

KRCG QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT

4th Quarter 2009

October 1st – December 31st

Top Issues Covered

1. Economy/Scams
2. Missouri/local Politics
3. Crime
4. Healthcare Reform Debate

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10.1.09 10pm Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill is sponsoring new legislation to extend the federal tax credit deadline for people who went to war this year and missed the chance to buy a house. The tax credit is for \$8,000 for first-time homebuyers. KRCG's Kermit Miller reports that some lawmakers want to add another year to the deadline for anyone called to active military or other foreign service for a period of 90 days or more during 2009. Kermit also discovered that the bill would also protect military homebuyers in the event of future military deployment. In order to discourage people from "flipping" houses, the current rules require homebuyers to pay back the credit if they do not move-in or move-out within three years. But McCaskill's legislation would forgive that if a buyer is deployed or re stationed.

10.3.09 10pm A concert series called Farm Aid is making its way to Missouri this week for the first time in its 25 year existence. KRCG's Matt Grant looked into the group and reported that the group works closely with local farmers and tries to change policies they feel are unfair. Local farmers told Matt that attending Farm Aid is more than just an opportunity to listen to music; it's also an opportunity to talk farm issues with a large and captive audience. Matt also discovered that Farm Aid has given money to the Missouri Rural Crisis Center in Columbia to help farmers recover from last year's floods. The group has also has donated money to encourage local consumers to buy locally grown food.

10.5.09 6pm Five separate bills to reform health care are now out of committee in the United States Senate. The president says he has the support of the medical community to make reform happen. KRCG's Kermit Miller reported tonight that one Missouri senator still don't know what he'll be voting on. Senator Kit Bond made clear his disdain for the President Obama's idea of health care reform during remarks to Jefferson City Rotarians. Bond told Kermit afterward he feels railroaded, but stopped short of saying he is ready to vote no. Bond said none of the bills contain what he believes to be necessary. Bond says he wants to see a bill with malpractice reform, pooling options for small businesses, and granting consumers the ability to buy health insurance across state lines.

10.6.09 10pm Missouri is one of a few states beginning to receive doses of the H1N1 flu vaccine. That has some companies considering new policies to keep their employees healthy. KRCG's Matt Grant reported tonight on if an employer can force you to get a swine flu shot and what happens if you refuse. He spoke with Missouri's Department of Labor, which said that employers can mandate you get a flu shot. There are a couple exceptions like if getting the shot violates your religious beliefs or if you're allergic to vaccines. Matt reported that because Missouri is an employment "at will" state, you can be fired at any time for any reason, as long as you're not being discriminated against. Employers say they do have reason to be fearful. A recent study found that a mild pandemic affecting 1.4 million people could cost the global economy \$330 billion dollars.

10.8.09 6pm Jefferson City State Representative Bill Deeken says he has earned a seat in the state senate. With family and staff at his side in his own living room, Deeken today announced his intention to enter the republican primary in the 6th Senatorial District. KRCG's Kermit Miller today reported on the 69 year-old's history as Cole County clerk and as a member of the Missouri House of Representatives. Deeken says having his 20 plus years of experience earns him the right to move up to the senate. Deeken will go up against GOP competitors Harry Otto and Mike Kehoe, both of whom have never held elective office. Kermit talked with Mike Kehoe and Harry Otto about Deeken's announcement. Kehoe said that people are looking for someone who has not been caught up in the political process. Otto told Kermit that the campaign for the senate seat will be cordial among republicans.

10.13.09 6pm KRCG today got a tour of Missouri American Water Company's drinking water treatment plant in Jefferson City. The plant has been in continuous operation for 121 years. The water company says it has made several expensive upgrades in the past 20 years, like electrical generators and computerized water processing control systems. Water customers pick up the tab for those improvements. KRCG looked at the issues surrounding the higher cost for water service inside Jefferson City limits as compared to surrounding areas. The water company says it cannot expand its customer base because of the surrounding public water districts. Also, Missouri American says it has to treat its water more because it comes from the Missouri River, not wells like the public water districts.

