



MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Branding, Marketing
and Communication

QUARTERLY REPORT

APRIL – JUNE 2026

PUBLIC RELATIONS

City of Murray ranks 3rd nationally in *USA Today*'s Best Small College Towns

The city of Murray, Kentucky, home of Murray State University, has been named among the top three best small college towns in the United States, according to a *USA Today* online readers poll. Murray was among the 20 towns nominated for Best Small College Towns in the *USA Today* 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards. Placing third this year, the city of Murray was recognized nationally in 2025 as well, placing fourth in the nation.

"The worlds of Murray, Kentucky, and Murray State University have been intertwined since the college opened in 1922 in the heart of town," reads *USA Today*'s website's description. "As a quintessential college town, Murray has lots of pubs and bars, casual restaurants run by local owners, and outdoor outfitters to keep everyone enjoying the local parks, which offer amenities like disc golf, a skate park, and a huge soccer complex. Non-collegiate visitors love the famed Calloway County Quilt Trail, which features more than 60 quilt patterns painted on barns, homes, and other buildings throughout the countryside."

"Being recognized as one of the top three best small college towns in the country is a true reflection of what makes the city of Murray so special, as there is a strong sense of friendliness, community and support shown toward our students, faculty, staff and visitors to the University," Murray State President Dr. Ron K. Patterson said. "There is a wonderful connection between Murray State University, the city of Murray, and the surrounding region we call home. This honor belongs to everyone who helps create a welcoming, vibrant environment."

Murray, Kentucky, is home to Murray State University, a nationally recognized institution with a 30+ year consecutive streak of top-tier rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*. Founded in 1922, the University is a comprehensive institution with 148 academic programs, a total enrollment of nearly 10,000 students, a member of the NCAA Division I ranks, and has more than 80,000 alumni throughout the world.

Campus and broader community celebrate the inauguration of Murray State University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson



The campus and broader community celebrated the inauguration of Murray State University's 15th President Dr. Ron K. Patterson with a variety of special events held on April 13 and 14, including the investiture ceremony inside historic Lovett Auditorium's Trustees Hall.

Events on April 13 included a Presidential Panel and Faculty Symposium, opportunities to meet the Racer Band, Racer One, and Dunker, listen to the Murray State Commercial Music Ensemble, and learn more about the University's 180+ student organizations and residential colleges. Additional activities included a First Lady cookout and ice cream social, a Racer Athletics t-shirt toss and a student scavenger hunt.

The investiture ceremony began with a processional of the 2026 Distinguished Professor and mace bearer Dr. Laura Ken Hoffman, the Murray State faculty, attending delegates and the stage party. The National Anthem was performed by student Kyler Hawkins and the invocation led

by Reverend Dr. Babatunde Oladimeji, pastor of Cornerstone Methodist Church in Cleburne, Texas.

Remarks were given from Governor of Kentucky Andy Beshear; Vice President for Academic Excellence from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education Dr. Melissa Bell; Murray State University Board of Regents Chair Dr. Robbie Fitch; Murray State University Foundation Board of Trustees representative Jessica Reed; Murray State University Alumni Association representative Geco Ross; Murray State University Faculty Senate President Dr. Michael Bordieri; Murray State University Staff Congress President Audrey Neal; and Murray State University Student Government Association President and Student Regent Ali Khatib, followed by the Investiture and Presentation of the University Chain of Office by Chair of the Board of Regents Dr. Robbie Fitch and Vice Chair of the Board of Regents Dr. David Meinschein, all leading up to the Presidential Address.

Musical performances during the investiture were led by student groups Una Voce and EQ Blu, and the student group winners of the scavenger hunt were announced.

Following the ceremony, an Investiture reception was held inside Pogue Library's Wells T. Lovett Grand Reading Room.

A video recap of the inauguration events can be viewed at youtu.be/z67RxUpn7fs.

Patterson began his tenure as the 15th President of Murray State University on July 1, 2025.

Murray State University announces strategic plan and process

Murray State University has 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.

"Strategic planning goes beyond a static document—it is a collaborative blueprint that enables us to anticipate opportunities, clarify our purpose and priorities, and align the resources needed to achieve our shared goals," Murray State University President Dr. Ron K. Patterson said.

Co-chairs of the strategic plan include:

- Chris Wooldridge, Faculty and Director, Center for Economic and Entrepreneurial Development, Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business
- Dr. Ben Littlepage, Professor, Higher Education and Student Affairs, Department of Educational Studies, Leadership, and Counseling, College of Education and Human Services

- Dr. Elise Kieffer, Program Director and Assistant Professor, Non-Profit Leadership Studies, Arthur J. Bauernfeind College of Business

A Strategic Planning Committee, comprised of members across the campus and broader community, has been formed. Under the leadership of the co-chairs, the group will lead the development of a clear, concise roadmap for the future that is mission driven, and provides actionable strategies and initiatives to enhance the student experience, teaching and learning, academic innovation, inclusive excellence and culture, financial sustainability, investment in the institution's people, and community engagement.

The University Strategic Plan and process will align with a Campus Master Plan and process that will shape another critical framework that is specific to Murray State's physical campus.

