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EIU Homecoming to Feature Many Events for Community

Oct-13-2011

Eastern Illinois University will celebrate Homecoming 2011, "Greatness in Blue," with a variety of events incorporating the community throughout the week of Oct. 17.

Of particular community interest in this year's Homecoming are the coronation on Monday; Family Fun Night on Thursday; many Saturday events that include a pancake breakfast, 2.5K race, parade and football game; and daily "Greatness in Giving" service projects.

Local businesses are encouraged to join in the fun by participating in "**Paint the Town Blue**," which encompasses a wide range of activities, including window-painting and displays, "Billy's Bucks" food discounts and specials, marquee signage, yard signs and more.

The week's events will begin with the "**Royal Blue**" **Coronation** of the EIU Homecoming Court at 7 p.m. Monday in McAfee Gymnasium.

Family Fun Night, with the theme "Big Blue Playground," will include activities for all ages, including bingo, carnival games, inflatable games, prizes and refreshments. It will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday on the South Quad. In the case of inclement weather, activities will be moved to the MLK Jr. Union.

The 12th annual **pancake breakfast** sponsored by the Charleston Rotary Club and EIU will take place from 6 a.m. to noon Saturday in the parking lot of Domino's Pizza, at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Seventh Street. The menu includes pancakes, sausage, milk and coffee. Proceeds will support local Rotary projects.

The 12th annual **EIU/Charleston 2.5K (1.5-mile) Homecoming race** will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday. Runners/walkers will begin at the corner of Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue, make their way north on Seventh Street to the Charleston Square, then return to EIU's Old Main via Sixth Street. The entry fee is \$10; register by Oct. 15 to receive a T-shirt. Awards will be given in run, walk and wheelchair categories. McDonald's will provide gift packs to all participants. Prizes will be given for best full-body costumes. To register, see <http://www.eiu.edu/homecoming/race.php>.

The **Homecoming parade** will begin at 9:30 a.m. Saturday. The parade, now in the third year of its new route, will begin at the intersection of Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue, travel north to Monroe Avenue, west on Monroe to Sixth Street, south on Sixth, west onto Polk Avenue, and south on Division Street to Grant Avenue (aka Panther Way), winding up at the tailgate area at O'Brien Stadium.

As the parade route includes Charleston's Morton Park, community members are encouraged to bring lawn chairs for a safe and relaxing view of the parade. Family-oriented Homecoming activities will again be provided at the park, including a bounce house, face-painting and EIU cutouts for photo opportunities.

In preparation for the football game, fans are invited to arrive early and show their Panther Pride at this year's **Football TailGREAT and Alumni Tent City**, with activities beginning at 11:30 a.m. Saturday. All of EIU's colleges will be represented at this tailgating event south of O'Brien Stadium, which will feature a performance by Jason and the Haymakers, a country band that includes two EIU alumni. Free popcorn, freebies and a Kids' Zone are also scheduled. There is no cost for the tailgating activities.

The **Homecoming football game**, in which the EIU Panthers host Ohio Valley Conference rival UT Martin, will begin at 1:30 p.m. Saturday. Tickets may be purchased the day of the game at O'Brien Stadium at a cost of \$15 for adults, \$13 for EIU staff, \$7 for high school students and \$5 for ages 4 through middle school. EIU students will be admitted free with their Panther Card ID.

The EIU Alumni Association will honor nine alumni at the **Alumni Awards dinner** Saturday evening, with a social hour at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and can be obtained by calling 217-581-6616. For details on the award winners, please see <http://www.eiu.edu/alumni/awards.php>.

Throughout the week, EIU students will be volunteering their time to help with "**Greatness in Giving**," a series of community-service projects. A winter clothing collection will be held all week. In addition, each weekday will feature a particular activity, including collecting canned food; creating cards for hospice patients; collecting athletic shoes for recycling; and writing cards and creating keychains for local children involved with the Department of Children and Family Services.



The week will end with **Trash Bash** at 1 p.m. Sunday. Volunteers will meet at Old Main to pick up garbage left behind during Homecoming festivities.

For details on all these and all Homecoming events, please see the new website at <http://www.eiu.edu/homecoming>. The site also offers a Homecoming history page, a photo gallery, a ringtone of the Eastern State March and EIU-themed desktop wallpaper.