



THE MURRAY STATE NEWS

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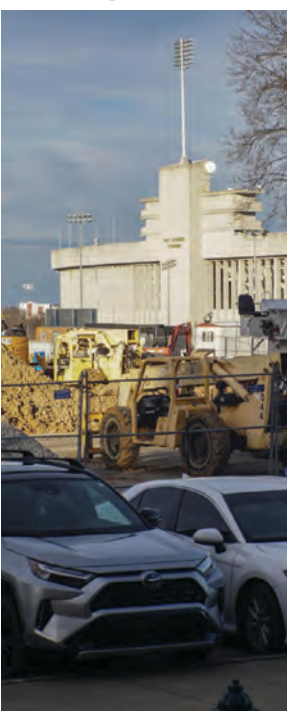
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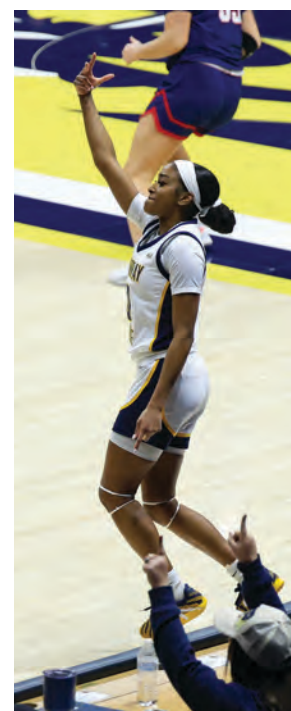
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award-winning, student-run news
organization at Murray State.*

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Students react to new antisemitism policy

Harper Spaulding

Staff Writer

jspaulding2@murraystate.edu

Following recent state legislation, Murray State University introduced a new policy affirming non-discrimination protections for Jewish students.

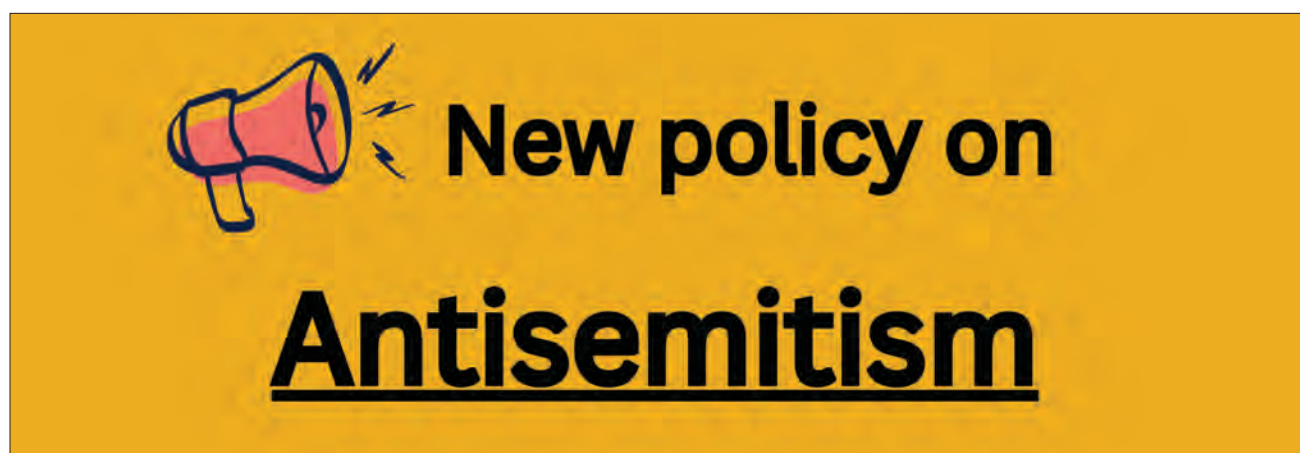
On Jan. 12, Murray State students received an email outlining the new policy, which affirms equal opportunity protections for Jewish students and tasks the University with documenting reported acts of discrimination. This policy, which took effect Jan. 1, followed the signing of Kentucky Senate Joint Resolution 55, which mandated Kentucky universities to adopt policies combating antisemitism through June 30, 2028.

"Murray State University endorses the intent of all federal and state laws created to prohibit discrimination," the email read. "Murray State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, veteran status, disability, or political or social viewpoint."

According to the policy, the University's Office of Equal Opportunity must inform students at the beginning of each semester of their rights to be free from discrimination and harassment, and how to file a report if they feel these rights have been violated. The office must also recognize Jewish groups as a community resource equal to all other religious groups on campus.

The policy allows the University to defund and disband any student group found to provide material support and resources to designated terrorist organizations, and report such conduct to law enforcement.

In accordance with SJR 55, the University will also collect all reports of antisemitic activity on campus,



Graphic by River Murt/The News

which will be sent to the Kentucky Council on Post Secondary Education. Such information is to be reported both on the council's website and to the Legislative Research Commission.

The News spoke to University students regarding the new policy, several of whom expressed support for the University's efforts to broaden student protections.

An anonymous sophomore graphic design major, said in the current divisive political atmosphere, policies like this to protect students are important.

"It's definitely good in the time that we're in politically, to be protecting a lot of these groups," they said. "Because just a little bit of slack given ... once you allow one thing to start happening, it opens the door for a lot worse to also worm its way through."

Though the student said they didn't know much about the new policy, during their time on campus,

they have seen hateful and antisemitic rhetoric spread around campus, as well as hateful comments directed towards LGBTQ+ students. The sophomore said it's important for colleges to provide a safe and inclusive environment for students, many of whom reside hours away from their families and homes.

