Stadium project on schedule

By Zach Childree
Editor in Chief

The stadium expansion project is on schedule despite the weather. Walter McKee of McKee and Associates, the architectural firm hired to design the stadium expansion, told the Jacksonville State University Board of Trustees on Tuesday.

"Anytime you start a project in the winter, you face rain and cold weather," McKee said. "Everything is going well, on schedule."

McKee said the beginning of construction was going well and the contractors were preparing the site for the erection of the new building. The rock level the project is being built upon has, so far, been predictable to the point where progress is moving smoothly.

McKee said the building itself will begin to take shape over the next few months.

"The erecting will begin mid February," McKee said. "By next football season, you'll get a glimpse of what the completed project will be."

McKee said the new seats would be in place and portions of the tower would be visible as well.

The project began in December, a month behind when it was anticipated because of economic factors.

It is expected to be completed for the 2010 fall semester.

Stimulus school money could be hard to cut later

By LIBBY QUAID and JUSTIN POPE
AP Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — If the government spends billions on education to help jump-start the staggering economy, what happens when things improve and schools have grown used to the largesse?

Rep. George Miller, chairman of the House education committee, state governments are making dramatic cuts to education as revenue from sales and property taxes plummet, said Miller, D-Calif. Class sizes are set to rise and hundreds of thousands of teachers have gotten layoff notices, he said.
WASHINGTON (AP) — If the government spends billions on education to help jump-start the staggering economy, what happens when things improve and schools have grown used to the largesse?

That is what Republicans are asking about President Barack Obama’s recovery plan, the largest increase in federal money for schools.

Critics say it is not a short-term boost but an immense expansion that will be impossible to roll back.

“It’ll never go away,” said Oklahoma Sen. Tom Coburn, a Republican on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee. “You’re talking about a permanent increase at a time when we are in the worst financial shape we’ve ever been in.”

“What will happen two years from now when the Democrat spending spree comes to an end?” asked California Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon, top Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee.

The measure making its way through Congress would achieve a long-sought goal of Obama and other Democrats. For the first time, it would fully fund No Child Left Behind, former President George W. Bush’s education program. Democrats complain Bush never provided enough money for the kindergarten-through-12th-grade program.

Not a coincidence, critics said.

“These are political goals,” said Checker Finn, president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a Washington think tank. “In other words, other fish are being fried here.”

Republicans can only imagine the pressure they will face, once spending goes up, to keep it that way.

Democrats say that is an argument for another day.

“At the moment, my interest is in rebuilding the economy,” said Rep. George Miller, chairman of the House education committee.

State governments are making dramatic cuts to education as revenue from sales and property taxes plummeted, said Miller, D-Calif. Class sizes are set to rise and hundreds of thousands of teachers have gotten layoff notices, he said.

“This is two-year money,” Miller said. “As their revenue base is restored, as sales taxes start to grow, if the economy recovers and home values start to stabilize, they will have to transition to return to reliance on that.

“But it’s clearly not in the national interest to have this system collapse at this moment in time,” Miller said.

School spending accounts for about one-sixth of the $825 billion economic recovery package, which also includes money for health care, energy, highway projects and tax cuts. As with education spending, critics say the measure won’t help the economy fast enough and will saddle the government with long-term, budget-wrecking commitments.

The plan would spend about $20 billion quickly to build and fix up classrooms, from kindergarten through college, in an effort to spur job creation and growth. States would receive $39 billion to stave off cuts in schools.

But it would also pump an extra $26 billion into two long-term programs, No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The bill includes a $15 billion bonus fund to encourage reforms related to teaching and student tests.

“None of this is going to stimulate anything,” Coburn said.

School districts do spend a lot of the No Child Left Behind and special education money on teacher salaries. But they have five years to spend money from the two programs — and a long track record of spending it elsewhere.

See “Stimulus,” page 2

By Jennifer Bacchus
Special to the Chanticleer

In an effort to update the university’s image and, hopefully change the way prospective students view Jacksonville State, the marketing and communications department unveiled a new logo at the board of trustees meeting on Monday.

The open-faced lettering and gamecock tail insinuating itself across the U are meant to make current and potential students, alumni, faculty and staff think of a place that is progressive and full of energy.

