

Aitch's last-second game winner clinches a No. 2 seed for MSU women

SPORTS, PAGE 1B



JOSH RADTKE/THE STATE NEWS

Junior center Lauren Aitch hugs sophomore forward Cetera Washington after sinking a buzzer-beating shot against Purdue. The Spartans won 57-55 at Breslin Center.

The State News

Student housing at stake in E.L. redevelopment

Agribusiness management junior and FarmHouse Fraternity recruit chair Eric Chase, second from left, prays with his brothers before their house dinner on Feb. 18. The fraternity is in danger of losing its house to the proposed East Village development.

JOSH RADTKE/THE STATE NEWS



East Village redevelopment



CHELSEA MCGORISKI/SN

By Jeff Kanan
THE STATE NEWS

Despite recent concerns from property owners in the East Village area and actions to label the area as environmentally contaminated, city officials said they have no intention of using eminent domain to acquire an area of land that is home to housing for thousands of MSU students.

San Diego-based Pierce Education Properties currently is 12 months into a 30-month deadline to complete land acquisition of private properties located in the planned East Village area but hasn't acquired any properties.

The 25-acre redevelopment project, which is bounded by East Grand River Avenue, Stoddard Avenue, Bogue Street and the Red Cedar River, calls for the acquisition of Cedar Village apartments and other student housing units and

businesses to allow for construction of more retail, restaurants, entertainment venues and housing units.

But with no properties acquired and time ticking to complete the project, property owners are concerned the city might be attempting to use a recent environmental assessment as a way to acquire the lands through eminent domain. Eminent domain is a tool cities use to take private property if it's deemed necessary for a public use.

Concern among residents

See HOUSING on page 2A

Committee looks to stifle rising health care spending

By Kayla Habermehl and Justin Harris
THE STATE NEWS

It's the university's fastest-growing expense, costing more than \$300 million per day.

Health care for university faculty and staff costs MSU more than \$10 million per year and is increasing about 9 percent every year.

With possible state funding cuts looming and forcing the university to enact cost-cutting methods, MSU President Lou Anna K. Simon has prescribed health care costs as a potential cure for MSU's financial woes.

During her State of the University address on Feb. 3, Simon announced the creation of the Health Care Strategy Advisory Committee, which was assigned the task of making MSU's health care system more fiscally sound.

The committee is comprised of representatives from faculty, various staff unions, retirees and academic specialists.

"Our approach must strike the right balance between quality and cost," Simon wrote in a letter to faculty and staff last month. "We must maintain access to high quality care while constraining expenses to achieve greater value. A sustainable approach will likely require shared sacrifice. It would be dishonest to suggest otherwise."

In 1970, health care represented less than 1 percent of MSU's general fund budget. It now accounts for about 7.5 percent of the budget. If costs continue to rise at current rates, by 2010, one-tenth of the university's spending would go toward health care.

MSU uses a self-funded method for providing health care, meaning the university pays for staff members' health bills, minus any co-pay.

Brent Bowditch, assistant vice president of MSU human resources, said the new health care committee will look for

See HEALTH CARE on page 2A

MEN'S BASKETBALL

MSU CLAIMS SHARE OF BIG TEN TITLE

By Cash Kruth
THE STATE NEWS

Champaign, Ill. — It's taken Goran Sutton five years to get a share of a Big Ten Championship. And while a share of the title is all well and good, excuse the senior center if he and his teammates want the whole thing for themselves.

"It feels good — actually it feels great," said Sutton, who scored eight points and grabbed 10 rebounds in the MSU men's basketball team's 74-66 win against Illinois at Assembly Hall. "But we want to be selfish. We want the whole thing and we don't want to share it with anybody."

The No. 9 Spartans (23-5 overall, 13-3 Big Ten) accomplished one of its main preseason goals on Sunday, clinching a share of the 2008-09 Big Ten Championship with the win against Illinois (23-7, 11-6).

The win gives the program its first Big Ten Championship since 2000-01.

"I'm ecstatic," MSU head coach Tom Izzo said of his fourth Big Ten Championship. "It's always tough to win on the road in this league

but to win in a place that I have so much respect for in how they play, how they act and how they are ... that made it even sweeter to be able to go in and win under that kind of adversity."

If the Spartans win just one of their final two games — either Tuesday against Indiana (6-22, 1-15) or March 8 against Purdue (22-7, 11-5) — they will be outright conference champions for the first time since the 1999-2000 season.

"It's definitely something I've been working toward for five years and it's here now," Sutton said. "The biggest thing is just worrying about Indiana now." Sophomore guard Kalin Lucas led all scorers with 18 points, while junior forward Raymar Morgan (4 points) and freshman forward Delvon Roe (10) also scored in double figures.

Mike Tisdale (15), Mike Davis (13), Chester Frazier (10) and Demetri McCamey (10) scored in double figures for Illinois.

After ending the first half on a 12-6 run to take a 37-30 halftime lead, the Spartans scored the first six points of the second half to extend their lead to 11. The Fighting Illini spent the second half pounding the ball inside to Tisdale and forcing Sutton and Roe to pick up their fourth and third personal fouls, respectively.



SEAN COOK/THE STATE NEWS

Illinois guard Jeff Jordan chases senior guard Travis Walton during a breakthrough in the second half of MSU's 74-66 victory at Assembly Hall in Champaign, Ill. With the win the Spartans clinched a share of the Big Ten title.

The Illini didn't hit another field goal until Frazier hit a pull-up 3-pointer with 33 seconds to go.

Each of the credit went to seldom-used senior center Idong Ibo, who Izzo admitted to putting in the game in a "panic decision."

"It was tougher" to get position on Ibo, said Tisdale, who

More online...

For a photo gallery from the Spartans' win in Champaign, visit statensnews.com/multimedia.

For more game coverage, see page 1B.

didn't score the rest of the way. "Ibok's pretty big, but we were still looking for it [inside]."

From there, Lucas scored four straight points and senior guard Travis Walton hit a baseline jumper to give MSU a five-point lead as the Spartans pulled away.

MSU planned to travel straight from Champaign, Ill., to Bloomington, Ind. Sunday night for its game against the Hoosiers at 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

In Bloomington, the Spartans hope to lock up the outright Big Ten title.

"It means a lot, but a share is seldom you said," Walton said to the team's next step. "We want to go down to Indiana and hopefully play a pretty good game like we did today and win it outright."

TAKING THE PLUNGE

More than 250 jumped into an area lake to raise money for charity this weekend, page 3A

Weather

Partly cloudy
High 22° | Low 6°
Three-day forecast, Page 2A