

Speaker 1:

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Nicki Donnelson:

Homecoming, it's a time to revisit your old stomping grounds, revel on the enormous changes, and reminisce while you share old stories. I'm Nicki Donnelson. Today, as my guests, I have Greg Fansler, Executive Director of Engagement and Alumni Relations at Missouri State University, as well as Stephanie Smith, Senior Director of Donor Relations and Special Events for the Missouri State Foundation. They're here to tell us about what to expect at Missouri State's Homecoming, October 28th and 29th.

Greg Fansler:

The theme of our homecoming this year is centered around and is created by our students, and so it's a Halloween theme. I hope everyone comes prepared with their costume, which is basically Bear Wear. As we all know, Homecoming this year will begin and kicking off on Friday. What people can look forward to for us from the events that we're planning at the Alumni Association will be the 50th reunion. The class of 1972 is coming back in force and we actually have a pretty significant panel discussion where we'll have the Mayor of Springfield, Ken McClure, will be a part of that discussion, as is Tina Stillwell, who's been a long time employee, retired employee from Missouri State. Also our dean here of Humanities and Public Affairs, Vic Matthews, is celebrating his 50th anniversary. So, we're looking forward to going down memory lane with members of the Class '72, and we'll be able to induct them into our Golden Bear Society, which will be on Saturday.

Nicki Donnelson:

While there are many dedicated alumni that visit campus annually for homecoming, the university also offers events for kids and families who have yet to become Bears themselves. Fansler tells us more.

Greg Fansler:

On the other side of it, the book end of it, we have our Breakfast with Boomer program, and so this takes place at Foster Rec Center. Here, families from grandparents to young families are encouraged to bring children to have breakfast, meet Boomer. We work with the Discovery Center here, and so there's a number of things that they can do enjoying that beautiful facility we have on campus. So, after Breakfast with Boomer, we also have our alumni tailgate tent. And here, stop by, we'll have prizes and giveaways, music, special guests, as well as we'll be grilling hot dogs. We'll be connected to the Bear Garden, which is where folks can grab beverages if they want, but TVs will be set up. We're looking forward to being part of the Bear Walk as the team comes in and gets ready. Special time on campus will be right there, north of Plaster Field.

Nicki Donnelson:

Every year, groups gather for homecoming and there's no better place to meet up than in BearFest Village before the Homecoming football game to find those old friends.

Greg Fansler:

As part of BearFest Village, we know there's a number of other organizations and groups back on campus. We have our track and cross country reunion that's going to be back here in full force. We

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know a number of over a hundred folks are back for that. Greek organizations are having their reunions and they will all be part of the tailgate and the madness and the excitement that leads up to our football game, and of course, the celebration later that evening.

Nicki Donnelson:

This year, homecoming is ending with a bang that we're calling The Celebration. Smith Elaborates.

Stephanie Smith:

The Celebration is the conclusion event of the Onward, Upward Campaign from Missouri State University, which is the university's largest ever fundraising effort. As part of the event, we will be revealing the final number of how much money was raised during the Onward, Upward Campaign, which will be a big moment for the university. We have an all star lineup. The event will be hosted by John Goodman. We'll have recording artists and voice actress Tori Kelly. We'll have special collaborations from the Pride Band, the Color Guard, the Grand Chorus. We'll have a lot of surprise guests and special things happening. And it will be one of a kind event unlike anything the university's ever done.

Nicki Donnelson:

Want to join in on the party? Smith has all the details.

Stephanie Smith:

We have a lot of exciting things happening with the celebration event on campus. Of course, we have all the homecoming festivities on Saturday during the day, but starting at six o'clock, the Student Government Association will be hosting the best waiting line ever. At that event, there will be games, a DJ, photo booths all outside the entrance to Great Southern Bank Arena, and students will have the opportunity to get their name in for some really great prizes donated by the Missouri State Bookstore like AirPods. We'll also have Dining Dollar gift certificates students can win, all kinds of things. Doors open to the public at 7:00. The first 2,500 guests get a free swag bag and people can watch out on the university's social media in the coming days. And there'll be a sneak peek reveal of what's in those swag bags. And then the show is scheduled to start right around 7:30.

Nicki Donnelson:

Find out more at missouristate.edu/homecoming. I'm Nikki Donnelson for the Missouri State Journal.

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For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.