Sterk looking to help Mizzou heal

JADE WASHBURN, Associated Press 10:34 p.m. CDT August 11, 2016

COLUMBIA - New athletic director Jim Sterk did not shy away from addressing the social issues that have beset the Missouri campus the last 12 months, saying Thursday that he wants to foster an “inclusive, diverse and successful” environment.

“I have a fresh start,” Sterk said. “We’re not a campus of turmoil. Obviously in every place, there’s issues, but I feel very good about this as a place that I can be a part of. I can help, and we can help grow and heal and move forward, and I’m excited about that.”

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley introduced Sterk and his wife, Debra, to a room of Tiger faithful that included former football coach Gary Pinkel and current coach Barry Odom.

Sterk replaces Mack Rhoades, whose tenure lasted just 15 months. It was marked by campus upheaval that resulted in the removal of the university system president and chancellor following student protests, including a prominent promise of a boycott from members of the football team, a stance Pinkel supported. Rhoades is taking over at Baylor.

In his opening remarks, Sterk called Missouri a “destination” job, stressing a long-term commitment to the program.

“I’m excited to represent the flagship institution of the great state of Missouri,” said Sterk, a 1980 graduate of Western Washington whose wife is a Missouri native. “We don’t jump around. That’s not us. We made this decision to stay here long-term, and so I have no intention of leaving.”

Sterk served as athletic director at Portland State from 1995-2000 and at Washington State from 2000-2010 before stepping into the same position at San Diego State. His official start date is Aug. 22.

Foley led the search for Rhoades’ replacement in conjunction with the Collegiate Sports Associates search firm.
“In thinking about this hire, I looked for people who would tell me that Jim’s reputation was too good to be true, but to honest I couldn’t find them,” Foley said.

“Instead, I’ve heard words like ‘highly seasoned,’ ‘inordinate passion,’ ‘uniquely gifted.’ All the attributes of a prudent athletic and academic leader.”

Sterk is regarded as an exceptional fundraiser, having more than doubled San Diego State’s athletic scholarship fund during his seven-year tenure with the school.

“I’m so excited about what his plans are leadership-wise,” said Odom. “The decisions that we make are going to affect this place for a long time, and I’m glad to have a partnership with him that will work well, and get started.”

Sterk was named 2016 AD of the year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics and holds a seat on the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Committee. However, he revealed Thursday he will have to vacate that seat. Kentucky’s Mitch Barnhart already holds a seat on the committee, and per NCAA rules, only one representative from each conference may occupy a seat on the committee at a time.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

AUGUST 11, 2016 6:44 PM

Jim Sterk felt fate tugged him toward becoming Mizzou’s new athletic director

COLUMBIA - Then-San Diego State athletic director Jim Sterk believes fate intervened, pushing him toward Missouri in recent weeks.

After meetings with the Tigers’ search firm and MU interim chancellor Hank Foley, Sterk told his wife, Debi, he thought it was an opportunity he’d like to pursue.

That’s when the universe stepped in.

“There was divine intervention,” Sterk said Thursday during an introductory press conference at Memorial Stadium’s Columns Club.
When Debi, whose family is from southern Missouri, went for a hike later that afternoon at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve, she crossed paths with a fellow hiker in a Mizzou shirt.

“Then, I’m driving on San Diego State’s campus and there was a Missouri plate right in front of me at the stoplight,” Sterk said with a laugh. “I’m going, ‘OK, I think the Lord is saying I need to go in that direction.’”

By the time Foley called and formally offered Sterk the job as Mizzou’s 17th athletic director, Sterk only needed 15 minutes to decide he was Missouri-bound.

Mizzou’s place as the state’s flagship school coupled with membership in both the Association of American Universities and the Southeastern Conference made it an easy decision, Sterk said.

“It was an opportunity I couldn’t turn down,” he said. “It’s one of four in that category — AAU, flagship and SEC (along with Texas A&M, Florida and Vanderbilt). There’s only four in the country and those don’t come around very often.”

Sterk was particularly impressed with Foley after an interview at the Dallas airport.

He walked out of the meeting and told Collegiate Sports Associates president Todd Turner, who was hired to assist with the search, “I can go to war with that guy.”

Foley, who will be considered for but isn’t a lock to remain as the school’s permanent chancellor, was flattered, but he didn’t want a candidate focused overmuch on the leadership vacuum at Mizzou.

“Even when you’re permanent, you’re interim, because these jobs turnover quickly,” Foley said. “I wanted somebody who wasn’t so concerned about me and had the self-confidence to come here and do the job independent of who was ‘the chancellor.’ I put that right out there, and if people couldn’t jump over that hurdle, then I wasn’t interested in them.”

Prior to his arrival at San Diego State in February 2010, Sterk served as Washington State’s athletic director for 10 years, and he was Portland (Ore.) State’s athletic director for five years before that.

But now, “I’m very honored to be at Mizzou and become a Tiger,” Sterk said. “The University of Missouri is a destination for me and my family.”

Missouri’s budget — the Tigers pulled in more than $91 million in revenue during 2014-15 — dwarfs anywhere else he’s served, but Sterk’s experience trying to squeeze the most from limited resources should help at Mizzou.
The Tigers still rank 11th in revenue among the SEC’s 13 public schools — which, along with Vanderbilt, will receive approximately $40 million each from the conference, according to the figure SEC commissioner Greg Sankey provided Sterk.

Still, Sterk’s philosophy won’t change.

“You’ve got to work smart and work hard at it and then get the right people in place,” Sterk said. “The people make the difference, and that’s what we’ll try to do here.”

Sterk doesn’t plan to bring anyone with him from San Diego State and feels comfortable with Missouri’s entrenched executive assistant athletic directors — including former interim athletic director Sarah Reesman, Bryan Maggard, Tim Hickman and Mary Ann Austin.

“I’m not one for quick change,” Sterk said. “I’ve heard great things about the staff. ... I’m excited to work with them and roll up my sleeves beside them and help continue to move forward.”

Sterk, who was appointed to the NCAA Division I men’s basketball committee in May, hasn’t officially been told that he’ll have to give up that position, but several sources indicated to The Star that he will.

Each conference is permitted one representative and Kentucky athletic director Mitch Barnhart — an Ottawa, Kan., native — also was appointed to the committee in May.

“Mitch isn’t giving up his seat ... but I think it’s also probably a blessing,” Sterk said. “That’s a hard committee. You put in a lot of hours, so I need to dedicate myself to this job. I’m glad from that standpoint, because that would pull at me and it would be difficult to do both.”

Sterk, who was groomed on Duke athletic director Kevin White’s staffs at Maine and Tulane from 1987-95, didn’t indicate if he’ll take part in the decision on softball coach Ehren Earleywine’s future, but he said he thinks it’s close to a resolution.

As for men’s basketball, Sterk pledged to support third-year coach Kim Anderson “in every way I can” and already was set to meet with football coach Barry Odom and senior department staff to discuss the new football facilities project.

“I’m damn excited,” Odom said. “I like his aggressive nature. He’s very matter-of-fact, talking about wanting to win and planning to win a championship. That excites me, and that’s really what I believe in. I look forward to working with him for a long time and getting that done.”