“It’s very important that it feels relevant,” said Ford Wiles, chief creative officer of Big Communications, the marketing group working with JSU to create the new logo and new marketing strategy. “It’s very important that that piece is marketable and that’s what we want to create for the university.”

The new logo will be part of a marketing push beginning this spring. The ads shown by Big Communications featured “students” in casual attire overlaid with a book page showing the attire they will wear to the job they get post-graduation and the facing page giving a description of how the education they received at JSU has helped them to be more productive citizens.

Board member Jamie “Red” Etheredge asked that the school also make an effort to have better communication with its students, faculty and the surrounding community through news items on the website.

“My concern and, I guess it’s been a pet peeve, is the lack of daily communication that comes out of the university,” said Etheredge, pointing to fellow board member Randy Owen receiving the Ellis Island Medal of Honor as something the university should have played up in the press.

Graham Lewis models a T-shirt bearing the new JSU logo. Photo by Angie Ayers Finley JSU

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INTERCULTURAL RELATIONSHIPS

Trenice Chandler discusses the beauty of love, no matter what color.

SHH WE’RE HUNTING GHOSTS

New columnist Sara Adams writes about her experiences with the paranormal.

A FAMILIAR REFRAIN

Jered Staubs compares this JSU Basketball season to last year.

QUESTION of the WEEK

What issue should President Obama focus on first?

- War in Iraq 11%
- Economy 78%
- Gay Marriage 7%
- Abortion 0%
- The Environment 4%

Next week’s question:

What do you think of the new logo?

ONLINE @ thechanticleeronline.com
ON Campus

Briefs

JSU President, Dr. William Meehan, was named to the Division I Board of Directors of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) as the representative of the Ohio Valley Conference.

Campus Crime

January 20
• Brandon Singleton was arrested for using a false ID to obstruct justice.

January 23
• A theft of property was reported at the Houston Cole Library. Items stolen include a brown Dooney and Bourke purse valued at $250, a debit card, a Dick’s Sporting Goods gift card valued at $100, a wallet valued at $45 and a Kentucky driver’s license.

January 24
• A theft of property was reported at Pete Mathews Coliseum parking lot. Items stolen include an Alabama license plate, a BMW license plate bracket valued at $40 and damages done to the passenger rear taillight were valued at $100.

What’s Happening

Thursday, January 29
• Chartering Reception, International House
  4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
  *Open to students/faculty/staff.

Friday, January 30
• JSU Calico Winter Guard Practice, TMB Auditorium.
  5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
  *Contact: Lizzie DeGaetano @ calicowinterguard@yahoo.com.
• Regional Technology Fair, Leon Cole Auditorium.
  7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
  *There is a registration fee for

Picture of the week

The Victoria Hotel, which was recently donated to Jacksonville State University. If you would like to see your photo as ‘Photo of the week’, email it to chantyeditor@gmail.com. Photo by Mandy Pearson / The Chanticleer

Students reminded of dangers of tobacco use

By Cecily Sanders
Staff Writer

Zach Childree
Editor in Chief

Wednesday, January 28 was Tobacco Awareness Day here at JSU. It was held from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the TMB lobby. This gave students a chance to learn of the health and dependency issues related to tobacco use. Cornett Grant, of the health department’s tobacco prevention and control program said information is key to preventing tobacco use. Grant said she hoped students walked away with some tobacco knowledge. “Everybody has a choice,” Grant said. “If you know better then you do better.”

According to tobaccofacts.com, tobacco is a tall, leafy annual plant originally grown in South and Central America, but now cultivated throughout the world, including southern Ontario.

Nicotine, a powerful central nervous system stimulant found naturally in the tobacco leaf, is classified as a drug. Nicotine is one of the main ingredients in tobacco. In higher doses, nicotine is extremely poisonous. Tobacco leaves can be burned and inhaled, or absorbed through the mouth. The membranes

Nicotine is highly addictive. This effect is the reason nicotine is so widely used. After using for awhile, it’s hard for a person to quit. Withdrawal pains can be excruciating. So instead of having to deal, many tobacco users continue using just to avoid the depression, insomnia, irritability, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, anxiety, decreased heart rate, increased appetite, weight gain and craving for nicotine that are recognized as withdrawal symptoms.