10.15.09 10pm KRCG updated a story it first brought to viewers last fall about a fake amber alert e-mail that's been tying up the phone lines at a mid-Missouri police Department. The Rolla Police department announced today that it is changing its phone number because of the hoax. The calls started coming in two years ago after a staff sergeant forwarded an e-mail about the made-up amber alert. His automatic signature became attached to the message and the department started getting hundreds of calls a day asking about the e-mail. KRCG's Mallory McGowin talked with the police department, which asked residents to not forward the e-mail if it is sent to them.

10.16.09 6pm KRCG today reported on a story it has followed since late spring about unreported high levels of E. Coli at Lake of the Ozarks. Governor Jay Nixon today dismissed a longtime aide and reinstated his top environment regulator after an investigation revealed a failure to protect the public from unhealthy water conditions at the lake. Nixon says state regulators have had a habit of turning a blind eye to bacteria problems. KRCG reported the governor had difficulty explaining to reporters why he told the news media in July that no one in his office knew anything about the failure to disclose the E. Coli findings for a number of weeks afterward when it was later revealed his communications people had learned of it within a few days. The investigation uncovered ten cases over the past three years in which beaches at state parks were not appropriately closed, despite high E. Coli levels. It also found 14 cases since 2005 when the public was not notified about high bacteria levels.

10.23.09 10pm KRCG this evening wrapped-up nearly 3 days of non-stop coverage of the disappearance and murder of 9 year-old Elizabeth Olten. KRCG kept the story constantly updated to let residents know how they could help search for Cole County 3rd Grader. Today her body was discovered and KRCG was there with live reports to help keep area residents informed.

10.24.09 10pm KRCG today continued coverage of the murder of Elizabeth Olten. Today details emerged that the Cole County Sheriff's department asked the prosecuting attorney to file first-degree murder charges against a 15 year-old in connection with Olten's death. Investigators tell KRCG that the juvenile suspect led police to the body.

10.24.09 5pm On the same day that her suspected murderer appeared in court, family and friends laid to rest 9 year-old Elizabeth Olten. KRCG reported from both the funeral and the court proceeding. After the funeral, a horse-drawn hearse carried Olten's body to the cemetery, where the volunteers who helped search for her lined the street wearing pink. In court, the judge ruled that a status hearing in November to determine if the 15-year-old murder suspect should be tried as an adult will be open to the public. However, cameras will not be allowed in the courtroom.

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November 1st – November 30th

11.2.09 10pm Exactly one year from today Missouri voters will elect a new US Senator to replace retiring Senator Kit Bond. KRCG tonight reported on the first attack ad in the race. The ad targets Missouri Secretary of State Robin Carnahan. In the ad, the Missouri Republican Party says Carnahan is linked with the controversial political group ACORN. The voter activist group recently had its federal funding stripped by Congress. KRCG's Matt Grant looked over 70 pages of e-mails the republicans say conclusively illustrates the relationship. KRCG found that none of the e-mails are actually to or from Carnahan herself. All the e-mails deal with her staff. However, one of the e-mails asks Carnahan's then chief of staff for research help. Republicans say the communication was inappropriate while the Missouri Democrat Party says the e-mails are routine and normal for a secretary of state.

11.3.09 10pm As part of our continuing coverage of the mid-Missouri economy, tonight KRCG looked into adults heading back to the classroom. The education report found that colleges and technical schools in mid-Missouri are seeing an increase in what they classify as "non-traditional" students. In fact, Linn State Technical College says they have seen a five percent increase just this year. KRCG's Mallory McGowin found that these non-traditional students are sometimes adults who have been laid off from work or some who even though they still have a job, need a degree to move-up in the workforce. KRCG showcased two students and showed what going back to school is like for them.