Sterk said he expects to assume his new job full-time Aug. 22, the first day of fall classes at MU. There will not be another interim athletic director appointed during the next two weeks as Sterk shuttles back and forth between Columbia and southern California.
“I want to just dispel the rumor that I’m going to appoint (school mascot) Truman (the Tiger) as the interim athletic director,” Foley joked.

Instead, Sterk intends to hit the ground running. He’s already spoken with several of Mizzou’s major donors by phone and pledged to be a visible leader for Tigers athletics.

“I’m not from Missouri, but I am now,” he said. “I know this is the Show-Me State. I will not tell you something that I don’t believe in. I will try to show you by my actions, my words and my deeds. I’m committed to meeting, listening, collaborating and building relationships with all of you who care so deeply about this program.”

**New AD Sterk eager to move Mizzou forward**

_By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 7 hrs ago_

COLUMBIA, MO. • **If you’re wondering what in God’s name convinced Jim Sterk to leave the sunny beaches of San Diego for the athletics director job at Turbulence U — also known as the University of Missouri — Sterk credited divine intervention.**

_Last week, Mizzou interviewed the San Diego State AD. He was impressed with interim chancellor Hank Foley and his vision for the job. When Sterk returned home to California, his wife Debi went hiking at Torrey Pines Natural Reserve._

“And there’s a guy wearing a Mizzou shirt right in front of her,” he said Thursday. “Then I’m driving on San Diego State’s campus and there’s a guy with a Missouri plate driving right in front of me. I’m going, ‘OK, I think the Lord is saying I need to go that direction.”’

That direction included a seven-year contract and guaranteed salary of $700,000, and once Foley offered the job, Sterk needed only 15 minutes to make a decision. He’ll take office Aug.
22, ending a turnstile of interim ADs who filled the job since Mack Rhoades left for Baylor last month.

“I’m not from Missouri, but I am now,” Sterk told a room full of media, Mizzou coaches, staff and donors at Thursday’s introductory news conference at Memorial Stadium. “I know this is the Show-Me State. I will not tell you something I do not believe in. I will try to show you by my actions, my words and my deeds.”

In Sterk, Mizzou lured an accomplished AD to help stabilize a department that’s been in flux for more than a year and absorbed more turmoil and turnover than most schools experience over a decade. But where others see chaos, Sterk saw opportunity.

Several times Thursday Sterk cited the school’s unique trifecta as a big factor: Mizzou is a member of the powerful and lucrative Southeastern Conference, Mizzou belongs to the prestigious Association of American Universities, and Mizzou is the state’s flagship university.

“Those (offers) don’t come around very often,” he said. “As I dug into it more and more I felt I could help make a difference. I could help move the program forward.”

**MIZZOU CHAT:** [Dave Matter Live at 2 p.m.](#)

Sterk, who grew up on a dairy farm in Washington and has spent most of his professional career on the West Coast, called the Mizzou job a destination — just like Rhoades did when he took the job last year. But Sterk has never been a short-timer. He’s been an AD since 1995, moving only twice, from Portland State to Washington State in 2000 and to San Diego State in 2010.

“I’d love to have a tenure of Mike Alden if you’ll have me,” he said, nodding to the second row at the former Mizzou AD, whose run lasted 17 years. “I’d love to have that opportunity. We don’t jump around. That’s not us. We made this decision to stay here long term. So I have no intention of leaving. You’re stuck with me.”
Karmic T-shirts and license plates don’t fully explain Sterk’s arrival. San Diego State’s athletics budget ranked No. 2 among schools outside the five power conferences, but the disparity in revenue capacity between Mizzou and the Mountain West Conference school is striking. Sterk said SEC commissioner Greg Sankey told him league distribution will approach $40 million per school this year, compared to $3 million per school in the Mountain West last year.

At Washington State in the 2000s, Sterk had the lowest budget in Pac-10, roughly $13 million less than the second-lowest school and $65 million less than the league’s biggest spenders, Southern California and Stanford.

Also, nearly half of San Diego State’s athletics spending last year came from university subsidies, according to USA Today. Mizzou athletics operates with very little university funding — and has turned a profit the last few years.

“Those resources really make a difference,” Sterk said.

Football coach Barry Odom, perhaps Sterk’s most important employee, met his new boss Thursday morning then later in the day to discuss plans for a new football facility that will feature new locker rooms and coaches’ offices.

“We're going to get rolling,” Odom said. “It's exciting for me because there's been a lot of talk about that. Our kids need that.”

Odom watched Sterk’s news conference alongside most of Mizzou’s head coaches. He came away impressed.

“I'm damn excited,” Odom said. “I like his aggressive nature. He's very matter of fact. He talked about wanting to win and planning to win a championship. That excites me. That's what I believe in.”

Sterk addressed a range of topics.
• On the fallout from last year’s football team boycott, Sterk said, “You get a perception of something, especially with the national press, and what I’ve learned is that’s not us. We’re not a campus in turmoil. This is a very great place to go to school, to live in and work in. ... Obviously at every place there’s issues. I think I feel very good that this is a place I can be part of. I can help. We can grow and heal and move forward. I’m excited about that.”

• Sterk expects a resolution on softball coach Ehren Earleywine’s status soon. MU’s Title IX Office found no violations of federal law in the complaints about his coaching style. “I’m very comfortable with the process and the people who looked into it,” Sterk said. “I’m looking forward to moving forward once that decision has been announced.”

• On the state of Mizzou’s men’s basketball program, Sterk said, “The head coach is the head coach and I’ll support (Kim Anderson) any way I can. He stepped into a tough situation where there were some penalties. He’s working through those and expecting to have a better year this year. I hope to help him do that in my little part that I play. I’m going to support the heck out of him in any way I can.”

Here’s the earlier version of this story:

Missouri formally introduced new athletics director Jim Sterk at a news conference Thursday at Memorial Stadium. The former AD at Washington State and most recently San Diego State said he’ll take over at Missouri on Aug. 22, which is the first day of classes for the fall semester.

“I’m not from Missouri, but I am now,” he told a room full of media, Mizzou coaches, staff and donors. “I know this is the Show-Me State. I will not tell you something I do not believe in. I will try to show you by my actions, my words and my deeds.”

Sterk introduced as next Missouri AD

By Daniel Jones

Thursday, August 11, 2016 at 4:05 pm

The video boards on Memorial Stadium’s jumbotron that face Stadium Drive normally project MU’s most prized sponsorships out to the world. Thursday, that video board -- and every other LCD board at Memorial Stadium -- welcomed Jim Sterk to Columbia.

Sterk took the stage as the school’s AD for the first time Thursday at a press conference at Memorial Stadium. He will officially start the job on Aug. 22.

The University of Missouri Board of Curators approved Sterk’s seven-year contract Tuesday.

Thursday’s ceremony was well-attended by both fans and Missouri dignitaries. Present were Curator Jon Sundvold, football Coach Barry Odom, former football Coach Gary Pinkel, Mayor Brian Treece and former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said the search for MU’s next permanent AD started July 13, the day former AD Mack Rhoades announced he was leaving for Baylor.

Foley started by creating a search committee that included former interim AD Sarah Reesman, Curator Phil Snowden and alumni representative Don Walsworth. They hired Todd Turner of Collegiate Sports Associates, who helped Missouri land Kim Anderson, to assist in the search.

