

TIGER KICKOFF

A DOMINANT DEFENSE

Mizzou's defense has become a menacing threat to opponents, with even more room for growth as the season progresses.

'BIG-TIME RUN STOPPER'

Damon Wilson has made a name for himself at defensive end, leading the Tigers with three sacks.



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A United Express flight arrives Thursday at Columbia Regional Airport, marking the airline's return to the airport with daily service to Denver and Chicago.

COU celebrates return of United Airlines

Governor touts regional growth as flights resume

BY BRIAN SMOOT
Columbia Missourian

Gov. Mike Kehoe helped welcome the return of United Airlines as a flight arrived at Columbia Regional Airport for the first time in years. The first arrival from Chicago, coming in at 2:13 p.m. Thursday, was marked with a water cannon salute. In his speech, Kehoe stressed the importance of

regional growth. United suspended its flights during the COVID-19 pandemic. The flight to Denver stopped in 2020, and flights to Chicago ended in 2022. "This is something that — it's not partisan," Kehoe said. "This is something that we really believe is what drives our state and will be the answer to our state growing and continuing to provide opportunities for all Missouri." Politicians from both state and local legislatures gathered

for United's return, including Columbia Mayor Pro Tem Nick Foster, Jefferson City Mayor Ron Fitzwater and Boone County Presiding Commissioner Kip Kendrick. "This is about working together collaboratively across government," Kendrick said. "We need to have a seat at the table to make sure that we can help pave the way for progress like United coming here." The politicians spoke about the effect the new flights will have on economic growth.

"We create jobs out of this. We attract businesses to the region, and we boost tourism," Foster said. The first United flight left for Chicago at 3 p.m. Thursday. "It took a lot of work to get to this day, and I'm very excited that it's here," United representative Sam Levy said. Flights to Denver are expected to start at 9 a.m. Friday. "This is really a great sign for us to continue to show how our region can continue to grow," Kehoe said.

Mizzou students Decorate the District

Murals transform downtown storefronts for Homecoming
BY CHARLEY DUFFIN
Columbia Missourian

Colorful board game murals were painted across Columbia's downtown storefronts as University of Missouri students decorated The District for Homecoming. At 10 a.m. Thursday, students from various campus organizations, clubs and Greek houses took to downtown to participate in Decorate the District. The annual Homecoming tradition welcomes alumni and visitors alike with colors and artwork on popular storefronts throughout downtown Columbia. This year's overarching theme is board games, with murals of childhood favorites such as Chutes & Ladders and Operation featured up and down Columbia hotspots. Alpha Delta Pi sorority member Yeva Stoops said she was excited to see her sorority's theme was Jumanji. "We have Wendy's, so we're just painting the sides for that," Stoops said. "SteerCo basically spun the wheel, and everyone had their top business that they wanted — whoever spun first got their first choice. I think we were the third to pick." The Mizzou Homecoming Steering Committee, or SteerCo, is a group of students who help to plan Homecoming each year. The students are split into various teams, with some in charge of the parade, the blood drive or the talent show, among other events that help it be the largest student-run homecom-



Addy Slusher paints a window Thursday at Lakota Coffee on Ninth Street. This is the first year that the Council of Student Social Workers is participating in Decorate the District for Mizzou Homecoming.

ing in the country. Sticking with the theme, each participating downtown storefront is painted with a different board game. "When everything's said and done, you just walk around and see the town of Columbia come to life and see all the creative ways that other pairings did their themes," Stoops said. Her Campus, an all-women's student group dedicated to online creative writing, was participating in Homecoming activities for the

first time. "It's really nice to feel seen as an organization on campus, get that recognition, be part of such an amazing event that I love," Her Campus Secretary Parker Carley Please see **DECORATE**, Page **4A**

