COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia Prepares for ESPN's 'College GameDay'

By Josh Barone, Kellie Kotraba
October 19, 2010 | 7:36 p.m. CDT


Downtown businesses are preparing for a surge in traffic expected to come this weekend from the combined festivities of Homecoming and ESPN's "College GameDay."

It will mark the first time MU has hosted the program, which will be broadcast live from Francis Quadrangle on Friday and Saturday.

The ESPN show, which averages more than 2 million viewers, originates from the day's best game, or the game with the most compelling storyline, said ESPN spokesman Mike Humes.

The undefeated No. 18 Missouri Tigers will take on the undefeated No. 3 Oklahoma Sooners at Faurot Field at 7 p.m., Saturday.

"College GameDay," which Humes calls interactive, fun and informative, won an Emmy this year in the category Outstanding Studio Show — Weekly.

An undetermined but large number of students will stand about 15 feet behind the stage, Humes said.

"They provide the atmosphere for the show," he said. "They play a very important role in the energy of the show."

Students also are encouraged to bring signs to support their team, Humes said.

"We love to see the signs," he said. "We believe they add an element to the show. The key is they have to be fun and good-natured."
Business burst

Downtown businesses are hoping to capitalize on both "College GameDay" crowd and Homecoming.

Campus Bar and Grill, the closest bar to the event, anticipates a post-broadcast crowd, said general manager Matt Hudson. The restaurant will be fully staffed and fully stocked.

Hudson said almost everyone on staff is scheduled to work Saturday.

"We basically load up on everything — all the kegs and all the food we can fit in our freezer," he said.

Lakota Coffee is making similar preparations.

"It’s pretty much double everything — double pastries, double food prep, double staff," manager Andrew Ducharme said.

Ducharme said he hopes to see triple the normal customer volume.

Kaldi’s Coffee “got hit really hard” during the Roots ‘N’ Blues ‘N’ BBQ Festival, lead barista Steve Schuh said. It is increasing food preparation and staff for the weekend.

“One person, maybe two, have the day off," Schuh said.

For Shakespeare’s Pizza, the presence of ESPN doesn’t mean much change.

“Homecoming in general is our busiest day of the year anyway, so we expect it to be crazy on that day,” general manager Tobias Epstein said.

The restaurant will open at 10 a.m., its traditional early opening time for Homecoming.

Public safety

For the MU Police Department, “College GameDay” and Homecoming are just routine events, Capt. Brian Weimer said. As with other football games, the department will partner with public-safety agencies from the city, county and state to enhance its efforts.
Because of a finite number of officers, MU Police plan to assign them based on where they’re needed throughout the day, Weimer said.

Weimer said the officers are prepared for a variety of scenarios that could occur, such as fans storming the field.

"There are measures in place, and there is staff in place, that would deal with that situation as it develops," he said. "We have personnel that’s based off crowd expectations, and we utilize them on game days to take care of things."

MU Police have contacted ESPN and other schools that have hosted "College GameDay" to learn from their safety strategies and see how MU could apply them.

Among the MU Police Department’s challenges are monitoring the capacity crowd at the stadium. General admission tickets for the game are sold out, but a few scattered single seats remain, said Brent Lewis, associate director of ticket operations at MU.

There has been a surge in ticket sales since MU beat Texas A&M on Saturday, he said. He added that Homecoming games typically sell out.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Homecoming parade to start at noon Saturday

By Josh Barone
October 19, 2010 | 10:18 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — MU's Homecoming parade has been rescheduled to begin at noon Saturday, said Carrie Bien, student programs coordinator for the Mizzou Alumni Association.

The change accommodates ESPN's "College GameDay" television show, which will broadcast live from MU from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday.

"We first started talking about it starting at 11," Bien said, "but we wanted to have a buffer time for people attending GameDay to be able to transition."

Bien said Saturday would be a "really fun day, jam-packed with activities," and that it was fortunate that the 7 p.m. kickoff leaves enough time for several events.

The Columbia City Council on Monday approved a request to move the parade to noon and ordered that there be no parking along Sixth and Ninth streets from 9 a.m. until the parade ends.

Missourian reporter Pavan Vangipuram contributed to this report.
More People Chasing Storms with Tornado Tourism

Updated: Tuesday, 19 Oct 2010, 11:02 AM EDT
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This story appeared in at least 18 different Fox outlets yesterday.

(CANVAS STAFF REPORTS) - A new type of adventure tourism has taken off as people are paying thousands of dollars to get a front seat to the most destructive storms on Earth.

