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UM Forward Together Campaign Exceeds Goal, Announces Extension

Ole Miss Athletics Foundation raises \$155 million in donations toward campaign, eyes \$200 million

NOVEMBER 18, 2015 BY ADAM KUFFNER



The Pavilion at Ole Miss, a new \$95 million arena opening in January, was made possible through the Forward Together campaign. Photo by Joshua McCoy/Ole Miss Athletics

OXFORD, Miss. – Thanks to the generous support of Rebel Nation, the Ole Miss Athletics Foundation has surpassed its \$150 million goal for the **Forward Together** campaign. With the help of 3,425 donors, the campaign achieved its goal in just over a four-year span, raising \$155 million.

“On behalf of Ole Miss Athletics, I want to thank everyone in the Ole Miss family and beyond who have made a contribution toward the Forward Together campaign and helping us not only reach our \$150 million goal, but surpass it

sooner than expected,” said Ross Bjork, University of Mississippi athletics director. “When I arrived, I stated that we must ‘pull the rope in the same direction because you love our student-athletes,’ so I appreciate everyone who has become a follower of this approach.

“In addition, we have the best fundraising staff in the country and their hard work has not gone unnoticed throughout our campaign. The generosity by Rebel Nation allows us to keep improving our athletics facilities and enhance the student-athlete and fan experience at Ole Miss. We will all be challenged with our new goal of \$200 million, but we will continue to work with maximum effort to achieve goals on and off the field and move forward together as family.”

The Forward Together campaign started in August 2011 and raised \$25 million in its first month. One year into the process, the campaign reached \$75 million in gifts before surpassing \$110 million in May 2014.

Today’s total of \$155 million is the result of \$56 million in philanthropic giving and \$99 million in donations related to priority seating. Three hundred of the Vaught Society’s 375 active members have contributed to the Forward Together campaign, including 13 philanthropic gifts at the \$1 million-and-above level.

“We are always amazed to see how generous Rebel Nation can be, and we look forward to seeing this excitement continue as we move ahead to reach our new goal,” said Keith Carter, Ole Miss senior associate athletics director for development and Athletics Foundation executive director. “Not only is the Forward Together campaign providing top-quality experiences and resources to be successful for our student-athletes, but it is also giving our fans the best game day atmospheres in the country.”

As part of the Forward Together campaign, multiple projects have either been completed or are underway. The Manning Center, the spectacular indoor practice facility, finished renovation in the spring of 2014. Vaught-Hemingway Stadium is in the midst of a facelift that will provide Rebel fans with an even greater game day atmosphere along with additional seating. Thirty luxury suites and 870 club seats were added to the south end zone, and the west skyboxes were renovated before the 2015 season.

With the campaign reaching its goal, Vaught-Hemingway will see more improvements next season. The north side of the stadium will be transformed into an exciting new “front door,” complete with a plaza and bell tower. The Walk of Champions will extend from the Grove to the plaza, which will include the new Jake Gibbs Letterwinner Walk. The series of columns will feature the names of every student-athlete who has earned a varsity letter at Ole Miss, dating back to the first football team in 1893.

Closing in the north end zone will bring stadium seating above 64,000. Finally, new videoboards along with improved audio systems will be ready for the 2016 season.

The Forward Together campaign also brought the concept of The Pavilion at Ole Miss to fruition. The

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Students Learn ‘Real Politics’ in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates’

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy’s new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying “thank you.” “It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Ole Miss In the News

Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve’s

\$95 million state-of-the-art arena will seat roughly 9,500 fans for Rebel basketball games and a variety of other events. The Pavilion at Ole Miss will open its doors Jan. 7, when the Rebels host Alabama.

Looking to continue the momentum and success of the Forward Together campaign, the Athletics Foundation announces a \$50 million stretch goal for the next phase of projects. These projects will include renovations of the following facilities: FedEx Student-Athlete Success Center, Gillom Sports Center, Ole Miss Track and Field Complex, Stames Athletic Training Center, football practice fields and a new indoor tennis facility.

Along with upgrades to each of those athletics facilities, additional enhancements to Oxford-University Stadium/Swayze Field will improve different sections of the facility to benefit the team and its fans. More details regarding this project will be announced later.

As part of the next phase, \$35 million of the \$200 million goal will go toward current capital project costs and \$15 million toward a capital investment fund to continuously maintain and improve all Ole Miss athletics facilities.

About Ole Miss Athletics Foundation

The Ole Miss Athletics Foundation is the fundraising department of Ole Miss athletics and provides resources for student-athletes through scholarships, facilities, coaches' compensation and other areas of the programs. For more information about the foundation and its initiatives, visit <http://givetoathletics.com> or call 662-915-7159.

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