MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Branding, Marketing and Communication

QUARTERLY REPORT

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2026

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Murray State University celebrates Susan E. Bauernfeind Recreation and Wellness Center refresh with ribbon-cutting

Murray State University celebrated the completion of the Susan E. Bauernfeind Recreation and Wellness Center interior refresh project with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Aug. 17, as students, faculty, staff, and community members attended and experienced the revitalized facility.

The student-focused project represents a significant investment in the health, wellness, and overall campus experience of Murray State students and the broader University community. Improvements include new state-of-the-art fitness equipment, updated locker rooms, pool enhancements, refreshed interior branding, and key infrastructure upgrades designed to create a modern, welcoming, and functional environment.

The celebration included a ribbon-cutting, followed by a brief program. Murray State University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson discussed the scope of the project and the vision for the facility as a cornerstone of student wellness, recreation, and engagement.

Following the program, Campus Recreation and Wellness Center staff led guided tours, showcased the facility enhancements, and provided information about the new fitness equipment.

The facility includes full-size basketball courts, racquetball courts, a 1/11 mile indoor track with cardio machines such as treadmills, ellipticals, and bikes, a pool area including a six-lane lap pool, resistance training spaces, free weight areas, and aerobic studios. There is also a lounge area for patrons and locker rooms with direct access to the pool. Those interested in learning more about the Susan E. Bauernfeind Recreation and Wellness Center, including membership information, can call 270-809-6000.



Record generosity creates transformational opportunities for Murray State University students

Donors respond to President Ron K. Patterson's Students First vision with historic support



For Murray State University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson, every decision begins with one question: *How does this benefit our students?*

That Students First vision has inspired an extraordinary response from Murray State University's alumni, friends, and supporters. During the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, donors made record investments that will expand scholarships, strengthen academic programs and create life-changing opportunities for current and future Racers.

The Murray State University Office of Development reports more than $7.6 million in new documented commitments for future support and a record $13.9 million in cash gifts received from nearly 3,500 individual donors. More than $2.7 million of those gifts will directly support students through scholarships, helping make a Murray State education more affordable and accessible.

The record-setting year also reflected growing engagement from new supporters. Nearly 650 first-time donors made gifts during 2025–26, including almost 70 organizations that partnered with Murray State for the first time.

Four of the University's five largest gifts during the fiscal year were estate gifts from Murray State alumni—an enduring testament to the lifelong connection Racers have with their alma mater. Overall, Racer alumni accounted for more than half of all donors and contributed nearly $8 million in support of the University.

Donors demonstrated their commitment to student success across every area of the University. The Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business, the Hutson College of Agriculture and the College of Education and Human Services each received more than $1 million in support. Racer Athletics also experienced a record year of philanthropic giving.

The Murray State University Foundation, Inc., the independent nonprofit organization responsible for accepting, investing, and distributing charitable gifts on behalf of the University, reported that, pending completion of its annual audit, donor funding provided nearly $8 million in direct support to the University during the fiscal year.

To learn more about making a lasting impact on Murray State students and programs, visit **murraystate.edu/giving**, call the Office of Development at 270-809-3001, or contact the Office of Alumni Relations at 270-809-5600.

Murray State University recognized nationally by *U.S. News & World Report*

Murray State University has again been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top universities in the country in multiple categories, marking the institution's 36th consecutive year of high rankings by the national college guide, which recently published its 2027 Best Colleges list. The publication continues to recognize the value that Murray State's faculty and staff provide in a students-first mindset.

Within the South cohort of universities in Kentucky as well as the local vicinity of Murray State University, the University ranks the highest in the following categories: Regional Universities, Top Public Schools for Regional Universities, Best Colleges for Veterans, Best Value for Regional Universities, and Best Value for In-State Students. Moreover, among all regional universities in the South, Murray State holds prominent positions in the following categories: a top 5 ranking for Best Value for In-State Students, among the top 10 Public Schools and top 9 Best Colleges for Veterans.