Turner made the initial contact with Sterk, who had been the AD at San Diego State since 2010. Sterk, 60, was one of four to win the 2016 Athletic Director of the Year award from the National Association of Collegiate Athletics and oversaw SDSU compile the nation’s fourth-best combined football and men’s basketball winning percentage over the last six years.

“Hands down, there was one candidate who really embodied everything we were looking for in an athletic director,” Foley said of Sterk. “Someone who had a winning record, who has taken good programs to greatness, a person who equally values success in the classroom and mentoring young athletes.”
Raised on a dairy farm in rural Nooksack, Wash., Sterk attended Western Washington University and worked his way up the collegiate athletics ladder through stops at North Carolina, Maine and Tulane. He took his first AD job at Portland State in 1995, then was hired as Washington State's AD in 2000.

At SDSU, he helped raise funds for a new basketball performance building, called the Jeff Jacobs JAM Center, which was completed in 2014. He was also a member of the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Committee.

“In thinking about this hire, I looked for people who would tell me that Jim’s reputation was too good to be true. I really tried,” Foley said. “To be honest, I couldn’t find any. Instead, I heard words like, ‘highly seasoned,’ ‘inordinate passion,’ ‘uniquely gifted.’ All the attributes of a proven athletic and academic leader.”

Without any working experience in or near Missouri, Sterk saw an opportunity at MU that only a handful of institutions provided. He repeatedly called the AD position a destination job.

“The” Southeastern Conference “is one of the top conferences, if not the top conference in the nation,” he said. “Combine that with an” Association of American Universities “institution, the flagship institution — so you have the whole state behind you — it was an opportunity I couldn’t turn down.”

MU is one of only three SEC schools, along with Florida and Texas A&M, that is both an AAU member and a flagship university.

Sterk, who began his address by acknowledging the work done by Alden and Pinkel for Missouri athletics, said he doesn’t like to bounce around and would like to have an Alden-like tenure. Alden held the AD job from 1998-2015.

“I believe him 100 percent, or I wouldn’t have hired him,” Foley said. “It’s that important to me. That was the most important to me. You’ve got all these boxes checked, but I need somebody that’s going to come here and stay here. He convinced me he would.”

Sterk said he was impressed with the search committee and Foley in particular.

“When I finished” talking with Foley, Sterk said, “I walked out and told Todd Turner, ‘I could go to war with that guy.’ ”

Even as the controversies surrounding the football team’s boycott and NCAA investigation into the men’s basketball team have died down, Sterk will enter his term at Missouri with a number of pressing issues plaguing the athletic department. Ehren Earleywine’s status as softball coach remains in question while a new softball stadium rises in the Hearnes Center parking lot. Plans for new football and baseball facilities were outlined, then put on hold after Rhoades’ departure.
Sterk said he was taking a facilities tour Thursday after the press conference. He said he wanted to get Odom’s input on any decisions regarding football facilities before making any new decisions.

According to former colleague Bob Moosbrugger, now the AD at Bowling Green, Sterk’s acclimation process at SDSU was quicker than many expected.

“Jim was the fourth athletic director in my time” at SDSU. “In between those four athletic directors we had three interim athletic directors,” Moosbrugger said. “When he came on, the donors felt, ‘Here we go again. We have to train another athletic director.’ What they saw in Jim was how genuine he was. He’s a great listener and he built trust with those donors, that what he was telling them was factual.”

Sterk will be managing a budget at Missouri much larger than he is used to. The revenue sharing the Mountain West Conference, of which SDSU is a member, was $3 million per school. Missouri received $31.5 million from the SEC for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

Still, the $91 million in revenue Missouri generated in 2014-15 ranked 12th in the SEC according to the USA Today’s database. Sterk, though, has experience competing with perennial powers in a Power 5 conference.

“At Washington State, I think we were $13 million below the next lowest” Pac-10 school in terms of revenue, Sterk said. “We were $60 million, at the time, below the highest,” Southern Cal “and Stanford. You’ve got to work smart and work hard at it, then get the right people in place.”

Though Sterk may lack Midwest ties, his wife, Debi, has family in southern Missouri. Sterk quickly picked up on the state motto.

“I’m not from Missouri, but I am now,” Sterk said. “I know this is the Show-Me State. I will not tell you something that I don’t believe in. I will try to show you by my actions, my words and my deeds.”

New AD is first step toward stability

By Joe Walljasper

Thursday, August 11, 2016 at 6:03 pm
Jim Sterk described his last six years at San Diego State as a vacation. His basketball team made six straight NCAA Tournaments, his football team qualified for five straight bowl games and his backyard had palm trees.

**At Missouri, the football and basketball teams are coming off losing seasons, last year’s racial unrest on campus is still a fresh wound and the highest-ranking university officials are temps.** If MU’s new athletic director needed a reminder that this isn’t paradise, he was greeted with a blast-furnace dose of soggy heat on his way to his introductory press conference at Memorial Stadium.

Is this hell? No, it’s Missouri, but at the moment we understand the confusion.

Given the aforementioned issues — most notably the word “interim” attached to the title of everyone who has a good parking spot — it appears Hank Foley, Missouri’s interim chancellor, delivered an extra-base hit on an 0-2 count with the hiring of Sterk. With a history of sticking with jobs for at least five years, Sterk brings some desperately needed stability to the university in general and the athletic department specifically.

He is not from the car salesman branch of the AD tree. Foley described Sterk’s best traits as “sincerity, humility.” Former Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden, who knows Sterk, included the adjectives “consistent” and “disciplined” and said the new guy is highly regarded nationally among athletic administrators.

Considering the events of the last year at Missouri, “consistent” sounds way sexier than before. When asked about how he convinced candidates that the situation at Missouri isn’t as chaotic as it seems, Foley said he didn’t do much convincing.

“I wanted somebody that wasn’t so concerned about me and have the self-confidence to come here and do the job independent of who was, quote-unquote, the chancellor,” Foley said. “I put that right out there. And if people couldn’t jump over that hurdle, then I wasn’t interested.”

The approach worked with Sterk, who said after meeting with Foley, “I could go to war with that guy.”

For all the issues at MU in the last year, it is still in a Power 5 conference, and thus attractive to most ADs based on salary alone, so this move made sense for Sterk, too. His pay more than doubled to a guaranteed $700,000. Missouri’s budget is almost twice the size of what he had at SDSU. After years of angling San Diego State for a spot in a power conference, he can watch realignment as a neutral observer with Missouri secure in the Southeastern Conference.

Sterk was previously in charge of a power-conference school, Washington State, but he left willingly for San Diego State in 2010. He made the move, at least partially, because of friction with his boss, the late Elson Floyd, who also clashed with Alden at Missouri. If Sterk’s new full-time bosses turn out to be antagonistic, at age 60 he can ride it out until retirement.
The abbreviated tenure of Mack Rhoades and his string of interim successors highlighted Missouri’s desire to find an AD who will stay awhile. The current definition of “awhile,” as it pertains to athletic directors, is about two weeks.