Some students, however, are dissatisfied with the policy. Samuel Miller, a sophomore history major, said the new policy lacks concrete definitions for antisemitism and terrorist organizations. Though Miller said the University should work to protect its students to the full force of the law, the vague wording of this policy makes it hard to tell what students can be punished for.

"This policy does not protect people as it is too easy to abuse," Miller said. "If this policy was a good-faith effort to defend students, every clause on it would be better written and defined."

University requests ideas to resolve parking stress

River Murt

News Editor

rmurt1@murraystate.edu

Murray State's construction of the Learning Commons, a planned new dorm and common area, announced at the Spring 2025 Board of Regents meeting, adds to the list of parking complaints.

Since August 2024, the University has begun building projects, namely Jackson Hall, the nursing building.

Its construction has resulted in either the temporary obstruction or restriction of parking areas for students and faculty, especially accessible spaces — or the permanent closure of the Faculty Hall parking lot that Jackson has been built on.

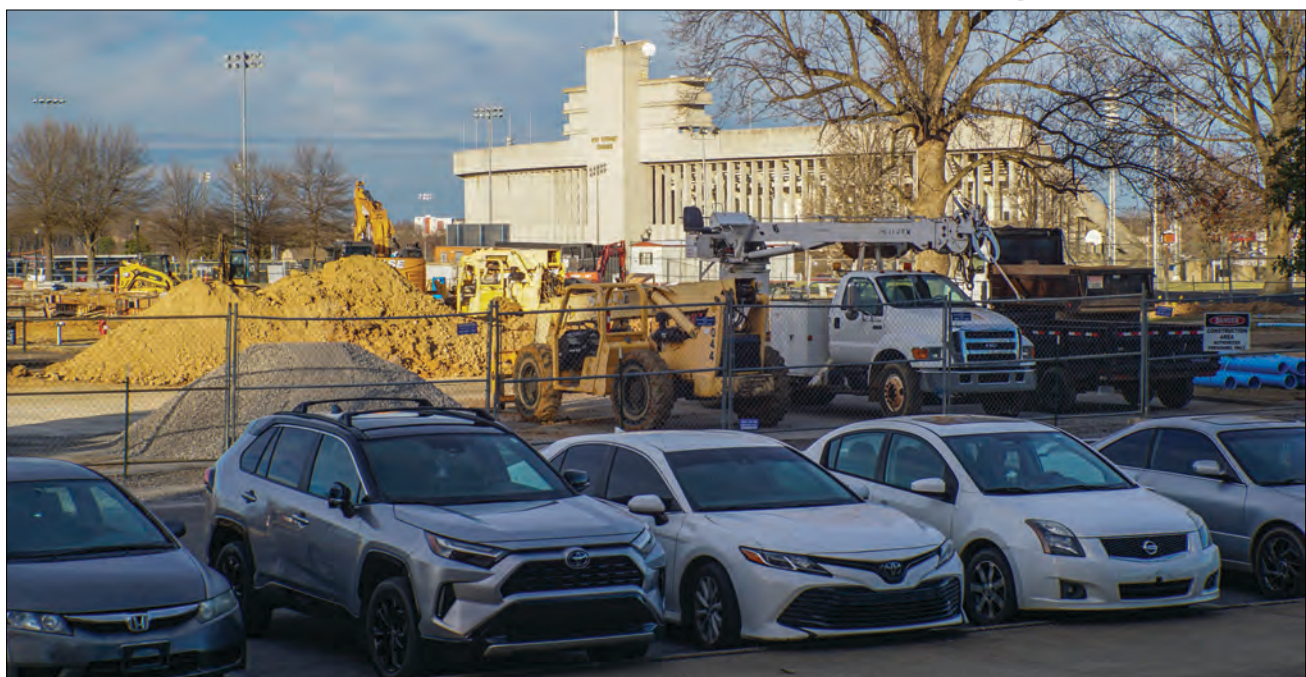
Both caused a scarcity of parking at Murray State, the redesignation of zones, with earlier issues of The Murray State News reporting faculty with disabilities saying they had to cancel classes because of this, and further frustration from the campus community asking why the University is selling parking it doesn't have.

Additionally, the University has made millions of dollars in profit from parking passes and citations in the last three years, according to an open records request.

The frustration continues with the construction of the Learning Commons being built on the empty grass plain to the north of Hart Residential College.

In the college's parking lot, the construction has claimed the north section, which is fenced off. The section is being used for construction vehicles, pipes, and dirt and gravel mounds.

After complaints made on the open forum for Mur-



River Murt/The News

Construction vehicles and dirt, gravel mounds sit in former Hart Residential College parking

ray State students on YikYak, The Murray State News polled its followers on Facebook and Instagram, asking for their thoughts on the matter.

The News will keep the identities of those who answered anonymously for their privacy.

"I pay \$200 for a yellow parking pass just to wind up parking in (Stewart) Stadium," one follower answered.

"WE NEED MORE PARKING," one follower answered. "Stop taking it away for construction."

"We already didn't have enough parking spaces,"

one follower answered. "This is a nightmare."

"Shoes down," one follower answered.

Read more of this story on our website:



Price of convenience

The News analyzes costs of necessities at Fast Track

River Murt
News Editor
rmurt1@murraystate.edu

Analysis

While coffee is not a requirement for mankind to survive, like water, food and shelter, it is what many consider to be essential to get through the day.

