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City Council adopts \$9.5M budget Tuesday night

E.L. sidewalk repair program decreased by 17 percent

By **Kate Jacobson**
THE STATE NEWS

The East Lansing City Council approved its 2009-10 \$95 million budget Tuesday, making reductions that city officials said would minimally affect residents.

Areas hit include the sidewalk repair program and the public safety departments.

City Council members said they were confident in the quality of the budget. The council commended the financial department on its ability to continue upkeep services for

residents of East Lansing while still balancing the budget.

"Their ability to cut services and have the city not feel the cuts is a pretty incredible thing," Mayor Pro Tem Diane Goddeeris said.

The budget increased about \$28 million from last year, mostly because of the City Center II project, City Budget and Accounting Administrator Mike Birchmeier said.

City Center II, the building project that will be enclosed by Abbot Road, Grand River Avenue and Valley Court Park, as well as other construction

projects, caused the budget to increase by about 42 percent from 2008-09.

Despite the total budget increase, a number of financial cuts were made for the coming fiscal year, City Finance Director Mary Haskell said. The city had to reduce the size of the general fund by \$95,000, partly because of state budget cuts, she added.

"We made drastic cuts to overtime, capital improvement expenditures and we reduced the emergency side-

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Police department to scale back overtime, training

By **Brittany Shammus**
THE STATE NEWS

To reduce costs but maintain its force, the East Lansing Police Department will be decreasing overtime, training and equipment spending, East Lansing police Chief Tom Wibert said.

"What causes us to have a good service is that we have good people," he said. "And we want to keep them."

Public safety, which is comprised of East Lansing's police and fire departments

as well as Parking and Code Enforcement, accounts for about 18 percent, or about \$17.6 million, of the city's budget, which is about \$95 million. The department took a 1 percent hit from last year, which amounts to about \$106,520 being subtracted from ELPD's overall budget. The department, which received \$10,201,470 of funding last year, will receive \$10,094,950 of funding next year.

The East Lansing Fire Department also will experience no position cuts.

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reflects cuts to departments across the city the 2009-10 fiscal year budget. City Manager Ted Staton said. The city's budget was approved by the East Lansing City Council on Tuesday.

"There's no way to balance the budget without spreading the pain, so to speak, to every department," Staton said.

Although ELPD received a cut in funding from last year, Wibert said community members shouldn't notice an immediate effect because the same

Avid hockey fans hit E.L. bars for series

By **Zack Colman**
THE STATE NEWS

Michael Tonner waited all his life to go to Joe Louis Arena. A bartender at Crunchy's, 254 W. Grand River Ave., for the past two years, Tonner had seen fans clad in red and white file through the bar doors every

playoff season. Finally, Tonner was headed to Hockeytown's sanctuary for the first game of the Western Conference Finals against the Chicago Blackhawks on Sunday.

Although Tonner wasn't in the bar, Joe Louis Arena didn't have a shortage of drunken, loud-mouthed fans.

When at work, unruly patrons are given the boot. At the arena, Tonner had to tolerate the fans of the opposing Chicago Blackhawks as Detroit took the first game of the series, 5-2.

"It was pecked, it was awesome," he said. "It was my first time there — and I also learned how obnoxious Blackhawks fans are."

In a series that has been dubbed "Hockeytown versus Hawkeytown," East Lansing could feel the rivalry between the two Original Six squads.

According to a report from the MSU Office of Planning and Budgets, Illinois supplied the second largest number of students to MSU at 3.3 percent of the student population during fall 2008.

Illinois is the only state aside

from Michigan that accounted for more than 1 percent of MSU's student body. Only Michigan contributed more students, which represents 80.9 percent of the university.

Tonner said he has several friends from Illinois and they have discussed the hockey series in depth.

"They think we're kind of soft and old and that they're young and quick; but experience makes a world of difference," he said. "I don't care how old (Red Wings forward Tomas) Holmstrom is. He's going to be there and dominate them."

