

NEWS FOR THE COUNCIL ON POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

NOVEMBER 2023



WKU unveils plans for Hilltopper Fieldhouse and Press Box

Western Kentucky University unveiled plans on Friday, October 20 for a new **state-of-the-art fieldhouse and press box**.

The 120,000-square-foot Hilltopper Fieldhouse will be home to the WKU Forensics and E-Sports programs, as well as provide practice and training space for the Big Red Marching Band and Hilltopper Athletics. The facility will be built upon the land that currently is home to the football practice field, in between Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium and Nick Denes Field.

The 15,300-square-foot press box will serve as a first-class home for media coverage of Hilltopper Football games. Situated above the existing Harbaugh Club, the press box will house the television broadcast, radio booths, coaches' booths, working press and game operations. Premium suites will also be in the new facility.

"The Hilltopper Fieldhouse will position our student-athletes for additional success," President Timothy C. Caboni said. "But more than an athletics facility, the Fieldhouse also will provide unparalleled, technology-rich, indoor practice spaces for our Big Red Marching Band, our E-Sports teams, and our Forensics team."

"The Hilltopper Fieldhouse will be an incredible complex for our student-athletes to utilize, as well as serving as the home to our Hilltopper Baseball program," Athletic Director Todd Stewart said. "Situated between Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium and Nick Denes Field, this state-of-the-art facility will enhance every one of our sport programs. The indoor space will allow for year-round, climate-controlled training for all 16 of our programs and puts us in the best position, from a facilities standpoint, we have ever been in the history of WKU Athletics once it is completed!"

WKU selected K. Norman Berry Associates Architects in association with HKS Architects for the project.

A groundbreaking celebration will take place on Friday, Nov. 10, at 10 a.m. Construction on Hilltopper Fieldhouse is expected to officially begin later this fall with project completion late in 2025. The press box construction will begin in December and is expected to be ready for kickoff in 2024.

The new Hilltopper Fieldhouse will:

- Serve as the permanent home to the WKU Forensics program and provide the program with modern classroom, practice, office, and competition space to allow it to continue its run of excellence as the most dominant collegiate speech and debate organization in the country.
- House the WKU E-Sports programs and teams and equip them with state-of-the-art competition space, practice pods and offices.
- Become the new base for the Big Red Marching Band program with dedicated storage/support space for the band as well as a venue for year-round, all-weather practice.
- Include a new Baseball Clubhouse with Locker Room, Weight Room, Team Room and Coaches' Offices.
- House a new baseball hitting facility with four batting cages and flexible multi-purpose space.
- Incorporate an 87,000 square foot indoor training facility for use by the WKU Marching Band, WKU Athletics, Intramurals and the greater WKU community.
- Serve to better equip WKU students for their endeavors in the classroom and in their competitions.
- Serve as a place of learning and collaboration for the various programs that will call it home.
- Celebrate the great success of the programs that will continue to grow and succeed from within this new facility.
- Encourage and provide the tools for innovation, learning, collaboration and success.

The new Press Box will:

- Be constructed within the existing Smith West stadium, as a new floor level built above the existing Harbaugh Club.
- Include modern media and press facilities to enable the media to better broadcast the continued success of the WKU programs.
- Provide state-of-the-art coaches facilities to better equip coaches and staff to guide the student-athletes of the University.
- House several suites for additional premium seating and viewing options.

A Steering Committee comprised of WKU faculty and staff worked with KNBA Architects & HKS Architects to design the new facilities.



WKU Student Publications business groups receive national awards

Cherry Creative and Student Publications Advertising received multiple awards in the 2023 College Media Business & Advertising Managers annual contest.

WKU Student Publications received recognition in the following categories:

- First place, Best Living Guide for the **2023 Housing Guide**
- Second place, Best Sales Strategy for a Special Section for the advertising staff's approach to sell **Best of the Hill**.
- Second place, Best Sponsored Content or Native Advertising for a **downtown Homecoming map** designed by Evansville senior Bailey Brush.
- Third place, Best Sales Promotional Materials for 2022-2023 sales fliers designed by Georgetown senior Amelia Curry.
- Third Place, Best Rate Card/Media Kit for the **2022-2023 media kit** designed by Curry
- Honorable mention, Best Paid Design Product for the **A Table for Y'all dining guide** produced in partnership with the Bowling Green Convention & Visitors Bureau

Cherry Creative is a branded content studio housed within WKU Student Publications.

The awards were presented during the CMBAM conference Oct. 12-14 in Minneapolis. The conference, held at the University of Minnesota, brought together students and advisers working on the business operations of student media across the country. Representing WKU at the conference were two student sales representatives, Troy, Illinois, senior Abby Loftus and Mount Washington junior Keelin Davis along with Student Publications Assistant Director Sam Oldenburg. Oldenburg also volunteers on the CMBAM board of directors as the organization's communications director.



WKU Big Red Marching Band receives invitation to perform in London

The WKU Big Red Marching Band has received an invitation to perform in the 2025 London New Year's Day Parade (LNYDP).

The LNYDP is equivalent to the renowned Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade with over 500,000 people in attendance annually. The parade is also televised on PBS to over 500 million people, reaching approximately 82% of U.S. television markets.

On Monday, September 18, an official entourage consisting of former Lord Mayor for the city of Westminster and founding patron of LNYDP, Roger Bramble, the Senior Patron and President of the London Mayors Association, the Chairman of the LNYDP, his aide-de-camp, and Senior Director of International Participation for LNYDP, Bill Northen, arrived at the Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium to present Dr. Gary Schallert, Dr. Matthew McCurry, and members of the WKU Big Red Marching Band with the official performance invitation.

"We are so excited for our students and our band to be presented with this amazing opportunity to travel and take the name of Western Kentucky University and the WKU Big Red Marching Band to a whole new level," says Dr. Matthew McCurry, Director of Athletic Bands and Associate Director of Bands. "We have worked really hard to put the Big Red Marching Band in the spotlight on a national stage and have our students be recognized for the fantastic work that they do."

This invitation coincides with a landmark year for the WKU Big Red Marching Band. 2025 marks the 100th anniversary of the WKU Band program.