

# KRCG QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

July 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>

## Top Issues Covered

1. Consumer Issues/Scams
2. Healthcare Reform Debate
3. H1N1 Flu Virus
4. Missouri Politics
5. Economy

# KRCG QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

July 1<sup>st</sup> – July 31<sup>st</sup>

7.1.09 10pm Drivers in Missouri with multiple alcohol driving offenses now face a new restriction. Starting today, a new state law requires that they install ignition locks on their vehicles to prevent their cars from starting if they have consumed alcohol. Some people remain skeptical the law will cut down on the number of drunk drivers, but the state officials who enforce the law are confident it will work. KRCG's Monica Madeja looked at both sides of the issue and asked if the system can be cheated. She discovered that the ignition lock alcohol tester does not have a camera, so no one can be sure who is actually breathing into the device to start the car.

7.2.09 10pm Missouri Governor Jay Nixon today stopped plans to revise the state's motorcycle helmet law. The current law requires anyone riding a motorcycle to wear a helmet, but many bikers wanted to change that, saying adult riders should be able to choose to wear a helmet or not. For years, this has fueled a contentious debate and KRCG talked with policy makers who say Nixon's action probably does little to end the debate. KRCG's Matt Grant has followed this story all spring and brought viewers reaction tonight. Many say it was a case of bad timing, in that former Governor Matt Blunt would have signed the bill but the legislation never passed during his tenure.

7.4.09 10pm The fourth of July weekend is the busiest time of year at the Lake of the Ozarks. With more boats on the water, KRCG Matt Grant spent the day riding along with the Missouri State Water Patrol to see how they are handling the crowds. Matt specifically asked how the new blood alcohol level limits have affected enforcements. Missouri lowered the alcohol limit to 0.08 the same as on land. Water Patrol officers say the new law and resulted in a slight increase in arrests. Officers reminded KRCG viewers that most drownings at the lake have alcohol involved.

7.5.09 10pm Water patrol officials were out in full force this weekend to keep boaters safe. One law designed to keep boaters safe is the boating education law signed in 2005 that requires anybody born after the date of January 1, 1984 to have a boating safety certification card to operate vessels on Missouri lakes. But owners of boat rental stores say the law can cost them money because renters are often from out of state. One storeowner says he turns away up to 10 potential customers on the weekends. KRCG looked into the issue and discovered that the state now allows boat rental stores to take a temporary test on the spot and get a temporary certificate.

7.6.09 6pm KRCG news broke a story about city sales taxes not being collected on customers' water bills for nearly 6 months. KRCG even alerted the city to the issue. City officials did some checking and determined the total amount owed by consumers could be in the tens of thousands of dollars. Missouri American Water says an out-of-state data processor inadvertently deleted the city sales tax computer code for all Jefferson City customers. The company says it will be adding the never-collected taxes onto customers' next water bill. Missouri's Public Service Commission, which regulates utilities, was surprised it had not been informed of the matter. KRCG reported to viewers that the extra charge would be around a \$1.50 for the typical customer.

7.7.09 10pm KRCG warned viewers tonight about an online scam that deceives customers into believing they are reading unbiased product reviews. KRCG discovered a website that purports to be a television station's website based out of Jefferson City, Missouri. The website looks real, with fake anchor pictures at the top, even real weather information. The fake website's top story is about questionable products, like work at home jobs and anti aging pills. KRCG also discovered that newspapers are being targeted. We showed viewers how to tell if a news site is legitimate.

7.10.09 12pm Millions of people use on-line social networking sites like twitter and facebook every day. Now, one insurance company is warning users to be careful of what they post on line. KRCG's Matt Grant looked into the matter and found the it's similar to how thieves would use obituaries in newspapers to know when a house would be empty. Matt passed along important tips on how to stay safe, including to never post online when you'll be out of town. And to never post your home address and to never be too specific about your whereabouts.

7.15.09 6am KRCG passed along a consumer warning to its viewers today. Viewers asked KRCG to investigate a check they got in the mail after purchasing a blanket call the "Snuggie" The check is only for \$8.25 and it shows up in the mail months after the purchase of the snuggie. Many cash the check thinking it is a refund of shipping charges or an overpayment. But KRCG discovered that by cashing the check the person is actually signing up for a \$150 membership to an company that offers perks for attending certain theme parks and other recreational activities. KRCG checked with consumer experts who way while this type of advertising is not illegal it is deceptive.

7.19.09 10pm KRCG's Kermit Miller brought viewers an exclusive tonight of Missouri Governor Jay Nixon making a surprise visit the Persian Gulf. He traveled to the Middle East with the governors of four other states at the invitation of the defense department to visit National Guard Troops serving in Iraq. The Governor told KRCG viewers that he is getting an education in the way citizen soldiers and regular forces have been meshed to do the mission in the desert. He says also wants to make sure that, as U.S. forces withdraw from the region, the Missouri Guard gets a decent share of the equipment shipped back to the united states.