The most obvious way to ensure loyalty is to hire someone with local ties. Foley certainly had that option, with nontraditional candidates, such as former-Tigers-turned-entrepreneurs Jon Sundvold and Mike Owens, or one of the Alden’s numerous protegés. It doesn’t appear that Foley seriously considered those options. Sterk’s only ties to Missouri are his father-in-law and his belief that a clipping penalty was overlooked as T.J. Moe scored his legendary game-winning touchdown in the Tigers’ victory over San Diego State in 2010.

The other way to find a keeper is to hire a sexagenerian. Sterk called this a destination job, which is what every athletic director, including Rhoades, has said before him. Sterk probably won’t live up to his joking declaration that he’ll equal Alden’s tenure of 17 years, but this very well could be his last stop, whether he likes it or not, as he is nearing the expiration date for attractive AD candidates.

There is at least one important long-term decision he’ll have to tackle early. The massive new athletic facility plan, which started under Alden as a football-centric structure attached to Memorial Stadium and changed under Rhoades into an all-sports project surrounding the current Mizzou Athletics Training Complex, needs to get off the drawing board. That project was a casualty of last year’s attention-sapping crises. Sterk and football Coach Barry Odom were scheduled to discuss the facility Thursday afternoon.

Some of the debris from last year’s unnatural disasters should be cleaned up by the time Sterk starts on Aug. 22. Missouri’s interminable investigation of its softball program is almost done, with all signs pointing to Coach Ehren Earleywine’s return with some behavioral restrictions. The “Mizzou Made” program, created in response to the football team’s November boycott, is staffed and ready to help athletes have a better experience at MU and a better connection with their coaches and administrators. Heck, the basketball team just won two games, even if they were exhibitions in Italy, so maybe this truly is a fresh start.

Nobody can promise winning seasons or palm trees or August heat indexes under 100. It won’t be a vacation. But if he sticks around, Sterk will find that Missouri can be a hell of a place.
MISSOURIAN

Missouri introduces new athletics director Jim Sterk

BROOKS HOLTON AND COLTON POUNCY, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — A month's worth of uncertainty surrounding the Missouri athletics department turned into celebration Thursday.

Golden Girls lined the entrance to Columns Club at Memorial Stadium. Truman the Tiger danced around in the highest of spirits. Former athletics director Mike Alden and football coach Gary Pinkel watched in approval. Black and gold was everywhere.

After a five-minute warning before a news conference to introduce athletics director Jim Sterk, excitement quickly turned to intrigue and anticipation for a new era for Missouri athletics.

Sterk isn't a true son of Missouri, but when he entered the Columns Club to "Every True Son" and a standing ovation from those in attendance, the Bellingham, Washington, native and son of a dairy farmer said it felt like home.

"It's a new day. It's a new year at Mizzou Athletics," Sterk said. "I'm not from Missouri. I am now."

What he heard about the football team's boycott last fall and the student protests on campus, he said he learned through national news. For a first-hand look, he was to tour the facilities Thursday afternoon and would be briefed on building construction. Also penciled into his agenda was a meeting with head football coach Barry Odom, who was also in attendance.

Sterk hoped that a busy Thursday was just the beginning of a long tenure in Columbia. He said his first day in office will be Aug. 22.
"I would love to have a tenure of Mike Alden, if you'll have me," Sterk said. "We don't jump around. That's not us. We made this decision to stay here long term, so I have no intention of leaving. You're stuck with me."

The crowd laughed, but after former athletics director Mack Rhoades left for a similar job at Baylor University after just 14 months on the job, longevity was something on the mind of Interim Chancellor Hank Foley and the five-member advisory committee when it set out on a search for the new hire.

Foley, who also served a brief tenure as interim athletics director when then-interim athletic director Wren Baker left for North Texas, said he started the search process for a new athletics director the day after Rhoades told him he would leave MU for the job at Baylor. The interim chancellor was beaming with confidence as he took the podium with the new hire Thursday, with banners of Missouri’s core principles — excellence, respect, discovery and responsibility — hanging in the background.

Foley said he worked closely with Todd Turner, founder of the executive search and consulting firm College Sports Associates, in the search process. Turner also helped MU lock down Kim Anderson as the head coach of the Missouri basketball team. When interviewing candidates for the athletics director job, Foley said he was up front with the "interim" tag floating around Columbia recently.

"Even when you're permanent, you're interim," Foley said. "These jobs turn over quickly, let's be honest. ... I wanted somebody ... who had the self confidence to come here and do the job independent of who was the chancellor. And I put that right out there, and if people couldn't jump over that hurdle, then I wasn't interested in them."

Foley did not disclose any names of other candidates, but called the caliber of the candidate pool "impressive."

According to a report from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, other candidates considered for the job were Derrick Gragg from Tulsa, Jeff Compher from East Carolina and Rick Hart from Southern Methodist University.
Sterk, 60, was named 2016 National Athletics Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. In May, he was also named to the NCAA's Division I Men's Basketball Committee, although his status on the committee is uncertain because committee rules prohibit more than one person representing the same conference serving at the same time. The University of Kentucky's athletics director, Mitch Barnhart, also was appointed to the committee in May.

Sterk didn't seem concerned by the possibility of giving up his position on the committee, citing the need to dedicate himself to the new job in Columbia over getting involved in a committee that requires a large time commitment from its members.

Sterk said he was more interested in putting together what he called "captain's committees" at Missouri. The committees will consist of a handful of members from each athletics team who will hold monthly meetings with the new athletics director, whether in his office or over karaoke at his house.

Sterk, a good singer according to those who knew him during his undergraduate days at Western Washington University, would not disclose his karaoke song of choice Thursday but preached the importance of connecting with student athletes.

"I think that Mizzou Made program is really important," Sterk said. "Staying connected with student-athletes and listening and being close to them so that they feel comfortable talking to coaches and talking to the athletic director and the staff that we have — I think some of the things have already been done, and we're going to just continue to build on that."

Sterk received a seven-year contract with a guaranteed annual base salary of $500,000 and an annual non-salary compensation of $200,000.

The contract also includes an incentive benefit of up to $150,000 a year "for achieving benchmarks in academic/social achievement, athletic performance and financial performance including revenue generation and development," according to the offer letter from Foley.

Sterk will also get an additional $150,000 in deferred salary if he completes the contract. The contract was approved at a UM System Board of Curators meeting Tuesday.
Sterk's base salary at San Diego State was $315,000 last year, according to the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Sterk has served as an athletics director since starting his career at Portland State University in 1995. Prior to his tenure at San Diego State, he was the athletics director at Washington State from 2000 to 2010.

Joining Sterk in Columbia is his wife, Debra, and three daughters, Ashley, Amy and Abby.

Mizzou Welcomes Jim Sterk as New Athletic Director

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=85803d0b-c9bc-41b6-ad1b-c200d5a05967

Mizzou Welcomes Jim Sterk as New Athletic Director

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=517409ba-8a70-4ab4-b043-eb9a6d126bab
Mizzou Welcomes Jim Sterk as New Athletic Director


Mizzou Welcomes Jim Sterk as New Athletic Director

Mizzou Welcomes Jim Sterk as New Athletic Director

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=ff333de4-a2cc-4698-9892-627d8a8252ef

Mizzou Welcomes Jim Sterk as New Athletic Director

Mizzou's new athletic director, Jim Sterk, talks about his plans, goals

COLUMBIA - **New Mizzou Athletic Director Jim Sterk said Thursday he will focus on students' academic, athletic and personal development and will work to ensure the university can "compete for championships on a high level."**

"We'll reach new heights of success," he said.