WEB MANAGEMENT



"The mission of the College of Veterinary Medicine is to educate professionals who will become leaders in advancing animal and human health through relationships established with those in our region and beyond. There is a great need for rural and regional..."

DR. LAURA KEN HOFFMAN
DEAN, COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Testimonial (Mobile)

Vet Medicine page

The web team developed and published a new page to highlight the College of Veterinary Medicine. This page highlights the college and the impact of the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree program.

The page includes a list of student benefits, including the construction of the new state-of-the-art Veterinary Sciences building on the West Farm. On the design front, the page features a testimonial from the dean of the college, with her photo and quote in a clean, modern, responsive layout. The timeline is presented in a vertical list with milestones separated into animated sections delineated by a navy border on the left.



murraystate.edu/vetmedicine

Timeline

- August 2023**
Murray State University's Board of Regents adopts a resolution of support to create a new West Farm and begins a feasibility study to examine the possible change of veterinarians and work toward the development of a College of Veterinary Medicine at Murray State University.
- April 2024**
The Kentucky Biennium budget includes funding for a \$60 million building for the construction of a new Veterinary Sciences building at Murray State University.
- April 2024**
Murray State University's Board of Regents approves the creation of a new College of Veterinary Medicine at Murray State University.
- August 2024**
Dr. Laura Ken Hoffman is appointed as the founding dean of Murray State University's School of Veterinary Medicine, contingent on Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education approval of the program.
- January 2025**
Murray State University receives program approval by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education to offer a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree program.
- Beginning in Winter/Spring 2025**
Murray State University to begin work with the American Veterinary Medical Association and secure program accreditation.
- February 2026**
Murray State University's Board of Regents approves the creation of a College of Veterinary Medicine at Murray State University.
- April 2026**
Construction for new College of Veterinary Medicine Building, which will encompass Veterinary Technology, Pre-Veterinary Medicine, and Veterinary students.

Timeline

PUBLIC RELATIONS (CONTINUED)

Murray State University hosts groundbreaking for new Veterinary Sciences building

The Murray State University campus and broader community participated in a special groundbreaking event for the University's new Veterinary Sciences building on April 22.

Located on the University's West Farm, the building will be utilized by undergraduate students in the Hutson College of Agriculture majoring in Veterinary Technology and Pre-Veterinary Medicine, as well as future students in the University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

In 2024, the state biennium budget included \$60 million in funding for the facility, in order to enhance existing and future programs in veterinary sciences.

The one-story building will measure more than 88,000 square feet and offer classrooms, laboratories, offices and support space, as well as common areas for students to collaborate and study. Construction is estimated to be a 24-month process.

Murray State has the largest pre-veterinary medicine/veterinary technology enrollment of any university in Kentucky, and the veterinary technology program is just one of three programs in Kentucky that is fully accredited by the American



Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).

Murray State is also racing ahead toward a new College of Veterinary Medicine, offering a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree to support future generations of veterinarians and advance both the region and the Commonwealth in critical areas of economic growth, workforce development, and industry needs. The University is currently working toward obtaining the required AVMA program accreditation through its Council on Education. Additional details on the University's College of Veterinary Medicine initiative is available at murraystate.edu/vetmedicine.

Murray State University announces campus master plan process

UNIVERSITY TO PARTNER WITH BHDP ARCHITECTURE TO DEVELOP A STRATEGIC ROADMAP

Murray State University has announced the official launch of a comprehensive campus master plan process, an initiative that represents a significant step in aligning its physical campus with the upcoming new University strategic plan.

The University will partner on the campus master plan project with BHDP Architecture, a firm renowned for its collaborative design expertise. Both Murray State and BHDP Architecture will work jointly on the development of a strategic roadmap that ensures Murray State's infrastructure, such as classrooms, residence halls, and student life spaces, are optimized to support the next generation of Racers.

The study will encompass nearly 50 buildings, including those on the University's main campus and the West Farm campus in Murray. The primary goal is to optimize its current footprint, ensuring

that every square foot serves academic and student life needs efficiently.

A Campus Master Plan Committee, comprised of members across the campus and broader community, has been formed. The process will include focus group sessions with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community leaders to identify specific needs, challenges and opportunities. Collaborative sessions can uncover opportunities such as "hidden" space needs, improving interdisciplinary synergy, strengthening community and alumni ties, enhancing the "Racer identity" and operational efficiencies.

BHDP has extensive experience both within and outside of higher education, and has been recognized for innovative and inspiring solutions in areas including architecture, planning, interior design, project management and strategic consulting.

MURRAY STATE IN THE MEDIA

- ★ Murray State University Alumni Association honors 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients
- ★ Assistant Vice President for Student Services Dr. SG Carthell recognized nationally for impact on student success
- ★ Murray State University Alumni Association celebrates 100th anniversary
- ★ Dean of the College of Education and Human Services Dr. David Whaley recognized as a Kentucky Colonel
- ★ Murray State University partners with Ohio University to improve Portsmouth, Paducah education outreach
- ★ Professor of TESOL Dr. Ho Ryong Park awarded Fulbright Scholarship to Vietnam
- ★ Murray State unveils Racer Welcome Week, rebranding of Great Beginnings
- ★ Murray State University recognized nationally by Colleges of Distinction

SOCIAL MEDIA

Engagement Results

Social media post engagement rate rose 10% over the previous quarter across all channels, demonstrating the impact of our social outreach with the Racer online community.