Just remember that there is no safe way to smoke a cigarette. Cigarettes are the only legal product whose advertised and intended use -- smoking -- is known to harm the body and cause cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths in the United States. Smoking causes about 87% of lung cancer deaths. Cigars, pipes and spit and other types of smokeless tobacco all cause cancers, too. In the United States alone, tobacco causes nearly 1 in 5 deaths, killing about 443,000 Americans each year.

Grant said she has the best advice for students and smoking. “Don’t start,” Grant said. “And if you have started, quit now.”

Grant said the health department has resources available to help smokers quit. “If you want to stop smoking, there is help available for you,” Grant said.
According to tobaccofacts.com, tobacco is a tall, leafy annual plant originally grown in South and Central America, but now cultivated throughout the world, including southern Ontario. Nicotine, a powerful central nervous system stimulant found naturally in the tobacco leaf, is classified as a drug. Nicotine is one of the main ingredients in tobacco. In higher doses, nicotine is extremely poisonous. Tobacco leaves can be burned and inhaled, or absorbed through the mouth. The membranes in the nose, mouth and lungs act as nicotine delivery systems—transmitting nicotine into the blood and to the brain. States. Smoking causes about 87% of lung cancer deaths. Cigars, pipes and spit and other types of smokeless tobacco all cause cancers, too. In the United States alone, tobacco causes nearly 1 in 5 deaths, killing about 443,000 Americans each year.

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Grant said the health department has resources available out there and it’s free,” Grant said. “Don’t start,” Grant said. “And if you have started, quit now.”

Don’t miss these other happenings around campus

**Thursday January 29**

**WISE V-Day Interest meeting**

3 p.m. at Java Jolt Coffeehouse

**JSU LGBT Interest meeting**

4:30 p.m. 328 Brewer hall

for more info: jsu.lgbt@gmail.com
By Julie Skinner

My favorite memory of my boyfriend, Sam, is simple. We were in Memphis. We were driving home from a movie, I think. It was raining. It was the kind of rain that falls straight down and flashes when the headlights catch it. I was wearing a sundress. Out of nowhere, he pulls the car over and leaps out, running to my side. He opens my door and helps me out. The rain was warm, and my eyelashes were weighted with water. Then, we danced to a random song playing on the radio. Though it’s cheesy, cliché and unrealistic; it’s stuck in my head and means a lot to me. It was spontaneous, and that one night defined our relationship from then on.

That memory is priceless, yet it didn’t cost anything.

What makes a rich person truly rich? Their worth in dollar signs, or their worth in memories? And, what makes a relationship fulfilling? What you spend or what you gain?

I can’t lie. I’m a sucker for pearls and chocolate covered strawberries. I like my thorny roses red and sharp, just like my wine. I enjoy eating out and doing fun things whenever possible. But looking at my relationship, I realize that I only vaguely recall the memories that were created while doing costly things.

I don’t remember every time I ate $9 popcorn at the movies, but I do remember sneaking in shrimp burritos Sam and I had leftover from sour $9 popcorn at the movies, but I do recall us walking four blocks to a restaurant that night, and laughing about how cold it was (when it was not freezing). And, I remember sneaking in shrimp burritos, but I don’t recall us walking four blocks to a restaurant.

Cheap dates can be good dates

By Chris Foshee

Opinion Writer

With a couple of weeks into the college semester you might already be looking under the couch cushion for spare quarters. According to the latest report for the College Board (collegeboard.com) the 2005-2006 tuition and fees at a public university grew 7.1 percent over the previous school year with a total cost of $5,491. That does not leave the average college student with a lot of extra money for social events like dating.

On an average date I spend anywhere from 50 to 75 dollars,” said a 22-year-old senior, Zack Blume. “And that’s just taking her out for a nice dinner and something to do afterwards.”

DATING is stressful enough without the money issue involved. You have to make sure you are dressed right, your car is cleaned out, and that you plan something your date will not be bored to tears with. That is a lot of pressure to overcome. Most people make dating harder then it really is.

It should not be as hard as quantum theory. It is just a date.

There are some guidelines that you must follow before you plan the date, a pre-game if you will. First, get a date and find out her interest. Talking is very important in a relationship. This is as true in a marriage as it is in the first date. This is important because you don’t want her to be bored. According to Maxim Magazine women get all the information they need from the first date. Plan something that she likes to do or even introduce her to something she might like to do.