Kehoe says he will sign new map on Sunday

Governor confident despite suits challenging revisions

BY RUDI KELLER
AND STEPH QUINN
Missouri Independent

The courts will determine whether the bill revising Missouri's congressional districts is constitutional, Gov. Mike Kehoe said Thursday after announcing his plans to sign the measure this weekend. Speaking to reporters after an event in Columbia, Kehoe said he felt confident he was on firm legal ground when he called lawmakers into a special session. "We'll let the courts decide that," Kehoe said. "We wouldn't have went into this without feeling like we had good advice on that." Over 10 days this month, lawmakers met and passed a revised map for Missouri's eight congressional districts so Republicans could have an advantage in the 5th District, currently held by U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Kansas City Democrat. "Missouri's conservative, common-sense values should be truly represented at all levels of government, and the Missouri First Map delivers just that," Kehoe said in a news release announcing he would sign the bill on Sunday. Even before the session began, legal challenges were being filed. The NAACP has a case argued Sept. 15 challenging Kehoe's authority to have called a special session on redistricting. Additional court challenges are underway in Cole and Jackson counties seeking to have the new map declared void because the Missouri Constitution directs lawmakers to draw districts after the census every 10 years but is silent on whether it can be done at other times. Kehoe said he relied on his advisers on the legality of his decision to call a special session. "I really believe they're very good on these issues, and we think we'll withstand all those challenges," he said. The case in Jackson County alleges the map is incorrect because a voting district designation is used twice in the bill. The court must decide if that is a mistake that scuttles the bill, but Kehoe on Thursday said he believes it is a mistake in census mapping, not in the bill.

"Once you look at the map, if you just read the language, it doesn't seem to make sense," Kehoe said. "But if you read the language and you look at the map, you can see somewhere along the line there was some sort of error when they put those numbers on out of the 60,000 voting districts across the United States." As the case that is the most advanced in challenging the new map, the NAACP lawsuit is likely the first that will be decided. At an "emergency meeting" Wednesday, Missouri NAACP president Nimrod Chapel said the group Please see **MAP**, Page **4A**

Ten years after MU protests, racial tensions endure

BY KATE ALTER

Nearly a decade after students protested racial incidents, the University of Missouri is still under scrutiny for its responses to discrimination and student expression. Over the past few years, Mizzou changed Homecoming parade policies to exclude political content, canceled the Legion of Black Collegians' "Black 2 Class" block party, removed resource websites for minority students and dissolved the Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity. Despite outcries from students and advocates, the university emphasized that it took these actions to align with federal and administrative policies. Still, these recent efforts parallel measures taken by the university around the time

of the 2015 protests against racial discrimination on campus. Reflections on 2015 protests Concerned Student 1950, a collective in 2015 made up of Black student activists at Mizzou, protested a series of racist and discriminatory acts at Mizzou, attracting national attention. What initially sparked the controversy was a Facebook post by former student government President Payton Head that went viral. In the post, he recounted a verbal assault on campus where white men in a pickup truck yelled racial slurs at him. Frustrations with the university's lack of response to Black students' concerns sparked

a series of nonviolent protests by members of the Concerned Student 1950 and other groups on campus from September through November of 2015. One of the most notable protests took place when Jonathan Butler, who launched a hunger strike, vowed not to eat until former UM System President Tim Wolfe was removed from office. In solidarity, around 60 African American Mizzou football players threatened to boycott all team activities and games in November. Two major rallies were organized and led by Concerned Student 1950 members under the slogan "Racism Lives Here." During the 2015 Homecoming parade, students and Please see **PROTESTS**, Page **4A**

Chamber of Commerce CEO resigns

McCormick leaving for job in Ocala, Florida, after 12 years in Columbia

BY FAITH BOYD

Matt McCormick, president and CEO of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, will resign effective Oct. 31, the chamber announced Thursday. According to a news release, McCormick will become the president and CEO of Ocala Metro Chamber & Economic Partnership located in Ocala, Florida. "I am proud of what we have accomplished together, the programs we have built and the strong partnerships we have," McCormick said in the release. "Columbia has been our family's home for the past 12 years and will always hold a special place in our hearts." In his role, McCormick launched initia-



MATT MCCORMICK

tives to support workforce development, supported the business community through COVID-19 challenges and led efforts to expand and renovate Interstate 70 and the Missouri River bridge. "Over the past 12 years, Matt McCormick has represented the Columbia Chamber of Commerce with exceptional dedication," Board of Directors Chair Mat Gass said. "His leadership has guided the chamber's growth, strengthened its role in the community and created lasting partnerships." Lily White Boyd, the chamber's vice president of external affairs, will serve as interim CEO while the board searches for a new CEO.

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