2007 MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE

Raising the stakes

With the minimum wage set to increase from $6.50 to $7.50 July 1, a dollar’s worth can vary from person to person.

The dollar increase could do as much as allow a single mother enough money to buy groceries but could potentially wipe out thousands of jobs across the state.

Over the following weeks, the DAILY EGYPTIAN will take an in-depth look at the people and companies that will be affected by this increase in a five-part series.

Extra income may relieve burden on single-parent families

Brian Feldt

An extra $40 per week may not seem like much. But for some families, that’s enough to keep them off the street.

Millions of people, especially those living in single-parent families working for minimum wage, must face this reality.

A take-home wage parent must make enough money off the minimum wage, which will rise from $6.50 to $7.50 July 1, to supply housing, clothing, heat and food for themselves and their children.

Sherree Randle knows the drill all too well. Randle has been supporting herself and her 11-year-old daughter, Imani, on her own since she was born. Randle receives child support from Imani’s father, who lives in Chicago, but mainly supports her family through her minimum wage job as a secretary for the college of education.

Based on the increase, a full-time minimum wage worker will now have an annual income of $15,600 per year, almost a $2,000 bump from the annual income from the current wage.

In theory, a single parent of two working 40 hours per week could raise their family for a year with little wiggle room. Costs would cover groceries, heating and utilities, transportation, housing, clothing, entertainment and toys. The costs, though, do not include family health insurance and assume no other bills such as credit cards, cell phones or cable.

Randle, of Carbondale, said the task of raising multiple children by one’s self is nearly impossible with no other form of income.

“For a single dad to take care of two children and have to go to work excessively to pay for things would be terribly difficult,” Randle said. “He would not be able to spend time with the children bonding and helping them learn the basic skills needed in life.”

For some, though, the increase can’t come soon enough.

Cyndi West, the executive director of The Lighthouse Shelter, said the quicker people can get back to leading normal lives.

Dunn: farewell to SIUC

Interim chancellor John Dunn said he was mislead by the attendance of a Sahku puppy at his farewell reception Wednesday.

“I thought they brought that little puppy for us,” Dunn said with a laugh. “I thought we got a going away gift.”

The farewell reception for Dunn was held in the International Lounge West of the Student Center Wednesday, when most of faculty and staff gathered to wish him luck at Western Michigan University, where he will take over July 1 as the university’s president.

Dunn hopes to begin the drive to Kalamazoo, Mich., today by noon.

“I was really impressed and very grateful. It’s pretty heart-warming,” he said. “This is a great university and a great community, and I think what we saw here is that we are a community and people do care about one another, as it should be.”

Dunn first came to SIUC as the provost, beginning at the position Nov. 1, 2002. In November 2006, he was appointed the interim chancellor after Walter Wendler was demoted.

Although he will be president of another university, Dunn said he expects SIU President Glenn Poshard and Fernando Treveno, who will begin July 1 as the next chancellor of SIUC, to contact him looking for help from time to time.

“I’ll do what I can to help and not get in the way, as well,” Dunn said.

Dunn said he has some unfinished business, which is expected, but he is pleased with SIUC’s agreements with tenured and non-tenured faculty, and he’s done as much as he could have with the budget.

Poshard said Dunn has done a great job as interim chancellor and will be missed at the University.

“He stepped in at a time which really required someone to take hold of things and I think he’s done an excellent job,” Poshard said.

Dunn said he advises Treveno to be his own person and to be accessible, and he is confident Treveno “will step to the plate and do what he needs to do.”

Dunn said accessibility is one of the keys to success at SIUC.

“Being open, acknowledging our University for what it is — and I think it’s an outstanding, what I would call, transformational university,” Dunn said.

“I think we do transform lives here, and do that, and do it well, I think it requires a person to be very much engaged with students, faculty and staff.”

Poshard said he thought Dunn developed very good relationships and was a workaholic.

“Obviously everyone’s not going to be in lock-step, but John worked very hard to develop relationships with the intramur provost, Don Rice, he worked very hard to develop relationships with the deans and we just had a great relationship between the Stone Center and Anthony Hall,” Poshard said. “We worked closely

See WAGE, Page 5

Up next:
July 5: Large-scale employers such as Wal-Mart could take the increase in stride.
July 12: Mom and pop stores around the region will try to compensate after the increase’s economic impact.