Once you understand your date’s interest start planning around your budget. Most girls don’t expect you to spend a lot of money on the first date.

“It’s the first date, I am not even worried about how much money the guy is spending,” said 20-year-old junior Reagan Williams. “I am more interested in making sure if he’s a nice guy or not.”

Even if you have been dating a girl for a while you can still get away with cheap dates now and then. You just have to do it with style. Stay away from fast food places and dollar theatres because that gives off the impression that you are a cheap-skate.

When planning food in a date a picnic is always a good idea. Get to know your date’s favorite sandwich or fruits. It shows that you put effort into the date and comes off as caring and sweet. If that sounds like a bad idea ask around for a reasonable place to eat that is still considered nice. It really just depends on your budget, and you can never go wrong with a good dessert like ice cream.

When planning an activity always run it by the date first. Although it is good to keep your date guessing it is never good if they dress incorrectly. If you plan on a picnic and fishing you don’t want your date wearing a skirt or slacks. Dates outdoors are always an inexpensive and smart move because you have a better opportunity to talk and nature has a way of being romantic. You can never go wrong with a zoo or a drive in movie either.

Obama should end ‘Don’t ask, Don’t tell’

UWire Editorial

Congress passed a law in 1993 regulating the treatment of gay people in the U.S. military. Commonly known as “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” the law dictates conditions for dismissing gay people from the armed forces.

Because of this law, the military has discharged at least 12,000 soldiers — 10 U.S.C. §654 — states that, because the military functions as a separate society from civilian life with its own rules and customs, “the armed forces must maintain personnel policies that exclude persons whose presence in the armed forces would create an unacceptable risk to the armed forces’ high standards of morale, good order and discipline likely that “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” will be struck down, regardless of moral qualms that some people have against homosexuality. But still, is now the right time?

It seems like this isn’t the best time to radically alter the nature of the military, given that the United States is waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention suffering a lack of gay-friendly personnel policies that have led to a loss of morale in the military and a reduction in the quality of personnel.

As a result, the military should end “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” as soon as possible, even if it means risking a war on two fronts. It’s certainly bold of Obama to tackle such controversial legislation so early in his term, and he deserves praise for holding true on this campaign promise.

While this could just be a political move to gain support from the LGBT community, it seems as though Obama is working toward a better economy, immigration reform, and other important changes to the United States.
The Chanticleer
Student newspaper of JSU since 1934

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Letters Policy:
The Chanticleer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters
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campus mail to our offices in Room 180, Self Hall, or
to the mailing address to the left. Letters may also be
e-mailed to chantyeditor@gmail.com.

The Chanticleer will not print letters which are libelous
or defamatory. Letters may be edited for style, brevity or
clarity. The Chanticleer reserves the right to refuse
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by noon on the Monday prior to desired publication date.
There will be at least two weeks between publication of
letters from the same person. Rebuttals will be published
no later than two weeks after publication of the article,
editorial or letter in question.

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By Trenice Chandler
Staff Writer

Yes, let’s go there. Personally, I have
no problem with interracial relationships. I think that it’s
a beautiful thing and that the babies produced (pertaining to straight
couples) are beautiful. Everyone is
beautiful, no matter what skin color
or you have, if your hair is curly, if
your hips are wide or if your lips are
thin. Everyone is beautiful. Therefore,
I don’t understand when people
look at a mixed child and turn
up their noses. Yes, there is that
possibility of not “fitting into one
world,” but in all honesty, it’s still
a child. It’s still beautiful.

Of course, interracial doesn’t
mean just black and white. It
means, Black, White, Asian, Hispanic,
Middle-Eastern, green, purple, whatever. Racial boundar-
ies should not exist anymore, and
yet they do. People tend to focus on others in their own racial group.
Looking outside of that still has a
bit of a taboo effect on people.
They treat it like it’s something
wrong. But people are people.
Everyone is a person and everyone
has the right to love whomever
they wish to love. You can’t help
whom you fall in love with. No
one should be forced to feel wrong
for that.

In this day and age, race still
plays a part in the selection of a
better half. I believe that cannot be
changed until people change. But
sadly, you can’t force anyone to
change their views or their beliefs.
And just as people shouldn’t be
forced to feel bad about their
racial relationship, no one should
be forced to feel bad about their
views on dating inside their race.