Speaking to the media, Sterk said he is proud to be working for the flagship university of Missouri.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley introduced Sterk, saying it is a new day and a new year for the athletic department. When asked how he convinced Sterk to come to a school recovering from turmoil with temporary leadership in place, Foley said he "expressed pride in the people and the school."

Foley said he wanted someone "who wasn’t so concerned about me," but had the confidence to come here and make a difference.

Sterk said he isn't worried about what's happened in the recent past.

“I have a fresh start,” he said.

Sterk said his talks with Foley made him think “I can go to war with that guy.”

He and his family have made a decision to stay at the university for a long time.

“This is a destination spot. I would love to have the tenure of Mike Alden,” he said.

Sterk most recently served as athletic director at San Diego State University. He was the athletic director at Washington State University from 2000-2010 and Portland State University from 1995-2000.
He was named the NACDA athletic director of the year in 2015-2016, and is currently a member of the NCAA Division I men's basketball committee.

Sterk said he will really dive into the work at Mizzou on Aug. 22.

New Mizzou AD could repair alumni relationship

Jim Sterk takes over after six years at San Diego State University

COLUMBIA, Mo. - As Jim Sterk takes over as athletic director for Mizzou, one person he'll likely be keeping in touch with is Alumni Association Executive Director Todd McCubbin.

McCubbin essentially called athletics the "front porch" to a university. Winning programs bring national attention, likely bringing in larger alumni donations, building a better overall university.

Sterk is taking over the Mizzou AD position after Mack Rhoades left after less than a year and a half for Baylor University. Part of Roades' tenure included protests on campus that spurred national attention and a fraction of the football team threatening to sit out because of perceived issues in campus administration.

Sterk does not have previous Missouri ties but insists he and his family are in it for the long haul.

"The University of Missouri is a destination for me and my family," Sterk said.

Part of his job as AD will include attempting to mend fractured relationships with alumni. McCubbin said he thinks alumni were concerned with what was going on on campus last fall.

"They were a little worried about what they saw happening on their television screens or newspapers."

Attendance for Mizzou football's last home game of the season was one of the lowest for a conference game since joining the SEC. The game against Tennessee was also Coach Gary Pinkel's last game leading the team. The Tigers lost the game with a score of 8-19.
"I think our record last year had a little bit to do with some of those folks who didn't come. Or at least that's my interpretation of it," McCubbin said.

At Thursday's press conference, Sterk seemed ready for the challenge.

"It is a new year, its a new day, and I have a fresh start."

"I think it is really going to help us get back into a fall, a regular rhythm. You get started again with a football season, new students on campus," McCubbin added.

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**Missouri introduces new AD Jim Sterk**

COLUMBIA — *After going through three interim athletic directors, Missouri finally has its man.*

Jim Sterk was officially introduced at a press conference Thursday morning at the Columns Club. He'll officially start his duties as Missouri's athletic director on August 22.

"I'm very honored to be at Mizzou and become a Tiger," Sterk said. "The University of Missouri is a destination for me and my family."

Sterk comes from San Diego State, where he had been athletic director since 2010. He was named 2016 Athletic Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Athletics.

Sterk replaces Mack Rhoades, who left Mizzou in July after just 14 months on the job. Interim AD Wren Baker lasted 14 days before going to North Texas. Interim Chancellor Hank Foley and Sarah Reesman also held the interim AD title.

"I feel like I can have a positive impact here," Sterk said. "I think it would be a heck of a lot of fun to help the alums and friends of the University really enjoy what's going on at Mizzou. I look forward to that."
Jim Sterk officially introduced as Missouri’s new athletics director

The day after Jim Sterk, 60, interviewed with interim Chancellor Hank Foley for the Missouri athletics director position, his wife, Debra, saw a man with a Mizzou shirt while hiking Torrey Pines in San Diego.

Sterk admitted it was strange, yes, but it wasn’t until later that day while driving on San Diego State’s campus and seeing a Missouri license plate that the former SDSU athletics director thought it was “divine intervention.”

“I’m going, ‘OK, I think the Lord is saying I need to go in that direction,’ so when the opportunity came, we were ready to take it,” Sterk said.

It’s been three weeks since Mack Rhoades left Missouri for Baylor, and those three weeks have featured three interim athletic directors: Wren Baker, Sarah Reesman and Foley himself. But when Sterk was approved by the Board of Curators on Tuesday, Missouri had its man.

As he took the podium Thursday for his introductory press conference at the Columns Club in front of a large contingent of the Missouri faithful that included Norm Stewart, Gary Pinkel, Mike Alden and even, yes, Truman the Tiger, Sterk spoke about what drew him to this institution and this college town in the middle of Missouri from what he said was “like a vacation every day” in San Diego.

Sterk pointed to the fact that Missouri is in the Southeastern Conference, something he called “one of, if not the best, conference in America.” Sterk pointed to the fact Missouri is in the Association of American Universities, “meaning it’s committed to academic excellence.” And although he said he definitely will go back to San Diego for vacation, he said he and his family “are really excited to be back in a college town,” and that the decision didn’t take long.

“It maybe took 15 minutes,” Sterk said. “Chancellor Foley did a great job and when I finished with him, I told Todd Turner, ‘I could go to war with that guy.’”

Turner was part of the search as head of Collegiate Sports Associates, the search firm hired to conduct a confidential search. Although Turner did know Sterk from his own time as an athletics director at Washington — while Sterk was at Washington State from 2000–2010 — Foley said he did “some Googling” and researching himself in making this hire.

Although Foley said he interviewed a number of great candidates, Sterk had an element of “sincerity and humility.”
“He’s a down-to-earth guy, and I found him really easy to talk with,” Foley said. “He really understood the student-athlete experience. He’s done a great job with coaches, he had it all. He was seasoned. He’s not a young guy, and I wanted that.”

Of all things mentioned on Thursday, Sterk’s desire to get to know and assist student-athletes was a clear priority.

At San Diego State, Sterk said he met with captains on teams three or four times a year and did “some social things,” including karaoke at his house. In response to questions about how he’d handle a situation like last November, when the football team elected to boycott football activities in support of Jonathan Butler’s hunger strike, Sterk pointed to this connection and spoke of being preventative.

Hearing comments like those, football coach Barry Odom said he is “damn excited.”

“I’m anxious,” Odom said. “For us, the decisions we make are going to affect this place for a long time. I’m glad to have a partnership with him and to get started, and I heard him say the word championship, and I’m good with that.”

Odom said Foley kept in contact with him throughout the search process and that he sat down with Sterk on Thursday morning for their first in-person conversation. They talked about the connection Sterk wants to have with student-athletes and topics such as facility upgrades.

Although Sterk was slated to officially take over Sept. 1, Sterk said his first day will be Aug. 22, and that his job will begin with ironing out priorities and areas of focus.

Again and again, Sterk said this was a “destination job,” and that he would love to have a similar tenure as Mike Alden, which would put him around the age of 76 by retirement.

Is he up for that?