So much that it became a world-wide commodity by the late 1800s, according to PBS. Especially now with branded and independent shops throughout the world, and the ingredients able to be bought in stores and made at home supposedly for less, the drink remains a staple.

But for students at Murray State, the price to make your own coffee at home, without considering the cost of electricity to power the coffee machine, and the price of the coffee machine — would start at \$43.09.

This example of Fast Track's prices is the single 24 pack of Starbucks Veranda blend K-cups. According to Dictionary.com, this is identical to price gouging when considering the prices of similar products sold by other competitors, even when considering the cost to drive.

At Walmart, a 22 count of Starbucks Veranda blend K-cups would cost \$15.24 before tax according to its online website, at the time of publication. Also, a larger 44 count of K-cups is \$31.66 before tax, double the amount for cheaper.

At Kroger, a 32 count is also cheaper than Fast Track's 24, costs \$32.99, and a 44 costs \$34.99 at the



Starbucks Veranda blend K-cups sit on the Fast Track shelf.

MacKenzie Rogers/The News

time of publication. While two 10-count packs from Walgreens, equaling 20 K-cups, costs all together \$26.98.

All the while, a 32 count costs \$29.69 at CVS.

A gallon of gas in Calloway County costs on average \$2.589, according to AAA, so with each of these locations distancing around a mile would cost that much added onto the purchase made for coffee if a student decided to leave campus.

This means it is cheaper for a student to leave Murray State University, get into their car, if they have one, and drive to any of these four locations, purchase

any of these products to have near equal, if not double the amount of coffee, than it would be to walk to Fast Track and purchase from there.

But at the same time, tampons are cheaper at Fast Track.

Read more of this story on our website:



Domestic violence help available in West KY

River Murt
News Editor
rmurt1@murraystate.edu

Domestic violence in the United States is a common problem, affecting around 10 million Americans a year according to the National Library of Medicine.

Since the murder of a Paducah woman, who was shot in her workplace by her husband on Dec. 13, the community responded with a GoFundme for her children to still have a Christmas and a vigil to celebrate her life — the awareness of the issue remains crucial.

According to the 2023 Kentucky Domestic Violence Data Report, 44.5% of women and 32.9% of men in Kentucky have experienced domestic violence, defined as instances of rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault by current or former intimate partners or family members. But the Department of Justice claims only half of all abuse is being actually reported.

“The true prevalence and impact of domestic violence goes far beyond the scope of the data captured,” the report read.

Victims of domestic violence can receive help in multiple ways.

According to the Kentucky Attorney General page for domestic violence, if a victim has fled the environment of domestic violence then they can file a petition for either themselves or their children for protection.

While the page suggests an adult family member file protection for minors, those under the age of 18 cannot file for protection.

In the petition, those who file need to describe the acts of abuse and/or threatening behavior that make following actions and orders necessary for protection. The page also said to note any use of a weapon or object used as one during acts of abuse, etc.



Graphic by River Murt/The News

ry or assault, an emergency protective order can be made to limit or stop all contact with the respondent, the perpetrator of violence.

The order requires the respondent to the following orders until a hearing.

- Have no contact or communication with the petitioner
- Stop the abuse
- Leave the residence you share
- Award petitioner temporary custody of the children
- Keep from disposing of or damaging property
- Any other orders

If the respondent violates any of the protective orders' measures, then the petitioner needs to contact law enforcement and the circuit clerk. The page says a violation of a protection order will lead to the respon-

dent arrested, with the action classified as a Class A misdemeanor or contempt of court.

The Merryman House, a 24/7 crisis center for western Kentucky, is another place for help, assisting victims via refuge from death and serious physical injury, as well as support in the courtroom.

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New state legislature drafts Charlie Kirk Day

Baden Grubbs

Contributing Writer

bgrubbs@murraystate.edu

Kentucky lawmakers have proposed a bill to officially designate Oct. 14 as Charlie Kirk Day, the controversial political activist's birthday.

Rep. Steve Rawlings of District 11 and Rep. Lindsey Tichenor of District 6 have sponsored Senate Bill 31 following the aftermath of Charlie Kirk's assassination at Utah Valley University.

Filed on Jan. 6, the bill recounts the political career of Kirk, such as the founding of Turning Point USA, a conservative nonprofit organization, his authorship of several books and his public debates on college campuses.

In the wake of his death, he is described as a martyr for freedom of speech, along with his belief in Christianity.

On the day of his remembrance, the bill advises, "Kentuckians are encouraged on Oct. 14, the date of his birth, to reflect on the principles he championed, participate in educational events promoting civic engagement and honor his legacy as a martyr for truth and liberty."

Rep. T.J. Roberts of District 66 announced a list of bills he filed for the year's legislative session on Facebook, including HB 87, the House version of the same bill, with Rep. Josh Hallway of District 10.

It has been sent to the state government, meaning it has been received by the House State Government Committee for review on Jan. 14.

In addition, he has filed House Joint Resolution 12, which is to designate a portion of Route 18 in Boone County as the Charlie Kirk Memorial Highway.

Lawmakers in Missouri and Florida have followed



A vigil for Charlie Kirk was held at Murray State after his death.

Kristopher Fister/The News

suit, proposing similar bills that would designate Oct. 14 as a state holiday to commemorate Kirk.

According to their House of Representatives, the state of Ohio's Charlie Kirk American Heritage Act has passed the House and is beginning to progress into the Senate.