See WAGE, Part one: “Students feel breathing room with dollar raise”
See WAGE, Part two: “SIU may drop student jobs after raise”

Dunn: farewell to SIUC

Scott Mieszala
A couple of thunderstorms

Rather cloudy

Clouds breaking and less humid

Delightful with sunshine

Plenty of sunshine

Mostly sunny

Mostly cloudy and humid

A couple of thunderstorms

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Clouds breaking and less humid

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SIU dental school suspends grades of 52 first-year students

Jim Suhr

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ALTON, Ill. — Southern Illinois University's dental school has suspended the grades of all 52 first-year students while it investigates them for possible academic misconduct, university officials said.

Officials on Wednesday would not discuss details of the suspected wrongdoing, and stopped short of saying the students cheated at the School of Dental Medicine in this Mississippi River city northeast of St. Louis.

The issue surfaced in May, when "there was some question about the academic integrity of our first-year students" at the four-year school, university spokesman Greg Conroy said.

The matter was forwarded to the school's conduct committee, a faculty panel that reviews allegations of student misconduct. Possible penalties range from a warning to expulsion.

"We feel we owe it to the program and the students to do a thorough investigation," said Conroy, who could not say how long the inquiry might take.

 calls to Boyle's office Wednesday were referred to Conroy, who said all 52 students would be allowed to enroll in and attend fall classes "without losing any time." When the committee rules on each student, Conroy said, "then we'd just go from there."

An unsigned letter sent to local media purporting to be from the dental school's first-year class called the investigation "nothing more than a witch hunt," and said it involved student advisers who apparently shared with first-year students tests from previous years.

According to the letter, which includes the typed names of all 52 affected students but no signatures, the practice has gone on for at least two decades as a legitimate way to understand how each teacher tests.

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"We feel we owe it to the program and the students to do a thorough investigation," said Conroy, who could not say how long the inquiry might take. "It's going to take a certain amount of time to interview all 52 students," many of them now away on summer break.

In a brief statement, the school's dean, Ann Boyle, said only that "this matter raises questions about the integrity and ethical behavior of Year 1 students and is, therefore, under investigation."

"Personal integrity and ethical standards form the foundation of all health care professions, including dentistry," she said.

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University shops for food

New vendor needed by spring

Sarah Lohman
DAILY EAGLE

SIUC is in the market for some new food service.

The University is preparing a request for proposals from potential new food vendors for Student Center dining and its satellites. The satellites include several coffee shops and food vendors around campus, such as those in the Communications Building and the Lexar Law Library, as well as the concessions for athletic events. The new contract will include a CoPrime Commons in the renovated Morris Library.

The current contracted vendor, Chartwell’s, began in 1999 and the students would like to see in the what kind of branded concepts registered in the fall to determine finished soon, around

The new contract will include a Starbucks in the Student Center.

The proposal is being based on surveys of students who described what they wanted to see from University dining. "The survey results showed that students were looking for more healthy dining options,” Stettler said. She said the vendor pays the University to provide the service and receives a percentage of the profit in return. She said the Student Center sees more than $100,000 of profit each year, which supports the Student Center and other University funds, such as the Presidential and Student Affairs Scholarship.

Joe Crawford
DAILY EAGLE

Carbondale is yet to find the money for its proposed new police station, but the City Council is working to give the undeveloped plan breathing room.

The City Council approved a resolution in a special meeting Wednesday to take the next step toward buying the lot adjacent to the proposed site of the station. The Council passed a contract offering to buy the land, located in Lincoln School Subdivision near East Mill Street, for $100,000 from Carbondale Elementary School District No. 95.

In 2004, the city purchased the first lot on the proposed site from the school district with the intention of housing the city and University police departments in one facility. The plot was the location of the old Lincoln Middle School, which the city demolished earlier this year.

Carbondale Mayor Brad Cole said the city has $115,000 remaining from a state grant, which was used to purchase the first lot in the subdivision and demolish the old school. If the school district does not accept the council’s offer, the money will be returned to the state, he said. “This keeps the property in the public trust and it pays the school $100,000, which they can certainly use,” Cole said.