AOL News reported that a growing number of companies are giving tourists the chance to experience Tornado Alley, a large section of the Midwestern plains where tornadoes are most frequent, first hand.

Storm-chasing tourism started in the mid-1990s. According to Discovery News, tourists head out with storm chasers who use technology such as mobile weather stations, radio scanners, GPS units and laptop computers to track down tornadoes and get up close to their power.

These vacationers usually include photographers and prospective storm chasers hoping to learn the ropes. And also others who are just along for the ride.

F5 Tornado Chasing Safaris owner Gregg Potter attributed the recent popularity to shows like Discovery's "Storm Chasers." He told AOL News that there was a time his Chevy suburban would be the only vehicle out on a long dusty Oklahoma road searching for tornadoes, while now he may see four or five vans giving chase as well.

A University of Missouri study found that the tourists are usually middle-aged, single, highly educated and wealthy. According to the study the trips usually cost between $3,000 and $5,000 not including food and hotels. They can last one to two weeks and cross different states.

Cloud 9 Tours owner Charles Edwards told Discovery that he once sold his own plasma to raise funds to chase storms. Now he looks for the ideal weather to attract these vacationers but said he also tries to tell them the "truth about storm chasing."

"It's not like what you see in the movies, there are very long periods of driving and waiting," he said. "Sometimes we spend hours sitting in a parking lot, waiting for the storms to fire up in the afternoon."
While a tour company took on some damage in May when a tornado blew out most of a van's windows, Discovery said there has never been a fatality on a tour. Most injuries are non-storm related.

There is also never any guarantee given by Mother Nature that they will actually find a tornado, though Edwards agreed the chasers are also content seeing lightning, hail and "jaw-dropping cloud formations."

A tornado, he said, "is the icing on the cake."
Commencement prayer upset letter writer

Chief of institute was fired in May.

By Janese Silvey

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

The anonymous letter writer offended by a Law Enforcement Training Institute commencement ceremony in April was mostly angered that it included religious references.

Gary Maddox — who led the University of Missouri Extension LFTI for 17 years — was fired in May after a graduation attendee sent the letter to Maddox’s bosses. At the time, Maddox was denied access to the two-page letter, but he has since obtained a copy.

The writer complained about a string of jokes and inside pranks at the ceremony but said the student-led prayer was “most offensive.”

“The student came to the lectern and said a Protestant Christian prayer that culminated in praising the almighty Jesus. Dr. Maddox came back to the lectern and said, ‘Amen,’ ” the letter said.

The writer went on to say: “The acts specific to the involvement of religion in the graduation ceremony are a violation of the law and are a violation of our civil rights. Upon not participating in the prayer, my family and I felt ostracized, embarrassed and awkward.”

Maddox said graduates had asked to include prayer in the ceremony, which he felt was their right to do.

MU administrators do not discuss personnel issues, but Maddox said he’s working with them to try to negotiate a settlement. He declined to say how much he’s seeking from the university. His salary last year was about $87,000.

If the parties can’t reach an agreement, Maddox said he’ll likely proceed through the university’s grievance process and, if necessary, pursue legal action. Maddox has retained Columbia attorney Milt Harper.

The person who wrote the letter about the April commencement requested an apology from Maddox and suggested LFTI employees be trained about university prayer policies.
MU doesn’t have a policy that prohibits an employee from discussing religion, spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. MU's faculty handbook charges employees to be respectful without violating religious rights.

Kathy Lehman Goetz attended the April LETI commencement where her son was graduating. She said she didn’t hear anything that sounded out-of-place.

“The prayer was very moving,” she said. “God can be part of my everyday life all the time. I’m not offended.”

Goetz cited several examples of where athletes and other public officials have given thanks to God without issue. “This was blown totally out of proportion,” she said.

Maddox has received plenty of support since he was fired. A Facebook page to reinstate him had more than 740 fans this morning, some of whom still are asking that friends and former students contact the university on Maddox’s behalf.

Since he was fired in May, Maddox said he has been busy looking for another job. He continues to occasionally lead law enforcement seminars across the country.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columhiatribune.com.
Mo. budget cuts prompt layoffs at tech network

Posted: Tuesday, October 19, 2010 9:21 am

Budget cuts have prompted layoffs for a Missouri network that deals with Internet connections and technical support at public schools, colleges and libraries.