Some have corroborated the idea of a Charlie Kirk holiday and its intentions to promote free speech. To-

bias Duncan, a freshman business administration major, responded to the bill,

"As a Murray State University student, I strongly support this bill and believe that it aligns with our American values such as free expression and civic involvement," Duncan said. "I think everyone should review this bill. It is important to keep public debates and discussions alive in society."

Shining Your Light

Workforce Transition Workshop & Lunch

 Tuesday, February 3, 2026

 11:30am - 1:15pm

 Curris Center – 3rd Floor, Large Ballroom



Join Murray State alumna Terri Lundberg ('05, '25), an accomplished executive coach, leadership facilitator, and speaker as she leads a Workforce Transition Workshop for Junior and Senior students.

This workshop and lunch are offered at no cost, thanks to the generous support of the Murray State Philanthropy and Leadership Collective and in collaboration with Murray State University Career Services, the Oakley Student Center, and the Center for Student Engagement and Success.

 RSVP by January 26 for this FREE event!

Through this workshop, students will be able to define their personal brand, communicate their professional identity, and much more!



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Campus advocacy group hosts rights Q&A with lawyer

Ainsley Beatty

Chief Copy Editor

abeatty2@murraystate.edu

The National Organization for Women Campus Action Network will host local lawyer Chris Hendricks on Jan. 28 in an informational workshop focused on students' rights on and off campus.

NOW CAN, created last semester, works closely with West KY NOW, a regional chapter of the national rights advocacy and voter education organization. President Presley Billingsley (they/she), a freshman psychology and sociology major, said Hendricks was recommended to them because of his past work with West KY NOW.

Vice President Cameren White, a freshman visual communications major, said meeting with a lawyer was a priority for the group because the opportunity to learn what rights students have on and off campus is important for everyone, even for those who are "working towards different goals."

"Having a lawyer present was one of the things that interested us the most initially," she said. "I feel like, given the current political climate on campus, I think that it is necessary that as many students as possible are aware of exactly what their rights are."

While making plans for the event at CAN's first meeting, Billingsley said members posed questions such as, "As a lawyer, what is the difference between free speech and harassment?" "How can we get legal support if we are being harassed?" and "Can the police legally search my property?"

The workshop will open with Hendricks answering prepared questions that were discussed at NOW CAN's meeting on Jan. 21, followed by an open floor conversation for additional questions. Billingsley said the event will be a welcoming, educational environment for everyone, no matter their views.

"Chris is a very nice and patient person, so it's not intimidating," Billingsley said. "It should be a welcoming environment for students to be able to be vulnerable and ask those hard questions. Everyone is welcome because everyone needs education (and) bipartisan support. We want as many people as we can to get the education that they need."

This is NOW CAN's first active semester. Billingsley said the group is important because students often feel more comfortable getting connected with organizations on campus.

"Students have a hard time connecting with those outside organizations because it's like they're walking into unknown territory," they said. "To have that group on campus to show you where your resources are, how you can be an advocate if you choose to be and to educate you on current politics or new resources ... is a good start."

CAN operates on the same tenets as its sister organization, West KY NOW. Their six core tenets are reproductive rights and justice, economic justice, ending violence against women, racial justice, LGBTQIA+ rights and constitutional equality.

White said CAN's main goal is to give a "proactive way to better campus."

"Our goal is to bring ... action to campus," White said. "I feel like it's really easy for students ... to feel hopeless, or feel like they cannot make an impact, and we want to give them the power to do something."

Secretary Li Irvine (they/them), a freshman aquatic biology major, said NOW CAN is working to meet a need in the campus community.

"I think (CAN) is trying to fill a space on campus for education and activism towards feminist causes, which we don't see a lot of," Irvine said. "We're planning a lot of informational meetings and seminars ... we want to do more humanitarian things, like food drives and



Photo provided by West Kentucky NOW

NOW CAN officers networking among students last fall.

clothing drives."

NOW CAN is working towards more events this semester with plans for a meeting with student representatives from Lotus Sexual Assault Center in February; a panel on faith and bodily autonomy in collaboration with the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice in March; and Green Bandana training in April. These events are opportunities to bring people in who can "answer students' concerns or educate about things that affect our members," Billingsley said.

CAN's monthly meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Mississippi Room of the Curris Center. Billingsley said meetings are discussion based and focused on connecting members with "resources or people that can help address their questions better than we can."

The "Know Your Rights" workshop will take place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 28, in the Mississippi Room of the Curris Center. For more information about the workshop and NOW CAN, contact murraystatenow@gmail.com.

Dining Guide



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CAMPUS LIGHTS

'THE PROM'

One of Murray State's oldest traditions, Campus Lights, puts on a performance annually in Lovett Auditorium. On Jan. 16-18, the 89th year saw the students performing the story of "The Prom," centered around a lesbian couple going together to the local prom. The story follows the couple as they encounter trouble with homophobia as the school's homophobic PTA cancels the dance to prevent them from attending. Through comedic mishaps and heartfelt moments, the characters learn about acceptance, love and the true meaning of community; leading to a triumphant, inclusive prom for all.



Photos by Mya Bolton/The News



Einstein Bros. Bagels prioritizes digital ordering in store

Gray Hawkins

Features Editor

hhawkins4@murraystate.edu

It's no surprise to see small changes around campus after a long break, but some students came back to a big difference in how they get their midday meal.