Cole said he sees no reason the school board would reject the city’s offer to buy the land, which is of little use to the district because there is no longer a school in the adjacent lot. “It’s pennies from heaven,” he said.

The district’s Board of Education is scheduled to vote on the city’s offer at its meeting tonight.

City Manager Jeff Doherty said there is no money for the new police station, but the city hired a professional consultant to help find federal funding for the project. While the city has no definite plans for the second lot, Doherty said there are benefits to the city owning more land in the area.

“IT would give us more options in terms of how we develop the police station,” he said.

School Board President Roger Plater said Wednesday afternoon that his board had not yet seen the contract passed by the Council and could not comment on whether the board would likely accept the offer.

“There’s been proposals back and forth and we’re trying to work together to get a proposal that both of us can accept,” he said. “I’m hopeful that that’s happening.”

City Councilman Lance Jack said he hoped the community would see the benefit of the remaining state grant money.

“It seems like it’s a good opportunity for both entities in my eyes and I’m hoping we can convince the (Board of Education) of the same,” he said.

Joe Crawford can be reached at 536-3311 ext. 273 or jocrawford@siu.edu.

Summer 2007

City seeks land near proposed police station

Interim Chancellor Dr. John Dunn and his wife Linda (right) greet guests Wednesday afternoon at a reception held in his honor. On July 1st, Dunn will officially fill his new position as president of Western Michigan University.
WASHINGTON

Test vote looms after immigration bill survives challenges

WASHINGTON — Attempts from the right to blunt the momentum of the delicate bipartisan compromise failed Wednesday, including a Republican proposal to deny illegal immigrants a path to citizenship and Democratic moves to mandate legal immigrants with family members.

With his eye on the Senate’s April 18 omnibus spending amendment by Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., to provide green cards for parents of U.S. citizens. By a 55-40 margin, it took the 51 Democrats and 3 Independents, D-N.C., to give family members of citizens and legal permanent residents more credit toward green cards in a new merit-based points system.

A steep break procedural vote was set for Thursday, however, as the Senate plowed through amendments that supporters hoped would address wavering concerns.

Facing determined opposition from conservatives who say the bill amounts leaders need 60 votes to keep the measure alive and complete it as early as Friday.

Gordon Brown becomes new British prime minister

LONDON (AP) — Former Treasury chief Gordon Brown became British prime minister Wednesday, promising a “new government with new priorities” after Tony Blair’s 10-year rule of a model economy overshadowed by the deep disarray of his health care system.

Power changed hands traditionally and quickly after Blair stepped down in Buckingham Palace as Blair first called on Queen Elizabeth II to offer Mr. Brown the job of forming a government. Brown arrived soon after to be confirmed as the new prime minister.

“This will be a new government. With new priorities,” Brown told reporters outside his London office Tuesday night. “I’ve been privoiged with the great opportunity to serve my country.”

Bombing kills 14 near Shi'ite shrine

GORDO, a 9-year-old male ocelot, is believed to be one of only about 1,500 left in the world. In June, 2007, Dallas Zoo researchers are working with the U.S. FWS & Wildlife Department to save the endangered ocelot cat from its natural habitat.

In March, she called Edwards a “faggot” and the Edwards campaign a financial boost. In March, she called Edwards a “faggot” and the Edwards campaign a financial boost. In March, she called Edwards a “faggot” and the Edwards campaign a financial boost.

Although a near twin of Texas’ more abundant bobcat, the ocelot has a shorter tail and rounded ears.

The stripping and waves on their coats are their fingerprints — unique species.

Toward the end of the slide, the U.S. wants to keep the measure alive and complete it as early as Friday.

This is a nation of great wealth — and their silts were once highly prized by fur traders who helped them to near extinction. Because the ocelot is now protected as an endangered species in the U.S. and Mexico, it is illegal to kill them today.

But even without guns, man continues toward the ocelot’s greatest threat.

The native, inhospitable brush cat needs for camouflage and protection is barely visible on either side of the Rio Grande today. In its place, cattle ranches, production plants and millions of acres of grapefruit trees, sugar cane, grain sorghum and cotton planted in the area.

The soil.

“Cities see poor people as a burden,” Booth-Binczik argues, who is also a full-time assistant attorney general for Texas.