“My dad is 91, and the last three years, he’s been driving a harvest truck for potatoes,” Sterk said. “So I think I have some pretty good genes and I have a lot of energy.”
Study: Lesbian, bisexual women developing healthier lives

By HUONG TRUONG Columbia Missourian

Generated from School of Medicine release: “New Initiative Improves Health Behaviors of Lesbian, Bisexual Women”

COLUMBIA, Mo. About five days a week at 5:30 a.m., Hudson Lavender meets a friend in front of her home for an hour-long walk on the MKT Trail. At 52, Lavender, an independent living specialist for low-income seniors, made a goal to stay active for her health, especially after having both of her knees replaced in August 2013.

After recovering from the surgery, another friend introduced her to a health study program, Living Out, Living Actively, known as LOLA. Led by Jane McElroy, a University of Missouri epidemiologist and associate professor, the program was a part of the first national study on healthy weight for lesbian and bisexual women. Lavender found that LOLA not only helped her stay mobile after recovery but encouraged her to live a healthier life.

The Columbia Missourian (http://bit.ly/2bgF47q ) reports that the national study was prompted by 2007 data from the National Center for Health Statistics in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that showed more than 60 percent of adult women in the U.S. are overweight and a little over one-third are obese.

Researchers also drew from the annual National Health Interview Survey, which included sexual orientation for the first time in 2013. Conclusions of that survey showed 37 percent of gay or lesbian women and 41 percent of bisexual women were obese. Compared to 28 percent of obese heterosexual women, obese lesbian and bisexual women are more at risk to developing chronic illnesses, including diabetes, cervical cancer and high cholesterol.
In 2013, McElroy began a study on preventing weight-related chronic illnesses in lesbian and bisexual, or LB, women. Instead of focusing on weight loss, McElroy's research study created programs to foster healthier lifestyle behaviors. The study emphasized the importance of being at a healthy weight, meaning a body size that is physically and mentally healthy. A key idea was to go beyond stepping on a scale to measure health.

Setting the burden of weight loss aside is crucial for the LB community, McElroy said, because there's a sense that assessing weight by the numbers is not important. That concept and the ideas that arose from the study have helped empower women such as Lavender to embrace beneficial life changes.

In 2011, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academics published "The Health of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People: Building a Foundation for Better Understanding." The report highlighted obesity and weight associated with chronic illnesses specifically for the lesbian community. McElroy said President Barack Obama's administration supported research addressing health and other issues in the LGBTQ community; that spurred the Office of Women's Health to engage researchers to study weight-related issues in LB women ages 40 and older.

Teams of researchers from across the nation in Missouri, California, New York and Washington, D.C., developed the study and health programs. Each group and their participants spent 12 or 16 weeks working through programs that focused on health behavior. The overall study had 266 LB women, including 46 women from Columbia and 53 from St. Louis.

Each location had a slightly different program. However, every program had weekly support group meetings, nutritional aspects and some level of physical activity.

Participants in Columbia and St. Louis were introduced to the LOLA program. They were placed in randomized controlled groups: counting steps with a Fitbit pedometer, a one-year gym membership with personal trainer sessions at Optimus Fitness or health education with speakers.

Lavender was placed in the pedometer group, measuring her steps every day with two goals in mind: to increase physical activity and to eat healthier.

"I love measuring what I do. It's exciting," Lavender said. "I look at the numbers and think that, yes, I can do more."

For 16 weeks, each LOLA participant focused on specific aspects of their health, such as less consumption of sweetened beverages and alcohol, increase in vegetable consumption and more minutes of physical activity.

"We think this level of autonomy the participants had was really important toward success," McElroy said. "Ninety-five percent achieved at least one goal, but we had a fair number who achieved more than two."
In the beginning of the study, about two-thirds of the participants were inactive. By setting goals, half of the LB women achieved a 20 percent increase in physical activity than when they began. The day-to-day changes some participants made could be as small as consciously making the decision to park farther away from an entrance when going to the market or taking a stroll after dinner. In the long run, the modest changes had more impact on participants’ lives, especially when there was no pressure to lower the number on the scale.

The reasoning behind the focus on behavior, rather than weight, stemmed from the cultural view of the LB community having a different attitude toward weight.

"There's a cultural acceptance of larger body sizes in the LB community," McElroy said. "And with that acceptance comes better body image and self-esteem."

Mickey Eliason, a professor of health education at San Francisco State University, was a part of the research team on the West Coast. Eliason said researchers had taken into consideration the different experiences that LB women had with weight, such as the different types of stress causing weight gain.

For LB women, especially women of color or with disabilities, there is a higher chance of stress being a factor in weight gain. Eliason said ageism, sexism, homophobia and racism could cause stress in women that correlates with gaining weight. Also, their sense of body positivity is another reason women in the LB community are more welcoming to bigger body sizes, Eliason said.

There is also the idea that LB women tend to be politically conscious of their body image. Eliason said they are more politically aware of society's and the media's roles in creating an ideal body size and shape for women. Those body size and shape ideals are set to attract heterosexual men, Eliason said — standards LB women tend to not find relevant.

"Many LB women figure out what their natural body type is," Eliason said. "They let themselves be happy and embrace themselves accepting it."

Although this does not apply to the entire community, Eliason said that LB women tend to not emphasize weight when looking for a partner. For the LB community, their open mindset embraced the concept of being heavy and healthy.

"The biggest feature (of the study) is no pressure of weight loss," Lavender said. "It isn't about who can lose the most weight but how we can increase our fitness."

Being in a group of women with similar backgrounds as herself made Lavender more eager to meet her healthy weight goals. She said people in an already marginalized community tend to have certain values that deviate from mainstream values, such as body image.

As for her own weight, Lavender said weight is not the primary issue — it's moving comfortably in her body that matters most.
By concentrating on health behaviors, participants acknowledged the health elements that they couldn't control and those they could.

"Women recognize the factors that are beyond their control and that empowers them to become healthier by making the changes they can make," Eliason said.

For younger generations, McElroy said that mentorship and looking toward the older generation to lead the way can reshape how the LB community views health.

McElroy's research study opened a new door for further prevention and research. Eliason said that most concepts of the study can be applied to persons of any age. The different approach of not focusing on weight loss might encourage women of all backgrounds to find ways to reach their health goals.

"Understand that weight, getting on the scale as a measure of health, may be less optimal than figuring out what size you can be healthy at," McElroy said. "We have participants as old as 69 years old in the study. And one of our older participants said it doesn't really matter what age you are, you can make a change to become healthier. It transcends age."

Since finishing LOLA, Lavender continued to incorporate more physical activity into her life. Lavender and her wife, Jane Lavender, bike downtown to grab dinner and drinks when the weather is nice. They have also completed a couple of 5K events. Hudson Lavender said healthy eating comes and goes because that is a truth of life. However, the experience with LOLA has taught her to be more patient with herself and her health.