The specific rankings for the University demonstrate the targeted focus on affordability, dedication to students, and alignment with goals to aid students in their journey to become better citizens, critical thinkers, and resilient leaders.

Murray State ranks in the South region as follows:

- Regional Universities - #22 (tied)
- Top Public Schools - Regional Universities - #10 (tied)
- Best Value - Regional Universities - #17
- Best Value In-State - Regional Universities - #5
- Best Colleges for Veterans - Regional Universities - #9 (tied)
- Undergraduate Engineering Non-Doctorate - #106 (tied)
- Undergraduate Nursing - #243 (tied)

WEB MANAGEMENT

Web Management launched three pages/sites in the last quarter to highlight major campus initiatives: Capital Projects, the Campus Master Plan, and the Strategic Plan.



Capital Projects

The Capital Projects page features information on new construction and renovations that are underway.



Campus Master Plan

The Campus Master Plan is a central hub for information about the development of the master plan that will transform the campus. The pages were developed with the help of Facilities Management.



Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan, developed with co-chairs Dr. Elise Kieffer, Dr. Ben Littlepage, and Dr. Chris Wooldridge, provides information about the development of the plan and a visual indication of which phases have been completed and which phase is underway.

All three pages include similar design elements meant to convey the interconnectedness of these three major initiatives.

PUBLIC RELATIONS *(CONTINUED)*

Murray State University hosts successful second phase of its strategic planning process



Murray State University concluded a successful second phase of its strategic planning process on Sept. 16 as the strategic planning committee, comprised of more than 40 campus and community members, met at the Curris Center for a full day of preparation and training.

Led by the three strategic plan co-chairs: Chris Wooldridge, Faculty and Director of the Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development in the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business; Dr. Ben Littlepage, Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs, Department of Educational Studies, Leadership, and Counseling in the College of Education and Human Services; and Dr. Elise Kieffer, Program Director and Assistant Professor of Non-Profit Leadership Studies in the Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business, the training session guided the committee to understand the conceptual and practical framework of the strategic planning process, learn how to engage stakeholders collaboratively, and grow a greater sense of ownership of the process and the momentum to move forward.

The committee began the morning hearing remarks given by Murray State President Dr. Ron K. Patterson, other members of University leadership, and the three co-chairs. Later in the day, Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education President Dr. Aaron Thompson and Executive Vice President and General Counsel Travis Powell provided insightful updates.

Earlier this year, Murray State announced the official launch of a comprehensive strategic plan and process that will serve as the vision and roadmap for the institution over the next three years.

Upcoming phases of the process include stakeholder engagement sessions, data synthesis, visioning and priority setting, strategy development and operationalization, with the goal of launching the strategic plan in July 2027.

For more information on Murray State University's Strategic Plan and planning process, please visit **murraystate.edu/strategic-initiatives-plan**.

Murray State University's Hopkinsville Regional Campus celebrates 25th anniversary

Murray State University's Hopkinsville Regional Campus is celebrating 25 years of providing accessible, high-quality educational opportunities to students throughout Hopkinsville, Christian County, and the surrounding region.

The grand opening of Murray State's Hopkinsville campus was held on Aug. 19, 2002, and the city of Hopkinsville declared that day "Murray State University Day." Classes at the Hopkinsville campus began just two days later.

The 35,680 square-foot facility was constructed on an undeveloped 80-acre campus and funded by the 1998 legislature. The campus features state-of-the-art multimedia classrooms, a computer lab, multiple student lounge areas, and a large multi-purpose room with technology to host events and conferences. By opening its doors to local employers and organizations, the campus serves as a gathering place for professional development, collaboration and community engagement.