Einstein Bros. Bagels operates out of Waterfield Library, making it a convenient grab-and-go location for students on the way to or between classes. Much like Tres Habeneros, Subconnection and Mein Bowl in the Thoroughbred Room, Einstein allowed students to give their order in person to a cashier or through the GrubHub app. With the recent implementation of two kiosk screens and an alternate location for finished orders, however, this community favorite seems to be turning to a technology-forward business model.

Nadia Enright, a sophomore graphic design major, has made a daily habit of getting Einstein since her first semester because she said it's reliable and right next to her classes. She came in on Tuesday, Jan. 13, to find the cashier replaced by a touch-screen and a poster blocking the window where finished orders were once handed out.

"I had been told that they changed from ordering in person to kiosks," Enright said. "I didn't expect it to be the only option you had. I was surprised, but it also didn't make a lot of sense to me."

While Enright was familiar with similar kiosks inside Chick-fil-A and knew how to navigate to the meal exchange menu, she said other customers were having trouble finding what they needed and had to flag down workers behind the counter to ask for help. She also said the second kiosk was hard to recognize as another line to order because that is where customers typically wait for their food.

This new system isn't just causing confusion for

customers; it's also causing big shifts in how Einstein employees operate.

Lily Becke, a senior English literature major, worked at Einstein for two years before quitting near the beginning of the fall 2025 semester. Though she has not been behind the counter for these changes, she said this new system is "adding a significant amount of stress" for her old coworkers. Previously, Einstein workers were able to prioritize orders from customers in-store and on a time crunch.

"The thing with this (system) is it doesn't separate in-person from out-of-store orders," Becke said. "It's not really beneficial to college students because we're running to class and have like 15 minutes between each class. That's not enough time to wait for every single order that's in front of you in the queue."

With GrubHub processing all the orders, Becke said preexisting stressors the employees face, like irritating beeping when a new order comes in and difficult-to-read instructions, will become larger issues.

Becke said she doesn't see many potential benefits of the new system except for a potentially better ordering experience for customers whose anxiety makes in-person ordering too difficult; however, as someone who experiences difficulty in social interaction, Enright said the kiosk system makes ordering more uncomfortable with "a screen actively preventing me from speaking to someone."

"I am used to going in and talking to them, even if it's just a brief 'hello, how are you?'" she said. "I've gotten so used to it in a schedule where I'm able to talk to many other people. I really valued that little interaction a lot, so for it to be basically gone, it was very jarring."

Becke said she thinks Einstein's changes came from upper management in the University's Dining Services without any input from floor managers or workers. Though cutting out the need for a customer service



Nyx Alverson /The News
A student ordering with the newly installed GrubHub tablets.

worker on shift may seem like a way to increase profits and raise wages, she thinks the advantages start and end with the restaurant's higher-ups.

"The upper management fundamentally does not know how Einstein works as a community, as its own ecosystem," Becke said. "It's easy to make assumptions about how things should run when you're not in the thick of it. I think upper management should take time to hear from the workers on the floor and their ideas."

The Murray State News contacted Dining Services for comment. Dining Services didn't supply answers to emailed questions by time of publication.

For Enright and students like her, such a change would feel like "one option rebranded in two different ways" because the GrubHub app already caters to those who don't want to order in-person.

"I think I will always prefer speaking to another person rather than a touch screen," Enright said. "For people like me who don't like using ordering apps or enjoy talking to the employees ... It feels like the option is being taken away for no reason."

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OPINION: It's time for us to cut down on GenAI

Owen Hansen
Opinion Editor
ohansen1@murraystate.edu

For university students, both here at Murray State and elsewhere, generative AI has completely changed the game. Many students utilize AIs such as ChatGPT, Copilot and Gemini to speed up their work. While the productivity increase seems innocuous, these technologies come with serious consequences in the form of data centers.

Our world cannot sustain GenAI and its data centers just yet, and the ramifications will soon catch up with us. As a community, it's our responsibility to understand the downsides of GenAI and data centers and keep our usage of it in check.

The term AI has been going around for quite some time, and has been a core component of computer science for decades. Artificial intelligence refers to technologies that mimic human behaviors, such as cognitive thinking and reasoning. GenAI models, such as ChatGPT, are large-scale AI programs that can perform incredibly complex tasks like generating images and sound.

Due to its larger scale, GenAI currently uses significantly more resources and energy than previous AI models. To provide these critical resources, GenAI uses data centers, large scale facilities that house and maintain the technology required to keep programs such as AI running. Data centers were responsible for 4% of America's total electricity consumption in 2024, according to a study by the Pew Research Center, and this number is only expected to rise.

These data centers primarily use natural gas for energy, which is incredibly unsustainable and damaging to the environment. Gases such as methane release greenhouse gases when burned, which are then trapped in the atmosphere and cause numerous issues. Considering how much energy data centers require to function, and the fact that around 40% of their energy comes from natural gases, data centers that power GenAI create a significant amount of greenhouse gas emissions.

Energy consumption isn't even the sole environmental concern with AI data centers. They also produce significant water waste. The burning of fossil fuels for power produces a significant amount of heat, and so data centers utilize immense quantities of water for cooling. According to an article by the Environmental and Energy Study Institute, a single large data center can use up to 5 million gallons of fresh water a day. The wastewater produced from this amount of water can be a serious pollutant if not properly disposed of.



Graphic by MacKenzie Rogers/The News

As GenAI becomes more advanced, popular and demanding, they require more data centers for power. Here in Kentucky, there are currently about 36 data centers already built, with more in planning including a large-scale one in Louisville specifically for powering AI. Other states are dedicating even more resources to data centers. Virginia has over 600 data centers and even more in the making, dedicating large amounts of natural resources and about 26% of the state's electricity to stay up and running.