Everyone has a preference, but
everyone should also be respected
for what they decide. Your preferences
and views are important, but no
one has the right to love whomever
they wish to love. The right to love
whoever you wish to love is a
basic right, and it’s a beautiful
thing and that the babies produced
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A good scare
Hunting ghosts can be a distraction from worries

By Sara Adams
Staff Writer

My Name is Sara Adams and with this column I begin an exploration of the life outside the classroom here at JSU.

A popular pastime in Jacksonsville is late-night ghost hunting. On a recent expedition, my merry band of cohorts and I ventured out to search for spirits in an abandoned building.

We reached ourselves, armed with a good camera, Wal-Mart flashlights, colorful hoodies and open minds.

We were almost like Elmer Fudd “shhh, I’m hunting spirits.”

I piled into the car with four boys, Zach, David, Steele and Chad and we were on our way to what we’ve been told is an abandoned mental hospital.

The whole way there, we talk to each other excitedly about what we might find, who would freak out the most. We also made bets on who would end up back at the car first.

When we arrive, the “abandoned mental hospital” appears more like a closed office building than anything one might see in a “Saw” film.

Zach and David win the bet, immediately opting to stay with the car “just in case.” So Steele, Chad and I walk through the overgrown weeds and bushes to the conveniently open door. As we approached the building, I remembered the three rules to use when searching for the paranormal:

1) Stay together and stay alert. Never go off on your own.
2) Don’t disturb the sanctity of the site. No stealing, no breaking windows, no vandalism and for God’s sake don’t do anything else illegal.

George Clooney joins his dad to talk journalism

By BRETT ZONGKER
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — George Clooney traded jokes with his father, veteran journalist Nick Clooney, before a screening Monday night of the actor’s 2005 film “Good Night and Good Luck.”

The 47-year-old actor wore a suit and directed the film about legendary journalist Edward R. Murrow, who his father now uses to teach journalism students at American University. Both Clooneys appeared at a screening of the film for students, alumni and others at the Newseum.

Nick Clooney said it’s important to him that college students can learn from his son’s work.

“I don’t care for that,” George snapped back.

“You never cared for this kid! His sister’s great,” the elder Clooney quipped.

“I always wanted to be adopted, couldn’t find anyone,” the son said, laughing.

The younger Clooney said he grew up hearing about Murrow, and their family took pride in how journalists held the government accountable during the paranoia of the 1950s communist threat. Clooney said he wanted to make a movie to let people hear some “really well-written words about the fourth estate again.”

Clooney, a vocal critic of the Iraq war, said he felt pressure to get the movie right because of criticism at the time that Hollywood actors were becoming too politically active.

“I realized if I was going to do a movie like this, I was going to have to get everything right,” he said.

Congress sends fair pay bill to Obama

By JIM ABRAMS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress sent the White House Tuesday what is expected to be the first legislation that President Barack Obama signs into law, a bill that makes it easier for women and others to sue for pay discrimination, even if the discrimination has prevailed for years, even decades.

The House on Tuesday passed it on a 250-177 vote.


The Ledbetter bill focuses on pay and other workplace discrimination against women: The Census Bureau last year estimated that women still receive damage awards for every dollar that men get for doing equivalent jobs. But backers pointed out that employees could wait to file claims in hopes of reaping larger damage awards.

“Enriching trial lawyers is simply the wrong way to ensure a fairer, more just workplace,” said Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon of California, top Republican on the House Education and Labor Committee.

But backers pointed out that the bill does not change current law limiting back pay for claimants to two years, so there would be no incentive to wait to file a claim.

The House first passed the bill on Jan. 9, just days after convening the new session of Congress. The Senate approved it last week by 61-36, with all 16 female senators, including four Republicans, voting for it.

The House had to vote again because it originally coupled the bill with another labor measure making it easier to receive damage awards for discrimination. The Senate separated the two, putting off the second bill, which faced more opposition, for later in
1) Never go off on your own.
2) Don't disturb the sanctity of the site. No stealing, no breaking windows, no vandalism and for God's Sake don't do anything else illegal or unsafe.
3) Always have one person with “nerves of steel.” I was designated as the “nerves of steel.”

