

The State News

Weekend

EMPTY POCKETS, DEBATING A PROMISE



ANGELI WRIGHT/THE STATE NEWS

Communication junior Lauren Flanagan is one of more than 7,700 students that had to find different ways to pay for college when the Michigan Senate eliminated the funding for the Michigan Promise Scholarship. Flanagan found out in the middle of the summer that she would not be receiving the scholarship. "I think it's just frustrating because it disappeared out of nowhere and students depend on this money for classes and housing and books," she said.

State debates Michigan Promise Scholarship; students wait to see if they owe more to MSU

More online ...

To see a video of a student talking about the effect of the state's deliberation on the Michigan Promise, visit statenews.com/multimedia.

By Abby Lubbers THE STATE NEWS

Naomi Schwartz kids she will spend more time in the Union to take advantage of free on-campus wireless Internet this semester, but her joke hints at many students' increasing financial difficulties. The finance senior is not ordering cable and Internet for her apartment after learning she might not get all the scholarships she expected. She is not alone.

More than 7,700 MSU students are waiting as legislators decide the fate of the Michigan Promise Scholarship after the state Senate passed a bill to eliminate the program in June. The scholarship awards Michigan students up to \$4,000 toward in-state college or university tuition, but that sum potentially could be reduced to zero by a Senate bill. The award was granted based on results from the Michigan Merit Exam. If the grant is eliminated, MSU students who would have received it will end up being charged by

the university. Freshmen and sophomores in the past received \$500 per semester from the Michigan Promise Scholarship and students in their junior year could apply for the second phase of the scholarship to get \$1,000 per semester. "The funds are on hold," said Rep. Joan Bauer, D-Lansing, who sponsored the House bill on higher education. The House version of the bill appropriated \$140 million for the scholarship in the 2009-10 fiscal year, but the Senate

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CITY CENTER II

City officials weigh parking structure in light of foreclosure

By Kate Jacobson THE STATE NEWS

Despite a decline in people using city-owned parking during the past few years, East Lansing officials are planning to construct a new parking ramp near Rick's American Cafe, 224 Abbot Road. The plan is part of the troubled City Center II project, a \$116.4 million mixed-use development on the corner of Abbot Road and Evergreen and Grand River avenues, which has parts

that have gone into foreclosure. Seven properties held by Strathmore Development Company, the developer, could go up for auction Sept. 17. The proposed parking structure, which will cost about \$11 million, originally was intended to house the tenants of City Center II. But without the development, the structure will sit among empty buildings. Director of Planning and Community Development Tim Dempsey said the city can start building the structure whenever

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Dan O'Connor, East Lansing parking administrator

it feels ready to start the project. No specific date has been set for construction. "The (Downtown Development Authority) is currently leasing the properties acquired for the ramp so we have the flexibility to wait until the project

moves forward," he said. If the City Center II project doesn't go through, East Lansing Parking Administrator Dan O'Connor said he was unsure whether or not the extra parking would be needed. "That end of town does run

at a higher capacity than other areas," he said. "I'm not sure what would happen if the project didn't go through if we would still need that down there." O'Connor said he has seen fewer people using city parking facilities in recent years, especially at night. The city has seen a 2 percent decrease in use last year, with the average number of daily occupants decreasing to 11,254 in 2008 from 11,785 in 2007. "There have been several things that have affected us,"

he said. "The taxicabs at night and the (Capitol Area Transportation Authority) buses; they're more available and it's had an effect on us. Our occupancies are down in the evening." Students such as communication seniors Katie Szykowski and Taylor Swineford said they don't utilize parking downtown and prefer to walk or take cabs when hitting the bar scene. "I don't know anyone that drives when they go to the

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