7.30.09 10pm KRCG continues to cover the story it broke about high levels of e-coli at Lake of the Ozarks. KRCG first discovered the beaches closed in mid-June with no explanation as to why the water was unsafe for swimmers. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources took samples from the lake May 26th to test for e-coli bacteria. Those findings were not released until a month later. The department originally said it waited to release the finding because it didn't want keep tourists from coming to the Lake over the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

## KRCG QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

### August 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup>

8.3.09 10pm KRCG helped promote a fundraiser for a new county jail in the heart of Missouri. The Jefferson County Jail needed to raise money for mattresses and blankets. The sheriff decided he would do a one night bed and breakfast and give people the opportunity to see what a night behind bars in like. Last month KRCG did a story about the upcoming bed and breakfast and this weekend KRCG reporter Matt Grant went to Hillsboro and reported about a night in jail. The new wing of the jail cost taxpayers about a million dollars. The bed and breakfast helped raise about \$6,000.

8.4.09 10pm The Missouri Court of Appeals has upheld a high six-figure judgment against a mid-Missouri gun club. It also ordered the trial court to reconsider the impact of a new state law on a permanent injunction granted in the case of a Boone County couple who sued the Cedar Creek Gun Club over excessive noise. The trial court awarded them a \$700,000 judgment. The gun club owners challenged both the judgment and an injunction limiting his operation. While his appeal was under review, lawmakers last year passed and former Governor Matt Blunt signed legislation to protect gun ranges from similar lawsuits saying people should not move next to gun clubs and then file "frivolous litigation". KRCG's Kermit Miller looked into the issue and showed that court documents indicate the plaintiff in this case owned his home next to Cedar Creek before the club opened in 1992.

8.5.09 10pm KRCG continues to track the economy and provide viewers with the most up-to-date local economic news. Today we reported that the Jefferson City real estate market is showing signs of recovery. Both home sales and home prices are up this summer in the capital city, especially during the month of June, when sales grew by 32 percent over the same month last year. Realtors say low interest rates for mortgages and the new \$8,000 federal tax credit for first-time buyers are helping to drive sales. KRCG also warned that the tax credit expires December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. Also, KRCG alerted viewers that Jefferson City is offering its own credit for those who buy certain homes in the oldest part of town. The city will match down payments up to \$5,000 and forgive city property taxes for up to five years.

8.5.09 10pm With school starting this month, KRCG looked into a viewer's complaint against school bus routes in Jefferson City. KRCG discovered that the boundary cut-off for who can ride the bus changes between 8th and 9th grades. One parent said she was not aware of the changes and said her son will now have to walk 2 ½ miles to school. KRCG checked Missouri law, which states that school districts are required to provide transportation to students have to cross major highways with no crosswalks on their way to school. This student's route does not violate that law. KRCG also checked with the school district that says that they recognize that the situation is not ideal, but says financial limitations require the boundaries. KRCG informed parents that they can pay \$90 each semester for children to ride the bus.

8.11.09 5pm KRCG continues to cover the health care overhaul debate. Today Democratic U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill was in Hillsboro for a town hall meeting. KRCG covered the event and provided proper context for the day's events. The meeting did have some shouting and deputies had to remove a woman from the auditorium after she fought with another audience member over a sign. KRCG discovered that the college, not McCaskill, had prohibited signs during the event.

8.12.09 10pm KRCG continues coverage of President Barack Obama's proposed healthcare overhaul. Today opponents of healthcare reform gathered outside Democratic U.S. Representative Ike Skelton's Jefferson City office. The protestors claimed Skelton was ignoring their concerns about the proposed legislation. The protestors said if Skelton won't hold a town hall meeting, they'll hold one without him. KRCG contacted Skelton's Washington D.C. office. A spokesperson told KRCG that Skelton has met with healthcare professionals in Sedalia. We also passed along to viewers Skelton's request that anyone who wants to voice concerns over the health care legislation can contact his office.

8.17.09 12pm For nearly 80 years, it has been holding back the 600 plus billion gallons of water that make up the Lake of the Ozarks in mid-Missouri. Bagnell Dam was built in the midst of the great depression and three-quarters of a century later, the owner of the dam, AmerenUE, has installed warning sirens to alert those down river of a dam emergency. That prompted KRCG to look into the safety of the dam. KRCG met with experts and got the answers to important questions about what could cause an emergency at the lake and what residents need to do to stay safe. Bagnell Dam officials say they are not aware of any problems with the dam's structure. According to the association of state dam safety, 95 percent of high hazard dams do not have emergency action plans in place. Bagnell Dam is among the five percent that do.

8.19.09 10pm KRCG's Kermit Miller provided viewers with multiple news stories covering the death of former Missouri Governor Warren Hearnes. Hundreds of people paid their respects Hearnes as he lay in state in the capitol rotunda. Dozens more gathered today for a memorial service featuring a eulogy by Governor Jay Nixon. The memorial service at the capitol brought former Governors Matt Blunt, Bob Holden, Roger Wilson, and John Ashcroft back to the capitol, along with former First Lady Jean Carnahan.