Great. Just great.
The whole time we were walking through the building, I keep thinking “Oh God, what was that? I just stepped negativity and sadness. We, however, don't think about them as we scare ourselves goofy in the rain on a Friday night.

Our way of forgetting the terrible things around us is to search for the terrible things that may or may not exist. Why? Because sometimes people just need a distraction and terror can be an amazingly effective one.

It just goes to show that sometimes, all you need is a good scare.

Don't disturb the sanctity of the site. No stealing, no breaking windows, no vandalism and for God's Sake don't do anything else illegal or unsafe.

3) Always have one person with “nerves of steel.” I was designated as the “nerves of steel.”

Great. Just great.
The whole time we were walking through the building, I keep thinking “Oh God, what was that? I just stepped

The measure, said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi after receiving a congratulatory phone call from Obama, is “a bold step to move away from that parsimonious interpretation” of the Supreme Court.

The plaintiff in the case, Lilly Ledbetter, argued that see me in the White House when they sign the bill.”

“By swiftly passing this legislation, Congress sets a new tone for employment rights,” said ACLU legislative counsel Deborah J. Vagins: “The Ledbetter legislation restores a clear, bright-line rule for determining the timeliness of claims.”

The measure making it easier to receive damage awards for discrimination. The Senate separated the two, putting off the second bill, which faced more opposition, for later in the year.

The bill is S.181.

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Media Illiteracy

The power of the Chanticleer reared its head again this past week.

For 11 years, Mark Gottfried was allowed to wallow in mediocrity, but four days after being called out in this publication, he found himself unemployed. That’s no coincidence.

I must admit, I was a bit perplexed at the lack of “Gott-fired” headlines.

It’s funny how we overlook the simplest things. Gravette and I meticulously comb every word within articles, making sure there are no dangling participles, sentences ending in prepositions, etc.

So, a week after the printer screwed up our headlines, surely we would at least make sure all last week’s headlines were pristine, right?

Maybe not. We managed to misspell, of all words, basketball. Right in the headline.

Of course most of you probably didn’t even notice. But when you’re expecting a word, as long as what you see is a reasonable facsimile, that’s what you read.

At least that’s what happened to us.

Enough of my drivel. Here’s some news and notes from around JSU athletics.

- Jacksonville State stands to earn the largest one-game payday in the history of its athletic program after signing to play a football game against reigning national champion Florida in 2012.

The Gamecocks will pocket a cool $500,000 for the November game, which was confirmed by JSU athletics director Oval Jaynes on Monday.

“The contract’s been signed by them and (JSU president) Dr. (Bill) Meehan signed it, so that makes it official,” Jaynes said.

Athletic department officials have been directed by the university board of trustees to seek out guarantee games in football and basketball as a revenue stream. The football team has played Mississippi State, Memphis, Kansas and Georgia Tech during coach Jack Crowe’s nine-year tenure at JSU, but the Florida game represents its biggest guarantee to date.

The men’s basketball team played four this season.

“To get an opportunity to play a program like Florida is a tremendous honor for us,” Jaynes said. “To go play a team that consistently competes for the national championship, we’re excited about going there, and I think our players and fans will be as well.”

Geez, I’m feeling optimistic.

The power of the Chanticleer reared its head again this past week.

A familiar refrain

JSU’s season beginning to resemble that of a year ago

By Jered Staubs
Sports Editor

It’s beginning to look a lot like last year for the JSU men’s basketball team.

After a sparkling 6-1 start that included impressive victories at UMass and Tennessee Tech and a home thrashing of VMI, the Gamecocks’ schedule reads very similarly to last season.

The team continues to play competitive games, but the results have gone sour, as JSU (8-10, 2-7 OVC) has dropped six in a row, which is especially painful considering all those losses have come to OVC teams.

Last season, the Gamecocks played 29 games, and lost 15 of them by 11 points or fewer on their way to compiling a 7-22 record.

The formula has been pretty similar recently, as JSU has only been beaten by double digits three times and has yet to lose by 20. The ability of the team has been shown, there is no questioning the desire of the players and coaches, but a certain cutting-edge is lacking.

Maybe it’s knowing how to win in conference play, maybe it’s handling the early season success, maybe it’s the difference in the top OVC schools expecting to win and a school like JSU hoping to win.