Data centers in Kentucky are concentrated around Louisville, with the remaining data centers scattered across the eastern half of the state. The environmental consequences of data centers haven't quite reached Murray; however, they get closer each day. In fact, large-scale AI data centers are planned in Paducah.

Data centers in Calloway County would be disastrous. Rural areas like Calloway County rely on farmland, with a large amount of our economy being agricultural. Data centers would buy out a lot of the county's farmland, decreasing agricultural production. While data centers would still give back to the local economy, they

actually provide very few high-paying jobs. Most jobs in data centers are low-paying positions. Additionally, the strain of resources such as water, electricity and fuels, alongside the release of pollutants, would have serious negative impacts on our community and ecosystem.

While data centers aren't in Calloway's immediate future, that could change at the drop of a hat. The construction of even more data centers will proceed while GenAI grows in scale and use. Decreasing the usage of GenAI will decrease the number of data centers that need to be constructed to power it.

In a few short years, GenAI has already become a large part of many of our daily lives. While it seems hard to imagine getting things done without GenAI, it was not all that long ago where society was doing just fine without it. A lot of the ways we use AI are entirely unnecessary, such as media generation. Because of this, serious retrospection and discussion about GenAI's role in our society needs to happen. Until GenAI and its data centers can exist without hurting people and the world, the best thing we can do is not use it.

Editorial

Board

Contact Us

111 Wilson Hall
Murray State University
Murray, Kentucky 42071-3301
MurrayStateNews.org

Zach Simmons
Editor-in-Chief
zsimmmons@murraystate.edu

Kris Fister
Associate Photography Editor
kfister3@murraystate.edu

Nyx Alverson
Photography Editor
ealverson@murraystate.edu

MacKenzie Rogers
Associate Editor
mrogers42@murraystate.edu

Gray Hawkins
Lifestyle Editor
hhawkins4@murraystate.edu

Gretchen Beatty
Social Media Manager
gbeatty2@murraystate.edu

River Murt
News Editor
rmurt1@murraystate.edu

Owen Hansen
Opinion Editor
ohansen1@murraystate.edu

Aly Adler
Chief Videographer
aadler2@murraystate.edu

Laney Evans
Sports Editor
levans11@murraystate.edu

Leigh Landini Wright
Faculty Adviser
ewright@murraystate.edu

Ainsley Beatty
Chief Copy Editor
abeatty2@murraystate.edu



Racers basketball dominates over Winter Break

A look at men's and women's basketballs winning streaks

Riley Staton

Contributing Writer
rstaton1@murraystate.edu

The Murray State men's and women's basketball teams entered the 2025-26 in different positions.

The men's team, coming off of a seventh-place conference finish in the previous season, looked to regroup and restructure under the leadership of first-year head coach Ryan Miller, following the release of former coach Steve Prohm and a significant amount of roster turnover.

The women's team, following a 2024-25 season that saw the Racers win the Missouri Valley Conference and make an appearance in the 2025 NCAA Tournament, sought to build around a group of new and returning players, looking to improve where possible to repeat the success of the previous year.

However, from a statistical standpoint, both teams have not only met, but exceeded expectations to start the year.

After more than two months of regular season play to start the 2025-26 season, the Murray State men's and women's basketball teams stand atop the MVC. The men's team, holding a

7-0 conference record on the year, have held an undefeated streak since Nov. 25's victory against George Washington University in the Cayman Islands Classic, sporting a 16-3 record on the season, trailing only Belmont in total wins in the conference. The Bruins have proven themselves to be the Racers' toughest in-conference competition in the 2025-26 season, standing only a game and a half behind Murray State.

The women's team has also fought throughout the year to secure the top spot in the MVC, with their Jan. 19 win over the Belmont Bruins allowing the Racers to secure the conference lead. Following the win, the women's team now also stands atop the MVC, holding a 16-2 season record with an 8-0 record in conference play.

Despite different expectations for both teams entering the 2025-26 season, each has been able to not only meet, but exceed all expectations en route to leading both MVC standings as March Madness approaches. However, this success didn't materialize overnight. There were many contributing factors for both teams that allowed Murray State to take an early lead in both conference standings.



Kristopher Fister/The News
Senior guard Javon Jackson shoots a floater over an Indiana State defender.

Men's Basketball

The men's team has been on a run that hasn't been seen since Murray State's last year in the Ohio Valley Conference.

In 12 straight wins for the Murray State men's basketball team, there has been a constant in almost all games: offense. In 11 of the Racers' last 12 wins, the team has scored over 80 points, with the only exception being in their Jan. 7 road win against Evansville, where they won 79-69. The Racers average 87.8 points per game this season, which is good for 21st in the nation.

In terms of scoring, senior guard Javon Jackson has led the way for the team. In 19 games, Jackson has scored 17.3 points per game, good for first on the team. A considerable amount of Jackson's offensive success this year can also be attributed to an efficient year from beyond the arc, as the guard has shot over 43% from the three-point line this season.

Jackson's reliability for the Racers has been reflected in his usage rate; the guard leads the team by a considerable margin, with 33%. Despite the pressure that may come with this kind of success, Jackson has not been deterred as the season progresses.

"We try not to focus (on) that we're 8-0 now, we try not to focus on that and take it game by game," Jackson said during the post-game conference on Jan. 17.