11.4.09 10pm KRCG continues to report on economic issues and how they are affecting mid-Missourians. In tonight's report KRCG followed up the sweeping credit card reform bill Congress passed earlier this year. Since the law doesn't fully take effect until August of next year, many say they banks are trying to make a quick buck while they still can. Many of the practices, like quickly raising consumers' interest rates, would be illegal once the new law goes into effect. Consumer experts told KRCG's viewers that credit card companies are trying weed out risky cardholders before the law becomes reality. KRCG's report explained to consumers what their options are if they feel a credit card company is being unfair.

11.5.09 10pm KRCG continued its reporting the consumer issues tonight with a report on debt collectors. Nationally, the Federal Trade Commission has seen over 4,500 complaints so far this year, that's up 20 over last year. In Missouri, 2009 has seen 8 times as many complaints than in the past two years combined. KRCG report told viewers what to look out for in abusive debt collectors and who to complain to. KRCG's report focused on a mid-Missouri family who claims to be the victim of illegal debt collecting. KRCG contacted Missouri's Attorney General who had his office get involved in the family's case.

11.10.09 6pm KRCG today followed breaking news out of Jefferson City after police put a part of downtown into lockdown after receiving reports of a hostage situation. KRCG kept viewers informed all day on developments in the story. Once it was determined that the hostage report was false, KRCG asked the tough questions about how police got involved and who made the false hostage threat.

11.16.09 10pm KRCG tonight reported on a growing crime in mid-Missouri: farm equipment theft. KRCG talked with local law enforcement agencies who say there is a million-dollar farm equipment theft ring that has victims not only across the state but around the country. The lead investigator tells KRCG he is desperate for help. The report featured surveillance video showing how the thieves take farm equipment and explained why investigators have such a hard time tracking it down. KRCG followed up on the task force created by Governor Jay Nixon. The Livestock and Farm Protection Taskforce is an expansion of the previous Cattle Theft Taskforce to include livestock trailers, equipment, and farm chemicals. Some connected with the group says the taskforce needs reinforcements.

11.18.09 5pm KRCG had team coverage today of the adult certification hearing for the accused murderer of 9 year-old Elizabeth Olten. The day started with the news media and some members of the public getting their first glimpse of Alyssa Bustamante. She is the 15-year-old neighbor of Elizabeth Olten who now faces a 1st degree murder charge in adult court. Her attorney in the juvenile court hearing made an impassioned plea to leave the case in the juvenile court. He argued Bustamante would never survive in an adult jail or prison. The juvenile court prosecutor argued that Bustamante could not be rehabilitated, especially within the five years before the juvenile court would be required to release her. Following two hours of testimony, the judge quickly ruled that she should be tried as an adult in-part because of the viciousness of the crime. KRCG shared with its audience the extensive research the newsroom completed into who Alyssa Bustamante is.

11.19.09 10pm KRCG tonight updated a story we followed earlier this year, as Missouri lawmakers debated an expansion of a statewide DNA database. The law went into effect in August. It requires law enforcement agencies to collect DNA samples from people arrested for violent felonies, sex crimes, and burglaries. The old law said only those people convicted had to give DNA samples. KRCG tonight updated how the law is working. The State Crime Lab tells KRCG it has received 1,350 DNA samples since the law went into effect. Only 830 of those samples could be processed because of errors made by arresting agencies. It takes about two weeks for the samples to be entered into the database. So far, there have been 12 DNA samples submitted because of the new law that have resulted in arrests in other cases.

KRCG QUARTERLY ISSUES REPORT

4th Quarter 2009

December 1st – December 31st

12.1.09 10pm KRCG tonight explained to viewers a new law that goes into effect in January 2010 that is aimed at improving safety on Missouri Lakes. This is of particular interest to our viewers since the popular Lake of the Ozarks is in our viewing area. In order to comply with the new law, dock owners at Missouri lakes must post addresses of the closest emergency service at their docks. KRCG talked with the State Water Patrol. The agency says that the new law will help emergency crews respond more quickly to incidents on the water. KRCG explained to viewers that the addresses must be visible from the water and include the name, street number, and zip code.