“We are not omniscient. We don’t know which interactions between species keep ecosystems operating like they should,” she said. “We don’t know what will happen if the ocelot is not protected.”

The ocelot is a nocturnal, mid-sized felidae that lives hidden in the dense thorn scrub of parts of North, South and Central America.

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WDBX will hold massive give-away at thrift store
Brian Feldt
DAILY EAGLE

After 10 years of service to the Carbondale community, the WDBX thrift shop is officially hanging up its cleats, which will be available for free Friday morning.

The WDBX thrift shop will open its doors Friday and Saturday morning and will offer everything in its parameters for free starting at 9 a.m.

The store was opened 10 years ago to financially support the WDBX community radio station. Now that the station is self-sufficient, the thrift shop is no longer necessary.

Tom Egert, owner of the store, said the shop started as a way to help supply the radio station with money but turned into a money-maker of its own.

“We said support your community radio station by giving us your stuff, and that generated some income for us to promote the station and keep it going,” Egert said.

WDBX, though, did more than just help maintain its own radio station. It also gave a lot back to the local community.

Egert said the store donated $500 a year to the Carbondale Community High School scholarship fund and handed more than 400 vouchers annually to those in need.

With the store set to pack it in this weekend, the community scholarship will be no more and those in need will have to go elsewhere for the charity.

“We just don’t have the money to do that anymore and that will definitely be a loss for the community,” Egert said.

Egert said WDBX will still take donations such as cars or larger money donations, which will serve as a tax write off for the radio station.

People interested in still contributing should contact the radio station directly.

As for the give-away extravaganza, Egert said he expects a large crowd.

Butler Electrical and Plumbing Supply based out of St. Louis is expected to move into the building Aug. 1.

Brian Feldt can be reached at 536-3311 or bfeldt@siude.com.

Low-income expenses

Average living expenses per month for low-income family:

- Groceries: $170
- Housing and Utilities: $143
- Transportation: $219
- Clothes: $32
- Entertainment and Toys: $64
- Total: $594

“All estimates from the 2004 consumer Expenditure Survey

WAGE

Starting from page 1

Most of the people here are here because they were not able to keep up with the rent, a mortgage payment or an electric bill or something like that,” West said.

“Then they then got kicked out of their housing. This extra money could help them get back into housing sooner than they may have expected.”

The shelter, a Marion-based homeless hospice and soup kitchen, is just one of a handful of places pov- erty-stricken families can turn to.

Other establishments such as The Good Samaritan House, Lander Baptists Church, Bethel AME Church Soup Kitchens, Project Angel Food and the Salvation Army are all places that impoverished families can house their children when they can’t afford to keep the lights on in their own home.

Randall said the extra income would go a long way in helping her raise Jamaa.

“I’ll allow more cash flow plus I get to work less hours and get to spend more time with my daughter,” she said. “I take care of her housing expenses so it could go towards her housing or her clothes or put some money in a savings account for her.”

West said the dollar amount would relieve some of the finan- cial burden facing many families in the area that are less fortunate than Randall.

“I can tell you right now it’s going to be some much needed extra money in their pockets,” West said. “It could pay some extra gas in their tanks, it could go towards some hills that were otherwise too pricey before. It could also free up some time to spare with their children. Time that might have been hard to come by before.”

West also noted, though, that companies employing single parents could cut hours to make room for the wage increase.

If a drop in hours occurs then some families would be back to square one, she said.

“If the companies decided to cut their hours to make room for the (increase) then they could end up making the same or even less money a week,” West said. “So it could end up being a situation where nothing really changes except a person’s hours.”

Randall, though, said parents’ hours could make or break a family.

“Other single moms will defi- nitely be affected because sometimes it is the only source of income for the family,” she said. “So for a lot of students, especially single moms, this is going to create a big problem.”

Planes collide at O’Hare, no injuries

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — The wing of a departing flight struck the tail of another plane on a holding pad at O’Hare International Airport during a severe thunderstorm Wednesday, authorities said.

No injuries or fuel spills were reported.

Chicago Department of Aviation spokesperson Wendy Ahrens said the accident occurred about 3:30 p.m. when the wing of a taxing United Airlines 787 struck the tail of a sta- tionary American Airlines MD-80.