Difficult work for change continues post-Ferguson

Lawrence Bryant

The fatal police shooting on August 9, 2014 of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old, led to local outrage and protests that spread nationwide. These protests against police misconduct and criminal justice system practices have morphed into an historic social movement. This movement, Black Lives Matter, is driven by a new generation of activists in a digital age, who are determined to confront systemic racism, police brutality and the unwarranted protection of police officers who have acted outside the law.
Many police departments, prodded by a vigorous debate about the relationship between law enforcement and African Americans that included some government officials, have sought to institute major reforms in police practices, including greater accountability for police behavior. There has been a vastly different response in Missouri. Major sustainable police reform is necessary to keep police officers as well as the community safe. Yet, the state legislature has been unwilling to enact even basic police reform. **The recent highly contested GOP gubernatorial primary found all four of the candidates determined to see who could be more harsh if there were further eruptions in Ferguson or student protests at the University of Missouri-Columbia. The university’s history of negligent to poor treatment of black students served as a further impetus for the student protests (including many athletes) that led to the resignation of the president of the entire system and the Mizzou chancellor. Subsequently, the football coach at Mizzou resigned.**

This movement highlights a racial divide in a country that has not yet come to full acknowledgment of the intentional and pernicious racist treatment African Americans have experienced since they were brought to this country in bondage. The country began as a slave society and even today, despite some improvement, millions of African Americans languish on the margins of society. Black Lives Matter is a response to the practices that question the human worth of African Americans. There has been some remarkable progress, but the current presidential campaign of Donald J. Trump shows the hate, anger and resentment that still exists among millions of white Americans.

While it is certain that what happened in Ferguson is not unique in poorer communities across this country, it is uncertain how this region will respond. There has been some commendable work done by the Ferguson Commission in examining the specific causes around the disruptions and the conditions that led to them. The implementation of 189 recommendations is being fostered by Forward Through Ferguson. Several civic and business entities have been active already and there have been some significant improvements.

Also, it is encouraging that many activists and their supporters have turned some of their attention and energy to a more robust engagement in elective politics, where public policy is shaped.
Problems around racial equity are deeply entrenched and solutions will not happen overnight or by chance. As the difficult work for change continues, much of this work is painful, but vital and its success is important to an entire region that needs to see change. It is necessary to allow thousands of its people to have greater opportunity for productive, healthy lives. We have some guarded optimism, largely because it is in the self-interest of the majority population and its leadership to see growth and competitiveness that can come from more inclusion of its fellow citizens.

MISSOURIAN

More than a year later, Museum of Art and Archaeology still adjusting at Mizzou North

M.P. WHITE, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — A hushed, reflective atmosphere envelops the small exhibition gallery at the Museum of Art and Archaeology at Mizzou North. The silence is amplified by the echoing hallways along the sides of the gallery. It's still easy to envision the space as the hospital it used to be.

For decades, the museum was in the red-brick Pickard Hall on Frances Quadrangle at MU. In the fall of 2013, it was relocated to Mizzou North — about two miles north at Business Loop 70 East and North Garth Avenue — due to concerns of radiation lingering in Pickard from when it was used for radium research.

The move and renovations took over a year and a half to complete, and while parts of the museum were open to the public in 2014, the full renovation was not done until April 2015.

The museum is expected to stay off campus for the foreseeable future, Alex Barker, director of the museum, said.

After two years and $1.5 million in renovations, the museum and Mizzou North are still not an ideal fit.
"It's how we frame it — whether we look at what's missing or whether we look at what we have," Arthur Mehroff, the museum's academic coordinator, said.

**An academic impact**

Because of the new location in the former Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, the museum's accessibility to students and visitors has changed.

When it was on campus, nearby K-12 schools could easily schedule visits during the day. Since the move, school trips have become harder to organize. Students from Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School used to walk to Pickard Hall, Barker said.

The museum has also experienced a 75 percent decline in the number of college-age visitors, Barker said. While on campus, students could drop by during the day and professors could schedule museum visits.

"It had some very unfortunate consequences," Barker said. "As a teaching and research museum, part of our role is not simply to exhibit art but also to make that art available for our study and our research functions for students. It's central to our mission as an academic museum, and (the move) has affected us significantly."

As a part of its mission, the museum allowed archaeology graduate students to work with their objects, which helped the students hone their skills and helped the museum learn more about the objects. The museum shared its old home in Pickard with the Department of Art History and Archaeology, so art and artifacts were easily available for study. The department moved to Swallow Hall, which has been renovated and will be completely open this fall.

"Now, they largely work with images and don't regularly come and visit the objects," Barker said. "They have much less real-world work experience."

Lorinda Bradley, a graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Art History and Archaeology, worked as the co-president for the Museum Advisory Council of Students over the past year. The organization works with the museum to raise student awareness of the resources it provides and the ways it can serve campus by being an academic resource.
Bradley, who came to MU as a master’s student in 2012, said the move from Pickard has affected council members and other students who regularly visit the museum.


Missouri astronomer: annual meteor shower will be much stronger show

AUGUST 11, 2016 BY ALISA NELSON

Missourians can see an outburst of shooting stars in the sky Thursday night and Friday night. University of Missouri astronomer Dr. Angela Speck says the annual meteor shower – known as Perseids – will be most active from midnight to dawn.

“Because of where Jupiter is with respect to the path of this dust, it’s been pulled so that it’s in a slightly different place. We’re passing through the middle of it, so we get a much stronger show,” says Speck. “More little rocks are going to come and hit the atmosphere, so we will see more shooting stars. That’s what makes the Perseids this year so much more spectacular than they have been before.”

Speck recommends finding a dark place where there are no city lights.

“I think often people get this idea that it’s like a firework and you get hundreds all at once. It’s never like that,” says Speck. “Normally, if you’re getting as many as one a minute, you’re doing well. I think for this one we are expecting more like two a minute.”

Speck says a telescope or binoculars won’t be necessary.
If you've got something that's fairly stationary that you just want to look at fairly closely, then binoculars or a telescope are great, but it's actually very hard to track because you're trying to watch something that's moving very fast and you don't know exactly where it's going to be," says Speck.

Speck says the meteors are just in the atmosphere and won't hit the ground. The particles would be comparable in size to a grain of sand. Speck says that's not likely to cause significant damage if they were to hit the ground.

MU astronomer anticipates economic impact of 2017 eclipse

COLUMBIA - In about a year, on August 21, 2017 a total solar eclipse will be viewable across much of the United States.

Columbia is right in the middle of the path making it the first total solar eclipse since 1442 in the area. The last solar eclipse in the U.S. was in 1991 in Hawaii. The last eclipse in Missouri was in 1839, but it did not go over Columbia or St. Louis.

How this could help tourism in Columbia

Angela Speck, director of astronomy and professor of astrophysics at the University of Missouri said she believes it will bring a lot of tourists to the area.

"One of the things I don't think people realize is how big of a deal this is going to be," Speck said. "There is a big tourism industry around it and then as it gets close to the time there will be so many people that will say, 'that's close by, let's go see it.'"

Speck said the numbers of visitors coming to the area will be a huge boost to the economy.
"My prediction is actually that we will have 400,000 visitors. This is based on a number of different things. But if we think about how many people come to town for True/False, for Homecoming, for football games, for Roots N Blues N BBQ and all of that. Then think about the rarity of the event and people's mobility, I think we will actually be struggling to house everybody," Speck said.

She said people don't have to be very organized to go because the majority of the population is close to the path.

"To give you an idea of the numbers, there are 12 million people that live on the path of eclipse from Oregon to South Carolina. But there are 88 million people that live within two hundred miles, and 350 million people, the entire population, within a long days drive," Speck said.

Speck said she is expecting that people will try to make last minute plans to come to Missouri or other places on the path to see the eclipse.