Senior Spotlight

Recognized 52 outstanding May 2026 graduates with personalized features celebrating their achievements while at Murray State.



TikTok Growth

Continued promotion of [@murray.state.univ](https://twitter.com/murray.state.univ) with QR code integration, encouraging followers to join the fun. Be sure to follow us!



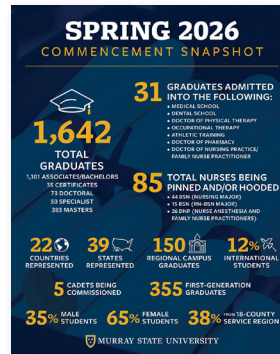
All Campus Sing

Delivered vibrant graphics and live event coverage that showcased the Murray State tradition's excitement and energy.



Racer Nation Orientation

Welcomed incoming new students with bold graphics and real-time coverage that captured the excitement of orientation day. Posts highlighted new Racers and set the tone for a successful start to their Murray State journey.



Commencement Snapshot

Celebrated the Class of 2026 with a bold infographic highlighting quick facts of student success and impact.

DIGITAL MEDIA SERVICES



🎯 Highlights from the Inauguration of Dr. Ron Patterson



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



 RNO 2026
Event Highlights



To watch the video,
scan the QR code or go to
bit.ly/rno26highlight.



 **Vet Sciences Building
Groundbreaking
Highlights**



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

GRAPHIC DESIGN/PRINTING



Henderson Regional Campus Sticker Sheet

The Henderson regional campus requested our assistance in creating a promotional sticker sheet.



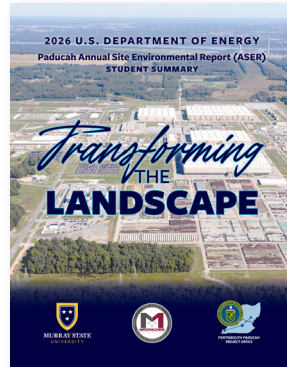
Summer and Fall Registration Marketing

A series of yard signs, flyers and social media graphics were created in partnership with the Office of Student Engagement and Success to encourage students to reach out to their academic advisor and register for summer and fall courses.



Paducah Regional Campus Rack Card

We partnered with the Paducah Regional Campus to design and print rack cards promoting the Integrated Studies program to non-traditional students.



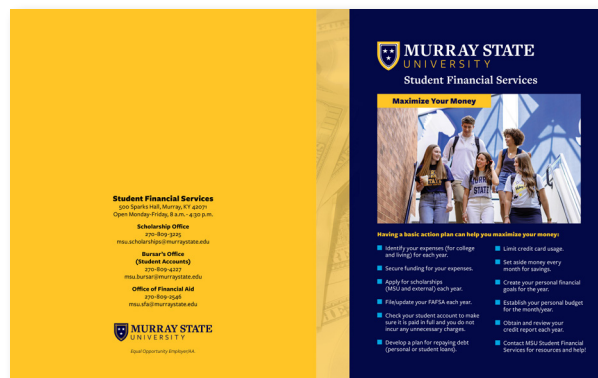
Student ASER and Poster Expo

We designed posters and a 36-page report to showcase the research conducted by students at McCracken County High School under the supervision of professors at Murray State and scientists at the U.S. Department of Energy - Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office.



Regional Campus Welcome Banners

We developed a series of banners to hang in the lobbies of the Hopkinsville, Madisonville and Paducah regional campuses.



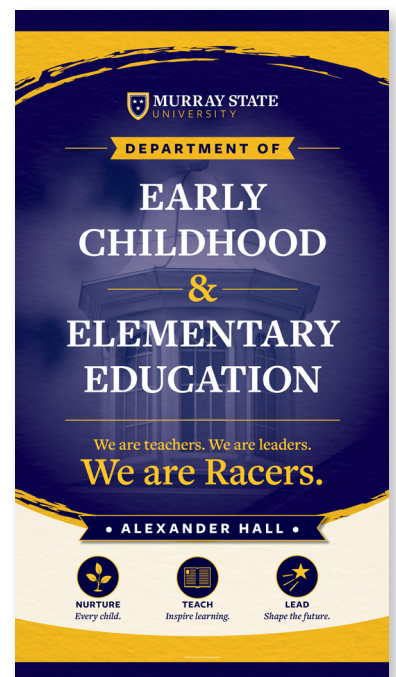
Student Financial Services Folder

A folder with valuable student financial tips and contact information was designed and printed for Student Financial Services.



U.S. Veterans Magazine Ad

An advertisement for U.S. Veterans Magazine was designed to promote our top degree programs suited for military students.



Early Childhood and Elementary Education Banners

We partnered with the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education to develop promotional retractable and tabletop banners.

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



We are Racers.

Shawn Touney

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