The United plane appeared undamaged and taxied back to the gate a short time after the collision, but American spokeswoman Mary Frances Fagan said the American plane suffered damage to its rudder and remained on the holding pad for about an hour before returning to the gate.

Fagan said American Flight 1817 was carrying 136 passengers and five crew members and had been scheduled to depart for Seattle.

United spokesman Jeff Kovick said United Flight 149, bound for San Francisco, was carrying 174 passengers and a crew of 11.

If you love the blue men, but can’t attend the concert, ask about the enhanced multimedia CD.

This Friday, CFPs will premiere “Inside the Tube” via the WSIU Facebook page.
We’re all immigrants

DIANA SOLIWON

That’s What’s Up
dailysoliden.com

Whoever raised the issue of making English the official language of this country created a storm that professional candidate debates, and cities are taking matters into their own hands. Carpentersville, a largely Latino suburb of Chicago, made history last week when it passed a resolution to make English its official language. And on June 6, the Senate approved an amendment written by Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okl., to make it official nationwide.

The madness of this topic gaining such ill-fated notoriety begs the question — are we really trying to do?

If it is to make immigrants who have sought a life in this country based on the American dream feel unwanted, then it is an accomplishment. If it is to strengthen this nation’s growing reputation for being a bunch of self-important, narrow-minded people, then job well done.

I understand this matter stems from the fact that most immigrants, guest workers, illegal aliens, migrant farmers — whatever the case may be — have not learned the most spoken language of this country. Do I think they should learn? Absolutely. Do I think we should, in a sense, outlaw every other language but our own from this country that is famed for being rich in diversity and culture? Not if we don’t want millions of our ancestors to roll over in their graves.

This country was founded as nation of immigrants. It was considered a haven for all who escaped death, persecution or a miserable life for themselves and their families. I cannot in good conscience look in the eyes of those who seek the same and say my ancestors are better than them. Not when we are all truly immigrants.

As The News Leader of Staunton, Va., said, “unless your ancestors hailed from England, Scotland or Ireland, they came to this country speaking a language other than English.” The article went on to say cities such as Chicago contain the relics of this past, what with the Polish community and areas like Chinatown, or suburbs such as Lemont, which boosts a thriving Lithuanian population.

In short, this is a trivial issue. We shouldn’t stifle the ethnic aspects of this country that gives it such flavor. We should focus on the real problem, which is that contemporary immigrants desperately need to find a way to communicate with the rest of us.

They need to learn English. And to declare it the official language in the faces of those who are struggling to get by and do jobs most of us would never consider is just arrogant. Not only that, it is childish. Instead, we should write amendments and pass resolutions to promote this people with a means to learn the language. Perhaps English-learning programs should become a requirement for all who cannot speak it.

With problems like limited healthcare, overpriced education and an expanding poverty line that plague this country, I hope our government realizes making English the official language is the least of our worries. It certainly is the least of mine.

Wanted: The best person. Period.

Not only does the vice chancellor for enrollment management have a title that’s tricky to put on a business card, but the person who holds the position is one of the most important people at SIU.

As University officials cite declining enrollment as one of their major concerns, the vice chancellor for enrollment management now becomes as important as it is lengthy.

The spot has been up for grabs since September 2006. All the candidates have been interviewed. And one candidate has been asked to return for a second interview, Associate Provost Don Rice said.

The candidate’s name was not released to the Daily Egyptian because if the interviewer is unimpressive, the second strongest candidate would be asked to return, and he didn’t want that person to think he or she was out of the running.

Thomas Calhoun, who chaired the search committee, said he was very confident in the candidate, who was impressive on paper and in person.

The Daily Egyptian hopes the University is willing to call off the search if either of the “strong” candidates are not exactly what the University wants.

This job is way too important and way too critical to the continued success of this University to be left to someone other than the best.

Look at it this way. The University just released its summer enrollment figures, which showed a drop of 167 students from last summer session. Assume the average student takes six credit hours during the summer at a rate of $193 per credit hour, which is the cost for new students. That amounts to a loss of $193,386 just for the summer session.

In fall 2006, total enrollment dropped by 438 students from fall 2005. For argument’s sake, let’s imagine the University retained those 438 students, and every last one of them stayed the entire school year.

