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Growth showing at Middle Tennessee

BRAA sets fundraising record

MT Media Relations

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - It is well documented that Middle Tennessee enjoyed a banner year in athletics as evidenced by winning its fourth Sun Belt Conference All-Sports trophy in seven years.

The payoff is also being realized from an economic standpoint when considering the Blue Raider Athletic Association (BRAA) just turned in record fundraising numbers, the current football season ticket drive is ahead of last year's pace, and the football and women's basketball programs are coming off record-setting attendance seasons.

"We are coming off one of our best years athletically and academically, and our fans and supporters are responding to this success," said Middle Tennessee Director of Athletics Chris Massaro. "We are building the foundation for future success and we plan to exceed last year's results in 2007-08."

One of the biggest areas of success last year was in the area of fundraising, where the BRAA raised \$2.54 million compared to \$1.59 million in 2005-06 and set a record in 2006-07 with \$835,383 raised in unrestricted monies compared to \$658,281 the previous year. Also during the year, a total of 500 new donors joined the BRAA. This is critical because the BRAA is the primary provider of scholarship funding for our student-athletes.

"It was a great year for us in terms of raising additional money and bringing in several new members," said Associate Athletic Director Alan Farley. "I commend the efforts of our staff and committees for their hard work in helping make all of this possible. Our fans realize this is an important time in the growth of our program and their giving helps fund scholarships, as well as enable us to improve our facilities."

Success on the field is also carrying over into season ticket sales for the upcoming 2007 football campaign. Middle Tennessee is feeling the effects of a conference championship and bowl appearance as football season ticket sales are at a nine percent increase over this time a year ago.

That's a good sign, too, because based on previous selling trends Middle Tennessee's new season ticket drive generally gains momentum in early August.

"If your retirement portfolio gains nine percent annually you would probably be pleased, or if a business turns a nine percent increase that would probably be considered a successful year," added Massaro. "We are encouraged by this current increase because trends would indicate the number should pick up as we get into early August and closer to football season."

Success within various programs has driven record numbers at the ticket office. For instance, the Blue Raider football team drew a school-record 22,037 fans for home games in 2006 and set a single-game home attendance mark when 32,797 watched the Blue Raiders face nationally-ranked Louisville in Nashville. The average attendance in 2006 was up almost 7,000 from 2005. In 2006, 110,185 fans went through the turnstiles for the Blue Raiders' five home contests.

"We were pleased and impressed with the support of Middle Tennessee fans last season," said Head Football Coach Rick Stockstill. "Fan support is so crucial when you are trying to build a program and our fans were a big reason for the team's success in 2006."

A similar correlation can be found in women's basketball where the best season in program history translated into the nation's sixth-best attendance increase in that sport. The Blue Raiders averaged 4,157 fans per game and set a single-game mark when 10,010 saw Middle Tennessee take on top ranked Maryland.

Attendance also has been on the rise in men's basketball and baseball. The Blue Raider men's basketball team has averaged more than 4,000 in consecutive seasons for the first time in 15 years, while the baseball program realized the third highest single-season attendance average in school history during 2007.

For season tickets, please call the Middle Tennessee Ticket Office at 1-888-YES-MTSU or order online at GoBlueRaiders.com.



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