton, Mich., native is set to graduate this May, RHA will have a new president for the first time since November 2006.

"There are times when I'm like, 'Boy, I'll be glad when it's over,'" Dobson said. "And there are times when I'm like, 'I'm really going to miss this.' It's bittersweet."

RHA's presidential election is tonight, but the president elect won't take office until April 8. There are three candidates for president: RHA Vice President Kevin Fleury, Communications Coordinator Emma Perex and Director of RHA TV Scott Bishop.

"All of the candidates are looking at the void (Dobson) will leave," Fleury said. "Having a meeting without mentioning Mark is going to be impossible."

Dobson first joined RHA in 2005 during his sophomore year as a representative for Wilson Hall.

When elections were held in spring 2006, Dobson decided to run for vice president, but didn't have high hopes. "Everyone still wonders how I pulled it off," he said. "I was really inexperienced and what people feared the most is if I had to take over as president."

Possibility became reality when Dobson was bumped up to president in November 2006. His predecessor, Lindsay Palinsky, stepped down because of personal reasons. Dobson credited his ability to get through his first term to his fellow officers, who helped him with the workload.

"The one thing with this job, in all my years, you surround yourself with really great people," he said. "We always joke that a lot of people work hard but I get to take all the credit." Dobson said since he took over, RHA has gained strength as a voice for students.

"What I'm most proud to have been a part of is the way that

See DOBSON on page 2A

To hear audio clips from an interview with Dobson, visit [statenews.com/multimedia](http://statenews.com/multimedia)

## PROGRAM

### Students rally against cutting music therapy

By Kayla Habermehl  
THE STATE NEWS

Andrea Kozminski turned down scholarships at other schools before coming to MSU last fall. The no-preference freshman wanted to pursue a career in music therapy.

Then, about two weeks ago, Kozminski learned of a proposed moratorium on admission into the program.

"The first thing I thought was that the clients and the clinic downstairs of the Music Practice Building) was going to suffer," Kozminski said. "The clients are the most important, not me."

The College of Music on Feb. 6 submitted a moratorium — or freeze on admissions — in

response to financial concerns, said James Forger, dean of the college.

Kozminski was one of a group of about five to seven students who weren't music therapy majors but had already started the required courses. Forger said since the moratorium was submitted, the decision was made to allow these students to audition into the program.

The decision came after a number of meetings in which students, faculty and other concerned parties voiced opinions against the moratorium, he said. Kozminski's audition is this Friday.

See MUSIC on page 2A



SEAN COOK/THE STATE NEWS

Music therapy Junior Kaylee Grettenberger, foreground, performs a rendition of a Beatles song on Monday with, left to right, clients Tera Dumency and Robin Balone and music therapist senior Morgan Miller, along with Douglas Delnaay and Mark Carlson (not pictured).

FLATS GRILL CLOSES Restaurant closes due to unpaid taxes, page 3A

Weather

Rain showers  
High 41° | Low 31°  
Three-day forecast, Page 2B