

New entertainment, events scheduled for Homecoming

Oct. 1-6

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New features are expected to bring a high level of energy, school spirit and alumni engagement to this year's "Maverick Days" Homecoming Monday, Oct. 1, through Saturday, Oct. 6.

New to the Homecoming schedule this year are a "Buffalo Wild Wings Blazin' Wing Challenge"; a Saturday morning Homecoming parade; extended hours for "Taste of Mankato; and the Intercollegiate Athletics Hall of Fame induction and celebration (scheduled during Homecoming for the first time in more than decade).

Other Homecoming activities include a "Block Party" kickoff event, a "Cram-A-Van" food drive, a lip sync contest, a Friday night pep rally, the 3 p.m. football game (Mavericks vs. North Dakota), and a Saturday "Comedy Blowout" to cap the day.

"I think we have responded to the challenges brought forward by the Minnesota Student Senate Association to breathe a new level of energy into this event, and to further engage students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Greater Mankato community in this wonderful, week-long, celebration," said Kara Van Sickle, student chair of the Homecoming Committee.

"With an increased budget and additional resources, our committee has worked very hard to put together a great lineup of events and activities."

The week kicks off with a Homecoming "Block Party" Monday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., with the University Mall bustling with food, music and student organization booths. Monday's schedule also includes a CD release party and a live performance by the Twin Cities-based band Evermore Escape at 6 p.m. in the Centennial Student Union Ballroom.

On Tuesday the focus shifts to giving back to the community with the Cram-a-Van food drive and can-sculpture building contest on the mall from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Students and alumni can sport their Maverick pride by supporting the volleyball team in a 7 p.m. Tuesday match against Upper Iowa in Bresnan Arena.

Wednesday's lineup features the new Buffalo Wild Wings Blazin' Wing Challenge, where several brave and hearty students will vie to claim the title of "wing king" in a high noon showdown on the mall. On Wednesday night the action shifts to Myers Field House, where a dodgeball tournament starts at 6:30 p.m.

On Thursday night students will "strut their stuff" in the Taylor Center, where Homecoming royalty will be crowned during a coronation ceremony at 7 p.m., followed by some of the university's best, worst and funniest entertainment – the popular lip sync contest at 8 p.m. For those with more refined cultural tastes, the musical "Cats" will play in Ted Paul Theatre Thursday and Friday at 7:30 p.m. each evening.

Friday is "Maverick Pride Day," when faculty, staff and students wear purple-and-gold apparel all day. Employees are invited to celebrate their Minnesota State Mankato roots at a luncheon for on-campus alumni in the CSU Ballroom, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The annual Hall of Fame celebration – new to Homecoming – starts with a 6 p.m. social hour, followed by dinner and a formal induction ceremony at 7 p.m. in the downtown Alltel Center. Students are invited to "Stomper's Pep Rally" at 7 p.m. in the intramural field area southeast of Gage Towers, where festivities will include a cheer contest, bonfire, pep rally and a free concert with music by Ha Ha Tonka.

Night owls are invited to join "Late Night with the Mavericks" Friday in Centennial Student Union from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. for live music, free billiards and bowling, and in snacks and refreshments.

Saturday activities include the parade at 11 a.m., moved from Friday afternoon to attract more community members and out-of-town alumni. "Taste of Mankato," on the practice fields west of Blakeslee Stadium, will be from noon to 2:30 p.m. It will include more than 20 food vendors, games, rides, events and activities for families, performances by the cheerleaders and pep bands, live entertainment and student contests. Tickets are \$10 for adults, including students, and \$5 for youth (ages 5-18).

The Maverick pre-game walk precedes the football game against the University of North Dakota, with kick-off at 3 p.m. Reserved-seat tickets are \$14 for adults and \$7 for youth; general admission tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for ages 5-18. Minnesota State Mankato students are admitted free with valid identification.

After the game, the "Blowout Comedy Event" features B.J. Novak, a.k.a. Ryan "the temp" from NBC's "The Office," at 8 p.m. in Taylor Center. "Bingo Night" will be from 10 p.m. to 1 a.m. in Carkoski Commons, with prizes.

Additional information and a schedule are at <http://www.mnsu.edu/homecoming/>.