The Missouri Research and Education Network has decided to eliminate seven full-time and three part-time positions, or about 11 percent of its work force. The state eliminated funding for the program in the current budget year that started in July.

The staff positions being cut involve tasks that have been automated. Three vacant positions will not be filled.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported that network’s leaders say the layoffs were needed to remain viable.

The Missouri Research and Education Network was created in 1991 and is part of the University of Missouri-Columbia.
MOREnet axes 10 positions in wake of state cuts

The Missouri Research and Education Network, or MOREnet, is reducing its workforce by 11 percent after the state eliminated its funding this year.

The cuts amount to seven full-time and three part-time positions. Additionally, MOREnet is not filling three positions.

The reduction comes after Gov. Jay Nixon withheld $6.8 million in state funding to MOREnet in June.

That amount represented MOREnet’s entire state allocation this fiscal year and one-fourth of its operating budget.

MOREnet also gets funding from fees charged to the schools, colleges and libraries that use MOREnet’s Internet services, technical support and network security. To cushion some of the cut, MOREnet increased those fees, which vary based on services provided.

Executive Director John Gillispie said administrators reviewed the operating budget “with a fine-toothed comb” to reduce other expenses wherever possible.

“This clearly isn’t something we want to do,” Gillispie said in a prepared statement. “It’s something we have to do to preserve the organization, ensure we remain viable and continue to serve our members well into the future.”

The eliminated positions include information technology employees and administrators, Gillispie said.

The cuts are in areas where previously manual processes have become automated.

Remaining employees will have to pick up some of the duties, but Gillispie said he’s hopeful customers won’t notice a decrease in services.

MOREnet began 20 years ago as a collaboration between the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Higher Education and the Secretary of State’s Office. It operates within the University of Missouri.

It’s unlikely the state will be able to restore funds to MOREnet next year.
"We're going to have something like a $400 million budget hole to fill," said Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia. "I know that lots of people, including me, have been longtime supporters of MOREnet, but I don't know where we're going to get $400 million. If people get serious about support for these kinds of things and are willing to consider a cigarette tax, that's one thing. But absent revenues, we can't. We're not the federal government; we don't print money."

UM System President Gary Forsee is calling for state lawmakers and citizens to consider increasing taxes on cigarettes.

Last week, he said increasing that tax could bring in some $700 million in new revenue to the state. Missouri's tax on cigarettes is 17 cents per pack, far below the national average of about $1.50 a pack.

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Don’t stop the presses

Citizen journalism no threat to pros.

By CLYDE H. BENTLEY

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

Newspapers will survive citizen journalism. The greater threat is from the parochial journalistic mindset that columnist Leonard Pitts Jr. displayed in his Oct. 9 dispatch from the Miami Herald.

Pitts declared he does not believe in citizen journalism, then went on to repeat a well-worn list of “abuses” that supposedly prove citizen journalism is an affront to civic decency.

I read the diatribe from the Pulitzer Prize winner with sad dismay. If his criticisms had been directed at an individual, his fear-mongering stereotypes and broad generalities would have raised a journalistic hue and cry. Unfortunately, it is a common rant from old-style journalists.

In 2004, I undertook a study of citizen journalism for the Missouri School of Journalism, a study that led us to found MyMissourian.com. MyMissourian was the second citizen journalism site in the country, coming on the heels of the groundbreaking Northwest Voice in Bakersfield, Calif.

Back then, we didn’t call it “citizen” journalism. It was “open source” journalism, a name that better described the process of allowing anyone to take part in the news collection and dissemination process.

The citizen journalism appellation was pushed on us by the traditional press itself, which almost immediately began to attack its own term. Many journalists saw it as an affront on the citizenship of those who populate the Fourth Estate. It was also seen as an attempt to replace the Watchdogs of Democracy with the Rabble of Wikipedia.

Pitts perpetuates the myth that only my colleagues who share a journalism degree and earn their living from a media organization have the ability to communicate worthwhile information. Among his hackneyed warnings: “Would you trust your health to a citizen doctor just because he produced a syringe?”

No, but I trusted my health to my mother. Mom held no degree at all, but she knew when to put me to bed, when to give me a dose of cough medicine and — important — when to pass me along to an M.D.
That's the problem, Mr. Pitts. Citizen journalists — be they bloggers or contributors to MyMissourian — don't want your job. In fact, very few people want to spend the long hours at boring meetings, suffer low public esteem and get by on the mediocre wages of a "professional" journalist.

But a whole lot of people have something worthwhile to say.

