

Raiders have raised 60 percent of funds for tennis facility

Hope to complete goal by early spring

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Middle Tennessee State University has raised 60 percent of the \$3 million it needs to build a state-of-the-art Indoor Tennis Facility and officials called upon supporters to help reach its goal by early spring to allow for a May groundbreaking.

Director of Athletics Chris Massaro said the proposed 47,000-square-foot facility would be a partnership with the City of Murfreesboro, the



Christy-Houston Foundation and MTSU. It would be open to the general public and serve as the home of the Blue Raider men's and women's tennis programs.

"Thanks to the generous contribution of the Christy-Houston Foundation, we are in the home stretch of this fundraising project," said Massaro. "It is important that we finish strong in order to build as many indoor courts as possible."

Massaro said thermometers went up on Dec. 7 at the Old Fort Park tennis courts and MTSU's varsity courts at the Buck Bouldin Tennis Center "to communicate with the public as we make progress toward reaching our goal."

The project, part of the University's \$80 million Centennial Campaign announced April 13, calls for six to eight courts; locker rooms for men and women; a lobby; a viewing area for spectators, a laundry room and an electronic scoreboard.

"The general public will have 80 percent of the court time in the new facility," said Associate Athletics Director Alan Farley. "The Middle Tennessee tennis teams will have a reserved block of time for practice in the afternoons during the week and when they are hosting matches.

"It is unusual for a city the size of Murfreesboro and as large as Rutherford County to not have an indoor tennis facility. We are working very hard to change that."

The facility would also allow Murfreesboro/Rutherford County to host ITA and TSSAA tournaments, as well as numerous other events that would provide new tax revenue to the city and county, Farley said.

Farley credited the volunteer work by the Indoor Tennis Committee, led by co-chairs Bill Neal and Joyce Ealy, in "getting this project off the ground." Committee members include Sandy Neal, Shane Reeves, Julie Wishing, Shelly Godwin, Jimmy Borendame and Farley.

"The committee will be engaging the local tennis community to be a part of the project as it will be a place for everyone to play," Farley said. "We have been very fortunate to have a couple of lead gifts and several major gifts given to this project."

Farley said there are numerous naming opportunities available, such as the courts, locker room, grandstand, lobby, plaza, and even the facility itself. "Naming opportunities within the facility are a great way to leave a lasting legacy," he said.

The lobby of the proposed indoor tennis facility will be named after long time tennis enthusiast Bill and Sandy Neal in exchange for their \$25,000 gift, Farley said. Also, he said, the late Carolyn Reeves will be honored inside the facility, thanks to the memorial fund contributions totaling \$10,000 from her friends and family.

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