"Part of the preparation is to get hotels ready, thinking about other alternative accommodations, having emergency services ready because there will be traffic. It's in the middle of August so there will also be issues of heat stroke probably standing out in the middle of the day," Speck said, "So we have to get all the towns on the path ready for that"

Beth Mead, sales manager at Columbia Convention and visitors bureau said it's too soon to comment on the economic impact of the eclipse, but she said there is a planning crew in place to start thinking about events for the eclipse.

What a solar eclipse is

"A solar eclipse happens when the moon moves between earth and the sun," Speck said.

"If you wear the right glasses you see what looks like the moon taking a bite out of the sun, until the moon is in front of the sun," Speck said.

Speck said the eclipse starts around midday and goes till about 2 p.m., taking about two hours total.

The dangers of the eclipse

"Most people know you shouldn't look at the sun, it hurts even with sun glasses on. So during the partial phase, that is before the moon gets directly in between, you need special glasses," Speck said.

Glasses will be sold at the Mizzou bookstore that have a special film in the glasses that is so thick you can only see the sun.

Speck said once it gets to the full phase the glasses will no longer work and you can look at the eclipse with the naked eye.
MU Health Care provides resources in fight against Zika virus

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri physicians and researchers are working to provide the public with information on how to stop the spread of the Zika Virus.

MU Health Care is providing the following resources:

- An MU Health website with common questions and answers, as well as informational videos and updated guidelines related to Zika
- An informational phone line and email address dedicated to addressing public concerns about the virus at: (573) 771-9452 and zika@health.missouri.edu

Dr. Christelle Ilboudo said the impact of Zika is not the same as other infectious diseases. The main concern with Zika is the virus’ link to birth defects, such as microcephaly, she said.

“The most typical symptoms of the virus are mild and last only a few days to a week,” Ilboudo said. “However, we believe that the virus can stay in the body for up to two weeks and, once infected, an individual develops a level of immunity to future infections."

Zika is transmitted primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species of mosquito. The Aedes mosquito is found in Missouri and is typically an aggressive daytime feeder.

Ilboudo offered the following suggestions for reducing the risk of being bitten by a mosquito:

- Use insect repellent that contains DEET.
- Wear light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and long pants when outdoors.
- Stay indoors when possible, preferably in spaces with either air conditioning or windows and doors with screens.
- Remove standing water around your home.
Alexander Franz, an assistant professor of veterinary pathobiology at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, along with his team of researchers, are working on genetically manipulating mosquitoes so they can not transmit viruses to humans.

“While my team is focused on mosquitoes, other researchers are focused on creating vaccines and therapies for the people infected,” Franz said. “Both approaches are needed to successfully stop the spread of the virus and other mosquito-borne diseases.”

Security preparations underway for first MU home football game

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri Police Department met with the Highway Patrol and other emergency response agencies Wednesday morning to discuss safety measures for the upcoming football season.

Major Brian Weimer with MUPD said they’re not changing much to the usual security plans.

"We'll still be operating a unified command as we have for the past many many years," he said. "Perhaps the amount of people and where we put them depending on the changes that may occur, but once again we never discuss the specifics of our plan."

Weimer said all 41 officers at the department work every home football game. They’re also assisted by 65 Highway Patrol troopers.

"We want to provide a safe atmosphere for everybody that's involved and getting there is part of that," said Lt. Justin McCullough with the Highway Patrol. "So obviously traffic control is a huge priority for us."

Security preparations begin hours before each game at Faurot Field. MUPD’s K9, Brass, searches the entire stadium sniffing for explosives. The Capitol Police’s K9 also helps search the stadium.

Law enforcement officials said they mostly respond to heat-related illnesses during the home opener.

"Make sure you come hydrated and stay hydrated throughout the game," said McCollough. "Hydration is a huge issue that we have in the first few games when it's very hot."
Weimer said law enforcement will be meeting with the athletics department on a weekly basis until game day plans are finalized.

The Tigers first home game is September 10 at 6:30 p.m. against Eastern Michigan.

Fidgeting can prevent heart disease


How Rural Farming Communities Are Fighting Economic Decline

The town of Brookfield, in north-central Missouri, is a close-knit community with a population of about 4,500.

Becky Cleveland, who grew up here, says that when she was a kid, there were four grocery stores. Today there is just one, and a nearby Wal-Mart.

The vacant storefronts on Main Street make it clear that the town is no longer in its prime. Like many rural towns, Brookfield's top moneymakers in decades past were agriculture, transportation and manufacturing. While those industries still exist today, each has taken a hit. The town lost an auto plant. The railroad station is no longer bustling. And farming isn't bringing in as much as it used to.
This story is a familiar one for thousands of towns across rural America. It mostly comes down to technology — because of advances like herbicide-resistant seeds and more efficient tractors, farms need fewer employees. The number of farm jobs in the U.S. plummeted by 14 percent between 2001 and 2013, according to the Department of Agriculture.

"What does that mean for a rural community?" asks Mary Hendrickson, a rural sociologist at the University of Missouri, who says there's a ripple effect. "How are you going to sell insurance if those people aren't there? How are you going to have a bank if those people aren't there? How are you going to have a grocery store?"

Pair that with young people fleeing to cities, Hendrickson says, and you're left with small towns that just fade away. "These things just kind of work in tandem," she says. "So we have to ask a lot of questions about what's the future of rural development for these farming-dependent counties."

That's why rural towns need to take a concerted approach to building sustainability, says Pat Curry, with the University of Missouri Extension. Rural areas need to diversify their economic options, he says, so the economy stays somewhat protected if one of their industries takes a hit.

In some of the most productive farming counties in the Midwest, agriculture isn't even the biggest industry, Curry says. "They have other things going on. Their economy includes manufacturing industries," he says. Or, "they may have a prison," which may employ as many as 500 or 600 people.

And so, rural communities are having to reinvent themselves to stay viable and sustainable, says Cleveland, an economic development coordinator in Brookfield, Mo. Her job is to make sure her town stays on the map by supporting existing small businesses and encouraging more economic development.

And Brookfield has also teamed up with neighboring towns to draw tourists to what they've dubbed the American Genius Highway, along which Walt Disney and Mark Twain grew up.

Kristie and Drew Harper, who recently moved to Brookfield from Seattle, have bought into this bright, new vision for the town's future. The couple own a new bistro on Main Street. "[It's] a little place where we can do art and we can do live music on Thursdays and Fridays," says Drew. They've also bought a small piece of land, which they're using to grow their own food for their family. "We can feed our family and feed Brookfield," he adds.

Of course, they still have a lot to learn about running a business in a small, rural town. They have some kinks to iron out, says Kristie.

Ultimately, encouraging business, education and health care leaders in Brookfield to collaborate and support each other is key, Cleveland says. The town lacks the health care centers and assisted living facilities to support the local aging population, for instance. So, town leaders are
working together to push state legislators to provide broadband access for local health care providers, allowing the rural population to get care via telemedicine.

Meanwhile, educators are working to retain their young people — and convince high school students that it’s fine to return home after college. At graduation, these students receive DVD slideshows filled with photos from early grade school and scored with emotional music. A section of the slide show touts many of the graduates who have returned to this town. It ends with an "unending invitation" from the entire community to make Brookfield their home again.