The base rate of tuition and fees alone for fall 2006 was $7,297. Retain those students all year, and that’s an extra $3.2 million.

Suddenly, this position seems a little more important than the run-of-the-mill, 6-figure University job.

The search committee should approach the vacancy with a sense of urgency and throw any price-tag worries to the wayside. It doesn’t stop there.

SIU basketball coach Chris Lowery’s raise was justified because his team brought SIU a lot of national attention.

Enrollment, administrators said, would go up because of the team’s success. However, the University failed to capitalize on the successes of the men’s and women’s basketball teams, and enrollment took another — albeit minor — slip this summer.

Fall applications are said to be up, but that in no way means enrollment will boom. The University needs someone who can turn these applications into enrollées.

Rice said the university is prepared to pay “top dollar” for the candidate. We wholeheartedly support this, and hope the results of the interview yield the perfect candidate for SIU.

Anything less could cost millions.
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Sudoku

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Sudoku

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Sudoku

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There’s an echo in the Pulliam pool when the instructor speaks. “Put your arm up like you’re going to touch the sky,” says trainer Sue Buesch.

After participants let their arm down, they began to hug themselves as they stretched their sides. The group is part of the Arthritis Foundation Aquatics Program at SIU, and they exercise three times a week. The program, which has been at SIU since 1994, aims to help people with arthritis become more active while leaving them with less pain. Many of the members said the exercises help the blood circulate and give them more energy. Also, the exercises help with flexibility.

Joyce King, a Carbondale resident, has been in the program for 10 years. King said she has had knee surgery twice but the exercises are easy on her knees. “The exercise is something that I wouldn’t do otherwise,” she said.

King said when people get old it’s easy for them to sit and watch TV all day. But she said she wants to keep healthy and stay alive. “My family all died around 75,” King said. “I’m 84.”

Mike Bigler, 59, said he had to leave work because he had two knee replacements. He said the exercises have given him more extension in his legs. “The warm water here has been a real blessing,” he said. “It helps my mobility and flexibility.”

Bigler said because of the exercises, he will be allowed to return to his job at the campus mail service in July. His doctors cleared him to work on Wednesday before the session.

“Physically and mentally, I’m really prepared now,” Bigler said.

Buesch, who leads the group, said she’s glad people do the exercises because many of the 3 million people with arthritis in Illinois don’t.

“There’s a process when people get arthritis,” she said. “It’s as if they lost a family member. There’s a mourning thing that everyone has gone through.”

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Police found steroids in WWE wrestler Chris Benoit’s home, and the media murder theory invades its beads, too. Should non-competitive wrestlers be more frequently and stringent tested for illegal substances?

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“sno they shouldn’t. Now we get to have the dream match in heaven between Benoit, Andre the Giant, ‘Rousing’ Bob Holly and Big Boss Man. Too bad there really is no afterlife though, that would make a mighty fine pay-per-view.”

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“Testing WWE wrestlers is pointless. It’s not like steroids can help the wrestlers; it’s fake. I’ll tell you: ‘non-competition’ wrestling I could win every match and so could you.”

SPORTS BRIEFS
MLB

Guillen hopeful Buehrle to re-sign with White Sox

Tony La Russa said Wednesday night’s game against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays that he’s hopeful the left-hander, who could become a free agent after the season, will sign a contract extension before the White Sox return from a road trip next weekend.

The Chicago Sun Times reported that the team and Buehrle, who has been the subject of trade talks, have been working on a new deal.

“I think he’s going to sign. That’s my hope,” Guillen said. “But there are so many things — so many hard things in the middle. Hopefully we’ll sign him before we get to Chicago. I think the way that both sides love each other, I think we’re fine.”

Buehrle started Wednesday night’s game. A handful of teams, including Atlanta, Houston, Toronto and the Los Angeles Dodgers, had scouts in attendance. Boston and the New York Mets are considered two teams that would make a serious bid if Buehrle was on the trade block.

“Like I told Mark, ‘I’m your friend, but I’m working for this organization. I just want to win games.’ ” Guillen said.

“Mark don’t want to leave,” the manager added. “Is he going to stay? We don’t know.”