Through flexible degree programs, student support services, and partnerships within the community, the campus has played an important role in serving transfer and adult students. An important part of the Hopkinsville Regional Campus's success has been Murray State's long-standing partnership with Hopkinsville Community College (HCC). Through this partnership, students who need to attend class while remaining in the local area are provided seamless pathways to begin their education at HCC and to continue at Murray State.

For students who are place-bound because of work, family, or other commitments, the opportunity to transfer to Murray State and continue their education locally can make completing a bachelor's or master's degree possible. Beyond the classroom, Murray State also offers a food pantry to help provide access to food and other essential items for students in need.

In 2025, Murray State University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson signed a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Christian County Public Schools Board of Education. The MOU established the Christian County High School Racer Academy to meet the needs of area high school juniors and seniors as they pursue their degrees. Murray State provides in-person dual credit courses for college-bound students who attend the new high school, which opened in August 2026 next door to Murray State's Hopkinsville campus.



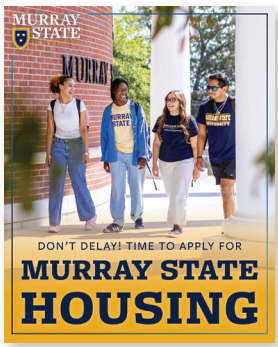
SOCIAL MEDIA



Welcome Week
Welcomed students back to campus through collaborative Welcome Week promotional efforts.



Engagement Results
Social media engagement increased more than 10% over the previous quarter across all channels, demonstrating the impact of our outreach efforts and strengthening connections with the Racer community.



Recruitment Communications
Encouraged prospective students to apply to Murray State through new recruitment graphics and messaging, while promoting completion of housing, FAFSA, and scholarship applications.



TikTok Growth
TikTok engagement increased 18%, while total followers grew 23% over the previous period.

MURRAY STATE IN THE MEDIA

- Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Dr. Dina Byers, selected for Leadership Kentucky 2026
- Murray State University's Nurse Anesthesia Program awarded 10-year reaccreditation from the Council on Accreditation
- Office of Branding, Marketing and Communication recognized by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education for its integrated marketing communications campaign supporting the institution's College of Veterinary Medicine initiative
- Murray State University introduces new graduate certificate in communication and technology within the Department of Organizational Communication and Leadership
- Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, Dr. David Whaley, retires after 14 years of leadership
- Murray State University accepted into the U.S. Space Command's Academic Engagement Enterprise
- *Money Magazine* names Murray State to the 2026 "Best Colleges" list
- Murray State University makes Purple Heart University proclamation, earns 2026 "Top Yellow Ribbon School" designation
- Board of Regents approves creation of two new auxiliary enterprises: Racer Enterprises, LLC, and Racer Sports & Entertainment, LLC.

DIGITAL MEDIA SERVICES



New image spot. "The A's of Murray State"

To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to **bit.ly/asofmsu**.



Susan E. Bauernfeind Recreation and Wellness Center Ribbon Cutting

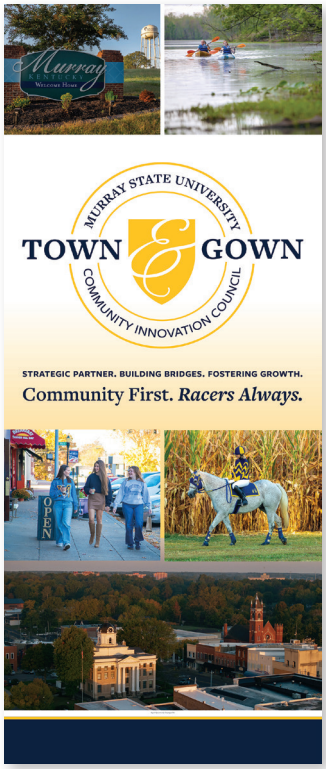
To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to **bit.ly/wellnessribbon**.



Family Weekend 2026

To watch the video, scan the QR code or go to **bit.ly/familyweekend26**.