My father was a chief warrant officer in the National Guard. Dad had a simple explanation of his cherished role as a once-a-month "citizen soldier."

"A citizen soldier doesn't want the career, but he wants to serve when needed."

Would you want National Guard "amateur" soldiers defending your country, Mr. Pitts? No, wait. They already have for more than two centuries.

Likewise, "amateur" citizen soldiers have carried the flag of the free press for generations. "Publius" was not only the unpaid author of the Federalist Papers that goaded us into a Revolutionary War, but it was the pseudonym of three anonymous troublemakers who became Founding Fathers.

Then there are the shopkeepers, farmers and other everyday citizens who have always reported the doings of small town America as correspondents or "stringers." Walter Williams, who founded the school I proudly serve and penned the Journalist's Creed that you follow, wrote fondly of these country correspondents who "often worked for stamps, stationery and recognition among their neighbors." That sounds an awful lot like bloggers.

Bloggers, Tweeters and Flickr photographers gave us the first look at the devastation in Haiti, shared the human side of Katrina recovery and provided countless images of every major human event in the past five years. But they also helped us decide what camera to buy, told us how to make perfect pies and let us recognize themselves in their stories of parenthood. Traditional journalists "cover" the story. Citizen journalists "share" pieces of their lives.

Citizen journalists have been known to make grievous errors, violate common ethical standards and lace their work with pointed opinion. But for every sin by the unpaid scribem, I can point to a similar offence in our own profession. Need I mention Jayson Blair at The New York Times or the blogger-broken "Rathergate" at CBS? And, of course, there are the rants of columnists.

We in the traditional press too often forget the democratizing impact of simple blogging technology. It allowed that huge mass of people who had always wanted to write to go around the formidable publishing barriers erected by newspapers and broadcasters. It gave them equal opportunity to share their recipes and children's photos and to promote their political opinions. To blast all who write without the benefit of a journalism degree simply because some strayed from your professional norms is as unfair as damning all Floridians for Miami-Dade County's hanging chads.
Sure, we have to look hard at published information to determine for ourselves what in the resulting great deluge of information is true. But I believe it was the stimulation of the citizenry’s critical thinking that Jefferson sought in his famous defense of newspapers, not the enshrinement of journalists.

Clyde H. Bentley, an associate professor of journalism in print and digital news at MU, teaches a course in citizen journalism.
International Spirit Day coincides with Mizzou Diversity Summit opening

By Jessica Krampe  
October 19, 2010 | 6:37 p.m. CDT  

COLUMBIA — International Spirit Day will be held Wednesday to raise awareness about anti-gay bullying across the country.  

Community members are encouraged to wear purple to remember lives lost because of harassment. The color purple on the rainbow flag represents spirit.  

It is also a day to recognize those who fear expressing themselves and who they are.  

It is a way to help people who may not know how to recognize the problem, said Ryan Black, coordinator of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Resource Center at MU.  

Spirit Day coincides with the second Biannual Mizzou Diversity Summit that also begins Wednesday.  

It was a coincidence, rather than planning, that the two events fell on the same day, said Roger L. Worthington, assistant deputy chancellor and chief diversity officer at MU.  

“When we realized that Spirit Day would take place on Oct. 20, our opening day, we wanted to make sure participants had an opportunity to do both,” Worthington said.  

The summit opens with a town hall meeting at 5 p.m. in Stotler Lounge in Memorial Union. Chancellor Brady Deaton will deliver the state of diversity address, and a panel discussion with questions and answers from the audience will follow. Academic and administrative leaders from across campus will make up the panel.
Created by the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative, the summit is for students, faculty, staff and administrators to get together and engage in dialogue, Worthington said.

To date, 422 participants have registered, including 235 for the town hall.

“It’s really the only time all campus constituents have an opportunity to be in the same room at the same time in dialogue about diversity,” he said.

The summit ends Thursday after a series of workshops and panels. At 4:30 p.m., individuals and groups will be honored with Inclusive Excellence Awards.
Litton foundation gives to MU

By The Associated Press
October 20, 2010 | 7:24 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — A foundation honoring the late Missouri congressman Jerry Litton has created a $250,000 endowment at MU.

Litton and his family were killed in a plane crash on the night he won the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in 1976.

The donation from the family's memorial foundation will finance several endeavors at Litton's alma mater in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

The university says it will include a lecture series, a fellowship for faculty entrepreneurial activities and scholarships for students to develop leadership skills. Funds will also be used for a fellowship to help students gain farm policymaking experience.