Whatever it is, the Gamecocks remain stuck on the precipice of OVC success. Thursday’s 59-57 loss at Tennessee State exemplified the way too many of JSU’s OVC games have gone the past couple years.

Trail by 10 at halftime? Check.

Give up a heartbreaking buzzer-beater? Check.

Jerrell Houston capped a 13-2 Tennessee State run with a tip-in at the buzzer to win the game and send the Gamecocks spiraling further into the OVC cellar.

JSU led 55-46 with 4:31 remaining, but would not make another field goal.

Tennessee State’s 10-point halftime lead was quickly erased thanks to a 21-2 JSU run, but it was not enough for the Gamecocks, who struggled from the floor the rest of the night.

Even with that run, JSU was only able to shoot 38 percent points. Brandon Crawford led JSU with 17.

It was a crushing loss for the Gamecocks, and one not made easier by the knowledge that they were playing conference-leading Austin Peay two days later.

The Governors have made a habit of capitalizing on opponents who are not ready to go from the opening tip, and they buried JSU in the first half, leaving some leeway for the inevitable Gamecock run.

Austin Peay led by 15 less than 13 minutes into the game and continued its hot shooting all night. Not surprisingly, All-OVC forward Drake Reed led first time JSU has shot over 50 percent since the VMI game on November 29 — but a lot of that came too little too late.

A hot finish brought JSU to within five with 25 seconds remaining, but Austin Peay did what champions do, taking care of the ball and making free throws at the end of the game.

JSU did have two players score 20 (Jonathon Toles, Jeremy Bynum) and four players (Toles, Bynum, Geddes Robinson, Nick Murphy) finish in double figures, an encouraging sign for what has recently been a stagnant offensive team.
Both men’s and women’s hoops teams currently out of tournament picture at midway point

By Jared Gravette
Assistant Sports Editor

Both the Jacksonville State men’s and women’s basketball teams started their respective seasons with high hopes, but both squads have failed to reach expectations and now find themselves on the outside looking in when it comes to an OVC tournament berth.

• Men’s Standing
The men were consistently ranked among the bottom five teams in the conference throughout the 2007-08 campaign, but the arrival of James Green seemed to rejuvenate the program.

The Gamecocks played a tough non-conference schedule with games against the likes of Massachusetts, Iowa State, South Carolina, VMI and UAB. At the beginning of the season, many believed that JSU would be lucky to even hang close with these teams, but not Green and his Gamecocks.

After losing to South Carolina in its opener, JSU proved that they belonged, defeating UMass 75-74 on the road one game before crushing VMI 95-67 inside Pete Matthews Coliseum.

The Gamecocks would continue to roll, winning six straight, and their 6-1 start didn’t go unnoticed. In fact, JSU even cracked the Collegeinsider.com Mid-Major Top 25.

But things started going south after the Gamecocks lost to UAB 75-48. Since defeating Tennessee Tech on December 6, JSU has compiled a 2-9 record, losing its last six conference games.

The Gamecocks now find themselves in ninth place — with the top eight teams making the conference tournament — two games behind both Tennessee State and Tennessee Tech. Only Southeast Missouri State’s record is worse, as the Redhawks have yet to win a game in OVC play.

JSU does have time to turn things around with nine games left on the schedule, and the Gamecocks have been playing better of late.

JSU lost on a last second shot against Tennessee State on Thursday and hung tough against league-leading Austin Peay on Saturday.

• Women’s Standing
While the men weren’t expected to be much of a factor this season, the Lady Gamecocks (4-15, 1-8 OVC) were picked to finish fifth in the preseason poll and have been disappointing at best after making the conference tournament a year ago.

Like the men, the women’s squad is currently in ninth place in the standings. However, Becky Geyer’s team is only one game out of the eighth spot.

The injury bug bit the Lady Gamecocks early, and they have yet to get on track this season. Geyer’s squad also misses the play of Cierra Duhart, who led the OVC in field goal percentage as a freshman.

JSU did get its first conference win of the season two weeks ago, defeating UT-Martin 55-49, but the Skyhawks have an even worse record than the Gamecocks and have yet to win an OVC contest.

Geyer’s team still has a chance to turn things around and could climb up the standings quickly with a string of victories.

The men’s team finished at the bottom of the conference last season with a 5-15 record.

The women’s team finished eighth with an 8-12 record, losing in the first round of the tournament.