Women's Basketball

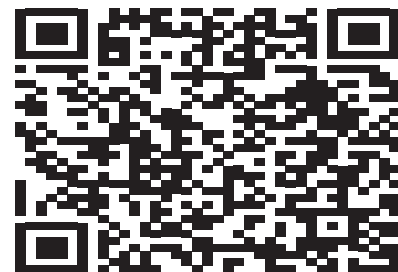
The Murray State women's basketball team has also capitalized on offense to take charge of their competition. After 18 games played, the Racers stand at 14th nationally in points scored per game,

notching 85.1 points on average against their opponents.

Junior guard Halli Pooch has proven to be an offensive weapon for the team, leading the team in both points, with 20.1, and assists, with 3.9 (tied with junior guard Haven Ford). Pooch, in her second year with the Racers, has improved her scoring by over three points per game up to this point in the season.

Sharnecce Currie-Jelks has also contributed to the team's success from both ends of the court. Currie-Jelks, who has won the MVC's Newcomer of the Week award four times in the 2025-26 season, stands second on Murray State with 19.3 points per game and leads the team in rebounds per game with 12.4, and blocks, with 1.4. She currently leads the country in double-doubles with 15 on the year. Despite continued success, Currie-Jelks has managed to maintain confidence and consistency throughout the year, no matter the opponent.

"We trust each other," Currie-Jelks said during the post-game conference on Jan. 11. "Like Coach (Turner) always says, we have to grind every night, no matter if it's a 30-point blowout or a double-OT game."



Scan the QR Code to read the rest of the story.



Kristopher Fister/The News
Sophomore guard Jada Cook celebrates a three-pointer against Belmont.

MURRAY STATE BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

1/22/26 - 2/12/26

MEN'S BASKETBALL

JAN. 24 @ NORTHERN IOWA

JAN. 28 VS. ILLINOIS STATE

JAN. 31 @ BELMONT

FEB. 3 VS. ILLINOIS-CHICAGO

FEB. 6 @ SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

FEB. 9 VS NORTHERN IOWA

FEB. 12 @ INDIANA STATE

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

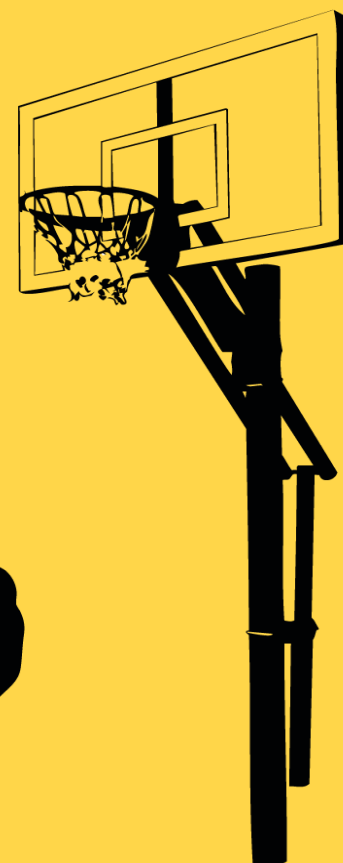
JAN. 23 @ NORTHERN IOWA

JAN. 25 @ DRAKE

JAN. 29 VS SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

JAN. 31 @ BELMONT

FEB. 5 @ INDIANA STATE



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Graphic by MacKenzie Rogers /The News

OPINION: Racer Nation's New Year's Resolution: Pack the Bank

Laney Evans

Sports Editor

levans11@murraystate.edu

It's Saturday night! The Racer band files into the bleachers, the local sports media finds their positioning on the floor and the scent of popcorn and Racer dogs drift through the air; the familiar voice of Logan Stout emits from the overhead speakers, families shuffle to their seats and both teams are getting their final shots in before the inaugural buzzer sounds. The CFSB Center is almost ready to host a riveting show, but one vital piece is missing – the students!

Racer Nation gave their 12th best showing in CFSB Center history on Saturday, Jan. 17, marking the largest attendance since the Racers beat Belmont 76-43 to wrap up the 2021-22 season on Feb. 24, 2022. The fans were graced with the men's basketball team's 12th win of their ever-increasing win streak, which has the potential to be extended against Drake and Northern Iowa on Wednesday, Jan. 21, and Saturday, Jan. 24.

Though the rumble of the local fans certainly ignites the fire needed to clear an opponent such as Indiana State, there is nothing that raises the intensity of a sports atmosphere quite like an organized, cohesive and aggressive student section. Consider this a humble plea, not just from your student newspaper's sports editor, but from your peer, maybe even your friend, to clear a few nights in your schedule over the next two months and gather everyone you know to

witness and show your support for what may be one of the most historic runs for both the men's and women's basketball teams in Racers history.

The first time the impact of a student section was nationally recognized as a game-changer was in 2004, as Penn State's Nittany Lions brought a 20,000-person sea of white to Beaver Stadium. The rowdy, unified student section is said to have transformed the game day atmosphere into an unstoppable force of distraction and disruption for the Purdue Boilermakers.

However, student sections have been a problem for opposing teams and a secret weapon for home teams for decades, from small high school gymnasiums to intramural championships. Over the last two decades, student sections have intensified in complexity, adding clothing themes, signs and personalized chants towards the opponent, adding an extra layer of intimidation.

Racer Nation has a special opportunity during the remainder of the basketball season to show up in unprecedented numbers to push their fellow Racers to greater levels of success. Not only does participating in a student section rally the home team, but it also elevates the entire community of Racer fans, ultimately strengthening the bond between a scholar and their alma mater. There is only one way to be a part of a community, and that is to contribute to it; one of the most rewarding facets of being a part of a collegiate community is participating through your university's many ups and downs.