Spiezio hospitalized with finger infection

NEW YORK (AP) — Scott Spiezio of the St. Louis Cardinals was hospitalized with an infected left index finger Wednesday, making him unavailable to play against the New York Mets.

Spiezio was receiving antibiotics and was to be re-evaluated Thursday. A valuable utility player, Spiezio is hitting .279 with three homers and 26 RBIs. The Cardinals have two games at third base while Scott Rolen was sidelined with a bruised left foot.

Rolen felt better Wednesday and returned to the lineup, batting fifth.

“It’s fine,” he said. “The doctor wanted me to sit two games, wait 72 hours. I woke up today and it felt good.”

Rolen got hurt when he fouled a pitch off his instep Sunday against Philadelphia.

In other injury news, catcher Yadier Molina (broken left wrist) was expected to be activated from the disabled list Thursday. Manager Tony La Russa said right-hander Todd Wellemeyer would get the ball again.

Outfielder Katie Schmidt thinks the knowledge and skill of the returning players and new players will only be beneficial to the team.

“I believe we have a good group of seniors coming up, everybody has been working really hard to improve their game, and the freshmen coming in will be good,” Schmidt said.

Junior Outfielder Tiffany Dunme said she and other players — Katie Wagar, Chelsea Perry, Bicky Wegmann — all play on a summer ball team with players from schools that they will compete against during the regular season.

Future rivals practicing with each other present a good opportunity to try to gain some insight about the competition.

Dunme said she was talking about a pitch she couldn’t hit and the Creighton pitcher standing nearby heard what she said.

“You have to be kind of careful,” said Dunme. “She said she probably won’t remember by the time we compete.”

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The women’s softball team is preparing for another great season.

Head coach Kerri Blaylock said although practice does not officially start until the second day of the fall semester, many of the players are not letting their skills become rusty and are practicing in their own way.

Whether it is weight training, hitting or playing with teammates, the Salukis are poised and ready to improve on last season, Blaylock said.

Blaylock is going into her eighth year as a head coach, and said she was pleased at her team’s performance last season.

Last season the softball team posted an impressive record of 41-16 and earned a 17-7 in the MVC, which put them in third place.

“I think we had a really good year,” Blaylock said. “It was our fifth straight trip to the NCAA tournament.”

While expectations are set high for the next season Blaylock said she is confident her squad will be successful because of the balance between incoming and remaining players.

There are four players joining the team. Danielle Glisson, from Winston-Salem, N.C., widać Waters, from Chattanooga, Tenn., are two new pitchers who will replace graduating pitchers Ashley Hamby and Cassidy Soggins.

“They’ve been watching the two freshmen this summer and they have been throwing very well,” Blaylock said.

Blaylock said the Salukis can count on returning pitcher Katie MCKenna to have an impressive season.

“She’ll be the veteran on the staff and has learned and understood what needs to be done to be successful at this level,” Blaylock said.

Eugene Clark

St. Louis has its history, but Kansas City and Omaha are accessible to more fans and schools.

At least, that’s what Joe Mitch thinks.

Mitch, associate commissioner of the Missouri Valley Conference, said the conference would be sending out proposals to both Omaha and Kansas City for the possibility of the MVC men’s basketball tournament being played in either city.

Omaha and Kansas City are as of right now the only two cities that have shown interest in holding the tournament and also have a large enough fan base to hold the event.

Mitch said the move to either the Sprint Center in Kansas City or the Qwest Center in Omaha would probably not be a permanent move, if it happened at all.

If the relocation does take place, however, it would not be until 2011. The main reason would be that St. Louis wants to host the tournament for its 200th anniversary, which would be in 2010, Mitch said.

Mitch said the criteria for the relocation hasn’t been determined, but a few of the considerations would likely include a guarantee of $1 million in revenue, hotel accommodations for teams and fans and adequate transportation.

Athletic Director Mario Moccia also said an added distance might keep fans from attending the tournament, which would take away from the atmosphere.

“I think we would still have a great crowd, but we have proven we can win in any environment,” Mitch said.

The road to the MVC tournament

The MVC would be a good idea because the basketball games have been so well attended in St. Louis. Owens said if the tournament does move, the amount of Saluki fans going to the tournament wouldn’t change very much.

“If we think we would still have a good drawing,” Owens said.

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