GRAPHIC DESIGN/PRINTING





University Advancement Banners

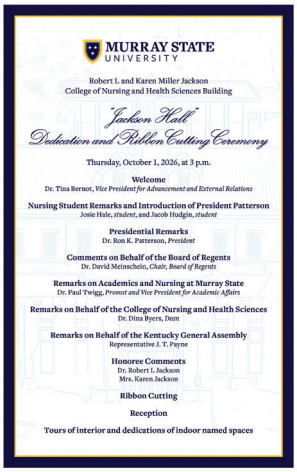
The Office of Development and Town & Gown requested a series of informative retractable and tabletop banners to display at community events.





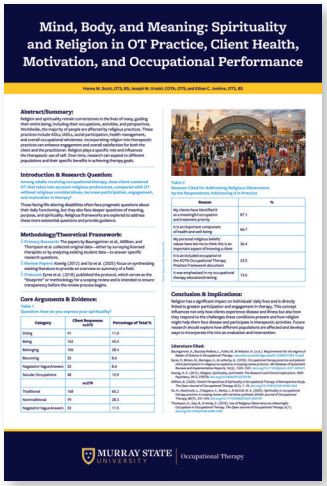
Racer Days Promotional Materials

In anticipation of this year's Racer Days events, we revamped the promotional postcard and folder for the Office of Recruitment.



Jackson Hall Event Program and Signage

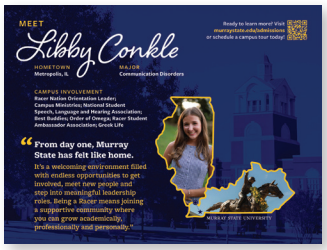
We designed the program and wayfinding signage for the Jackson Hall Dedication and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.



Occupational Therapy Research Posters

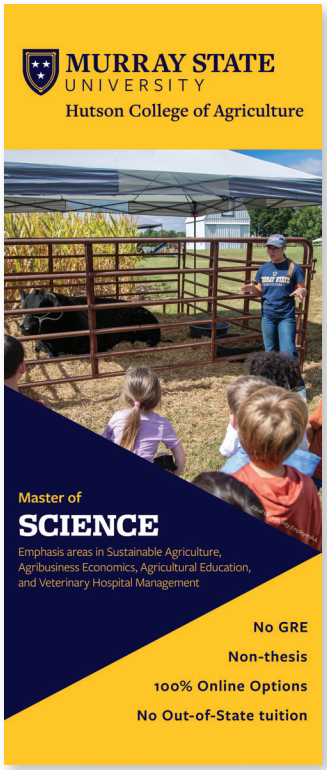
In anticipation of the Kentucky Occupational Therapy Association conference, the Occupational Therapy program requested a series of posters showcasing student research.

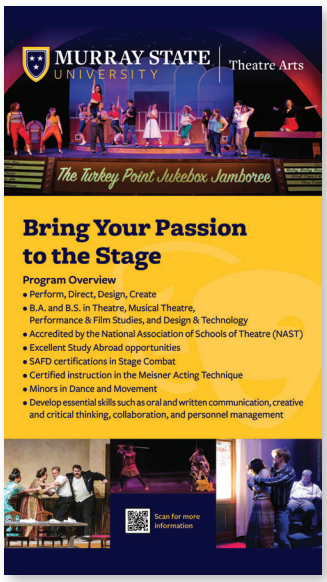




Neighborly Recruitment Postcards

We developed a series of targeted postcards for the Office of Recruitment, featuring a personalized testimonial for prospective students based on their home state.





Promotional Program Banners

The Hutson College of Agriculture and the Theatre Department requested retractable banners and other marketing assets to promote their various programs.

To access an e-edition of this report and previous quarterly reports, visit **murraystate.edu/bmc**

MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

We are Racers.

Shawn Touney
Assistant Vice President of Marketing and Communication
429 Sparks Hall | 270-809-2198 | stouney@murraystate.edu