Graphic by Murray State Athletics

Luckily for you, Murray State basketball's success is certainly on an upward trajectory, and it looks like it can only go up from here. As the women's team searches to extend their 14-game winstreak, the nation's fourth longest active streak, and the men's team looks to continue putting up over 80 points per game, the student body should match their efforts by preparing to rally behind the Racers.

Continue to check your Murray State email for information from Racer Athletics about pregame festivities and themed nights. In the meantime, you can put the game dates in your calendar, make plans

with a few friends to attend the games and wait in great anticipation for the next Murray State basketball victory.

Remember, Racers – only you can take the reins of your collegiate career. One of the most unique aspects of attending Murray State is being a part of something bigger than yourself, and many of the university's longest and most beloved traditions and achievements are found within the athletics department. Don't deny yourself of this opportunity; rather, open yourself up to new experiences and find your way to The CFSB Center for a night you won't forget. I promise, you won't regret it.

Softball looks to improve in 2026

Anna Knasel
Contributing Writer
aknasel@murraystate.edu

Murray State's softball demonstrates the effect a quality coach can have on the team's overall capability. Throughout Kara Amundson's career with the Racers as their head coach, she was the winningest coach in program history.

Her contributions to the team have led to improvements with their offense as seven of her players have an above average batting average. With the 2026 season right around the corner, it's important to highlight the developments of the returning players from the 2025 season and showcase the strengths to look forward to as the season arrives.

Amundson will begin her 14th season as Murray State's head coach with a record of 328-292. In 2022, she led the Racers to their first Ohio Valley Conference regular season and tournament championship and earned OVC Coach of the Year.

One of the Racers' greatest strengths in the 2025 season was their consistent quality at bats. The team had a combined .288 batting average where four players had above a .300 average in at least 30 at bats. Sophomore utility Katy Huels led the team with her .374 average, also leading with 37 hits and two triples.

An area where the Racers struggled was their ability to put up home runs against their opponents, having 12 combined home runs as a team while their opponents had 25. The Racers home run leader was between four players, all with two home runs each.

Freshman infielder Hannah Sutton will not be returning in the spring but had two home runs in the 2025 season alongside being named MVC freshman of the week on Monday, April 14, 2025. Sutton also had the most doubles on the team with seven with Huels following behind with six. Sophomore utility and pitcher Kayleigh White and junior catcher Taylor Franzen also will not be returning but had a strong year with two home runs each. Senior outfielder Bailey Broemmer will finish off her college

season with the Racers after a strong 2025 season where she had two home runs, 17 hits and 12 runs batted in.

Sophomore pitcher Karlye Graber had the lowest earned runs average out of qualified pitchers on the roster with 5.09 (ERA) and strike outs with 46 and will be returning for the 2026 season. Senior pitcher Bre Haislip followed with the second best ERA with 6.36 in 63.2 innings with an opponent average of .303.

Softball concluded their previous season ranked #9 in the Missouri Valley Conference, ending on a two game losing streak against Illinois State and Drake with a record of 11-17.

Eight Racers received Easton and National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-American Scholar-Athlete honors concluding the 2025 season. Graber, Haislip, Huels, junior utility Adison Hicks, senior utility Erin Lackey, sophomore infielder Kenley Minor, junior pitcher Raylee Roby and junior outfielder Courtney Sandy were all recognized for their grade point averages during 2024-2025. As a team, they had a combined 3.35 GPA.

Huels, Minor and Broemmer were assigned to MVC teams, highlighting each of their strengths in the 2025 season. Huels was appointed to All-MVC First Team for her offensive power which was exhibited through her 17 game hit streak, the longest hit streak by a Racer that season.

Minor was selected for the All-MVC Second Team for both her offensive capabilities and her defensive strength showcased at second base. She hit .333 with a fielding percentage of .937. Broemmer was elected for the MVC All-Defensive team as she excelled in center-field with 83 putouts in 42 games.

During the November signing day, Amundson added six new players with a main focus on infielders. Outfielder Ava Maples sparked interest from appearing in All-District twice and participating in the 2025 All-District tournament.

Infielder Gracie Belle Weakley participated in All-District three times as well as appearing in All-County three times too. Infielder Camila Taylor is a



Kristopher Fister/The News
Junior outfielder Courtney Sandy slides into second base after driving in a run.

four time scholar athlete with a 2025 appearance in the All-Conference and All-District, being named the champion of both as well as being named the MVP for her team.

Another player who was a Conference and District champion was pitcher Alyssa Quick who was named both four times as well as 2022 State Champion. Catcher and infielder Payton Stueart had a career .408 batting average as well as three All-Conference appearances of her own. Lastly, pitcher and first baseman

Shannon McAuliffe had three All-Region, All-District and All-Conference appearances with a .464 batting average and 996 career strikeouts. The new additions showcase the offensive and defensive power to look forward to in the upcoming seasons.

The 2026 season begins with a series at Alabama State University on Friday, Feb. 6 through Sunday, Feb. 8 at Barbara Williams Softball complex. Conference play begins on Friday, March 6, against Northern Iowa at home.


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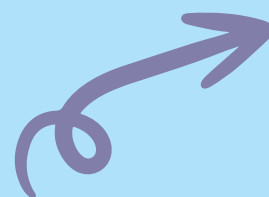


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