12.2.09 6pm A mid-Missouri prosecutor this morning asked the state supreme court to let him prosecute a man charged with violating new restrictions the actions of registered sex offenders on Halloween. KRCG's Kermit Miller has followed the debate over the legality of having registered sex offenders laws apply retroactively. Tonight's report explained how last year, state lawmakers adopted legislation that requires sex offenders to isolate themselves from trick-or-treaters. The law says an offender must stay inside his home between 5 and 10:30pm on Halloween. Kermit explained that in the past, the high court has rejected prosecution of sex offenders who live within a thousand feet of schools if their homes were acquired before that rule went into effect.

12.8.09 5pm Krcg continued its ongoing coverage today of the Elizabeth Olten murder. Today her accused murderer, 15 year-old high school sophomore Alyssa Bustamante appeared in court to face a murder charge. The teen did not speak during the arraignment; her attorney spoke on her behalf and entered pleas of not guilty. Today was the first time cameras were allowed into the courtroom. KRCG explained to viewers that Bustamante had to be arraigned a second time today because when she first appeared to answer the charged in November she did not have an attorney. Today she was represented by a public defender.

12.10.09 10pm KRCG tonight continued its coverage of a new recycling and trash service in Jefferson City. While a report is not due to the city council next month on how the system is working, KRCG today talked with the city's sanitation director who says that six weeks into the program he thinks it's been a true success. The program is controversial for some residents who say that they should not be required to pay the mandatory fee for the recycling and trash bins and service. KRCG passed along tips from the sanitation department of what residents can do to help the service run more smoothly.

12.14.09 6am KRCG today kept viewers informed on an overnight shooting at a busy Columbia Wal-Mart store. KRCG's morning news informed viewers on what happened and gave a description of the suspects police are looking for. KRCG also talked with police to find out if the crime was random and the details surrounding the shooting. KRCG also passed along tips from police on what residents should do to keep safe during the busy holiday shopping season.

12.15.09 10pm KRCG news reported tonight on a new plan backed by Missouri Governor Jay Nixon that could direct tens of millions of dollars toward the state's biotechnology and life sciences industries. KRCG was there as the Governor spoke to an audience of more than a hundred bio-technical business leaders, Nixon outlined his vision of MOSIRA: the Missouri Science and Innovation Reinvestment Act. KRCG reported both sides of the story and told how Missouri House republicans also have pitched a similar idea, saying the money should be used to provide the infrastructure needed by tech business.

12.16.09 10pm KRCG continues to provide viewers with up-to-date information on scams that could cost them time and money. Tonight our crime tracker report reminded viewers that consumer experts suggest changing your e-mail account password often and always keeping it secure. Also, don't log on your e-mail account over an unsecured network or on public computer. KRCG showed how a mid-Missouri priest learned the lesson the hard way while traveling internationally. Identity thieves hijacked his e-mail account and sent out a desperate plea to all of his contacts asking for money. KRCG also passed along a tip from identity theft experts that if someone sends you an e-mail asking for help, to simply verify their identity by asking a simple question that only that person could answer.

12.23.09 10pm With holiday gift giving in full swing, KRCG tonight reported on gift cards. In the consumer report, KRCG showed how retailers and even the state of Missouri can benefit from unused gift cards. The report showed that almost 10 percent of gift card balances go unspent and that after a certain amount of time, the unused portion gets turned over to the state as unclaimed property. KRCG talked with the state treasurer who informed viewers that every year the state gets about \$1 million dollars in unused gift card balances. And since names are not normally attached to gift cards, the money, which is now considered unclaimed property, cannot be returned. The state treasurer said it is then deposited into the state's general revenue fund. KRCG showed viewers how to tell if gift cards will expire and to watch out for fees.