Aaron Weiner, general manager of Buffalo Wild Wings, 3160 Albert Ave., said there weren't many Blackhawks fans during the season outside of a group of regulars. He said these fans congregated in a corner to watch the Blackhawks on satellite TV as the rest of the restaurant watched the Red Wings.



But with Stanley Cup implications on the line, Weiner said he hopes the rivalry between the teams will transcend TV airwaves and hit customers.

"I'd love to see Blackhawks

fans come out and get a little rivalry going in the store," he said.

Kelsey Tait, a kinesiology senior, didn't hold back about her feelings toward the Black-

hawks on Tuesday at Buffalo Wild Wings.

"The Blackhawks are all small and scrawny," she said. "I think if we can contain a few of the young ones, we'll be OK."

Business graduate Drew Johnson, a Blackhawks fan, said the Wings didn't stand a chance at Stanley Cup glory.

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From left to right, communication senior Bud McCourt, kinesiology senior Laura Buscher, interdisciplinary studies senior Louis Turner, and East Lansing residents Victoria Guzmán and Josh Eller react to the Detroit Red Wings game versus the Chicago Blackhawks Tuesday night at Buffalo Wild Wings, 360 Albert Ave. The restaurant was near its 175 person capacity all night. NICHOLE HOERNER/THE STATE NEWS

For a video of people watching and celebrating the game in downtown East Lansing, visit statenews.com/multimedia.

BASEBALL

MSU LOOKING FOR MORE IN BIG TEN TOURNAMENT

By **Zack Colman**
THE STATE NEWS

Teams don't wait five years to go home quickly — at least that's what members of the MSU baseball team have been telling themselves.

The No. 5-seed Spartans (23-26 overall, 13-11 Big Ten) play No. 4-seed Illinois (23-18, 16-6) at 12:05 p.m. today at Huntington Park in Columbus, Ohio, in the first round of the Big Ten Tournament. It is the first time MSU has made it to the conference tournament since 2004. And although the team has exceeded expectations — first year head coach Jake Boss Jr. said the Spartans were picked to finish 10th in the conference — they aren't satisfied by

simply being in Columbus.

"I think it's a big step for our program, really," Boss said. "Again, it's some place that Michigan State hasn't been at in a while and I really think that we can play for championships here on a yearly basis and this is the first step in doing that."

"Now our job is to — we kind of reached that goal — now we need to reevaluate and try to raise the bar a little bit and hopefully we can go down and play well and we'll see what happens."

MSU dropped five consecutive games after clinching the tournament spot, but won its regular season finale at Indiana to give the team momentum — and they might need all of that momentum with Illinois on the docket. The

Spartans were swept by the Fighting Illini in the first series of conference play and were outscored 16-5 in those three games.

Illinois is a speedy team, stealing a conference-best 78 bases. Much like the Spartans, the Illini are not a power-hitting squad, but they are patient as they had the fewest strikeouts in the league and were near the top in batting average and walks. But senior third baseman A.J. Shindler said those Spartans at the beginning of the year were different than the ones who will take the field today. It was when MSU beat the Lansing Lugnuts 12-2 on April 15 in the Crosstown Showdown — an exhibition game — when Shindler said the Spartans had a transformative turnaround.

"We went out and beat a team full of professionals pretty, pretty bad, 12-2. And we thought if we can play with anyone, and that's what we've been doing," he said. "That's a team that's getting paid to play and we just went out there and took it to them pretty good. That's good for our confidence knowing we can go out there and play with anyone."

Shindler, however, is the only MSU player who knows opposing left-handed starting pitcher Phil Haig. The two played against each other in the summer, and Haig was hurt when the Spartans played at Illinois earlier this season. Shindler called



Sophomore center fielder Brandon Eckerle makes an out at Oldsmobile Park on April 1. The Spartans earned a 20-3 victory over Central Michigan. STATE NEWS FILE PHOTO

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