8.16.09 6pm KRCG's coverage of the healthcare overhaul debate continued today as Democratic U.S. Senator Claire McCaskill came to Jefferson City for a town hall. KRCG covered the town hall live during our newscasts and on our website. It was a standing room only crowd of close to 400 people that showed up at Lewis and Clark Middle School to question McCaskill on health care reform. More than a hundred others were turned away for lack of space. The democrat spoke for over an hour.

## KRCG QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2009

### September 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>

9.1.09 5pm Health officials warned about it all summer and now Jefferson City school district is the first to deal with an outbreak of the H1N1 flu virus. KRCG news learned that hundreds of students stayed away from school today. KRCG provided parents with up-to-date and accurate information about how many students were actually sick and how many healthy kids were staying away from school to avoid the illness. Also, some doctors have advised parents that sick children should stay home about a week after their fevers break. That caused some parents to question district's policy that flu victims may return to school 24 hours after the fever disappears. KRCG checked with the CDC and the Cole County health department and found that both agency support the district's policy.

9.2.09 6pm Parents of Jefferson City Public Schools continue to contact the KRCG newsroom for answers to questions about the H1N1 flu. In an effort to help parents connect with school district officials and healthcare officials KRCG held a live chat on its website this evening. The coverage started with comprehensive coverage of the H1N1 flu virus at the beginning of our 6pm newscast. We then alerted viewers that they could have their questions answered live on the website. We 3 panelists answering questions, one from the school district, one from the county health department and another from a local hospital. The question and answer session lasted for about 2 hours. We then posted a transcript of the entire session on our website for others to read over.

9.10.09 6pm The Tour of Missouri Bicycle Race ended stage four today in Jefferson City. KRCG was live with coverage all afternoon on its website and on air. KRCG dedicated a large portion on its 6pm newscast to the covering the final 15 minutes of the race. KRCG's Matt Grant was live downtown as the racers finished their 109-mile leg of the race with a three-lap circuit sprint to the finish line.

9.14.09 10pm KRCG's Mark Slavik covered a public safety concern in the City of Columbia with a three-part story. The "keep Columbia safe" petition seeks more surveillance cameras in the downtown area. It comes after a man was attacked in a parking garage earlier this summer. Mark spoke with the victim of the crime who says if it wasn't for two city-owned video cameras the police could have never brought five of his seven attackers to justice. But others see the cameras as a violation of privacy and say there is no probable cause to simply have cameras recording occurrences on downtown streets.

9.16.09 10pm A KRCG investigation revealed that special Anheuser Busch Beer "Fan Cans" with the team colors of the University of Missouri Football team were being marketed with official MU logos. A-B has said that the cans were not being marketed with any official likeness of the University. After KRCG's report, the University of Missouri sent A-B a letter questioning the marketing campaign and the entire concept of the black and gold striped beer cans and how they might undermine efforts to curb underage drinking. Today KRCG learned the A-B plans to stop selling the cans in the Columbia market. However, we did learn that A-B does have permission to use University of Missouri's logo in the marketing of other beer products.

9.21.09 10pm                    With back to school shopping out of the way, consumers are now looking toward holiday shopping. And with the return popularity of lay away, KRCCG reported on the fees associated with the program. Economists say the lack of credit following the banking crisis gave new life to the time-payment plan. Critics say the fees can calculate into enormous annualized percentage rates, while proponents argue that the program doesn't hurt your credit and teaches discipline in having to pay for a product entirely before being able to take it home. KRCCG told viewers the details they needed to know so they could make an informed decision.

9.22.09 10pm                    KRCCG tonight looked into Missouri's prison funding. As states across the country find themselves strapped for cash, some state governments are giving inmates an early release or closing prisons altogether. We asked if Missouri is considering these options. Missouri corrections officials say while they have done their share of trimming the state budget, no policies or procedures have changed that would jeopardize the safety of Missourians. This year the state correction's budget is about 660 million dollars. That is only nine million dollars less than the department received last year—a budget decrease of about 1 ½ percent. In response, corrections officials have laid off just over a hundred of their 11,000 staff members. None of those lay-offs were prison guards.

9.24.09 10pm                    A credit repair company advertising in mid-Missouri prompted a consumer report tonight on the practices of such companies. Consumer groups tell KRCCG that tighter lending practices during the economic downturn have led to the rise of credit repair companies. They promise to make delinquencies vanish and bankruptcies disappear. We spoke with state banking regulators who say if the debts really are yours, there is no magic wand to make them disappear and that most negative reporting stays on for 7 years. We showed viewers how the companies dispute accurate but negative information on a credit file to temporarily boost credit scores. Also, some companies even promise an entirely new credit file by applying for a new taxpayer identification number, which is a felony. We also told viewers that it is their right to dispute inaccurate information on their credit files. We provided information on how to dispute an item with all three major credit bureaus.