



## **Stanton defines plans for return of ETSU football**

### **For Immediate Release**

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**JOHNSON CITY, Tenn. (Dec. 22, 2006)** – Citing the report he received from the Football Task Force earlier this week, ETSU President **Dr. Paul E. Stanton Jr.** announced Friday that he is prepared to proceed with plans to return football to the university by the fall 2010 season.

However, Stanton said several steps remain in the process, including the institution of student fees and fund raising goals that must be met.

“The ball’s just been kicked to us and we’ve got 99 yards to go, but I’m going to be there with you all the way,” said Stanton, who established the Football Task Force in June. “I’m 100 percent committed and believe we can get this done. Our students have indicated they want it and are willing to support a student fee to help fund it. But we will also need a stadium that could cost anywhere from \$10 to \$15 million, and that will rely on community and fan support. I believe we can get it done, and nothing would suit me more than to throw out that first football in 2010.”

According to Stanton, the following must be accomplished for football to return:

- A phased-in student athletic fee must be approved by the student body through a referendum vote in April 2007. If affirmed, the proposed fee and subsequent increases must then be approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents, ETSU’s governing body, during its June 2007 meeting. These dollars will be used to fund operating expenses.
- A total of \$300,000 must be in hand by March 31, 2007, to fund the preplanning stage. This stage will include the hiring of a facility consultant, as well as the design development of a new football stadium.
- A total of \$15 million must be in hand by July 2008 to move forward with the construction of a new football stadium and related facilities.
- Completion of new football facilities (including a stadium, locker rooms, fieldhouse, etc.) would be scheduled for June 2010 with the first game planned for the fall of 2010.

The football program at ETSU was disbanded after the 2003 season. At the time, Stanton said issues such as a \$1.2 million annual deficit for football, issues with Memorial Center’s turf field, state budget woes, and the overall athletic program’s inability to meet Title IX compliance led to his decision to end the program. Stanton said today’s financial landscape is different, and the current state of the ETSU athletic department is better than ever before.

“We are just doing better now than we were three years ago,” Stanton said. “I also think the support is there in the community to get it done. If all these things come together, we can make this happen.”

Members of the Football Task Force are:

**Dr. Wilsie S. Bishop**, ETSU VP for Administration and Chief Operating Officer

**C.M. Boggs**, Accounts Manager, Waste Management Service Center

**Jeff Byrd**, President, Bristol Motor Speedway

**Dr. David D. Collins**, ETSU VP for Business and Finance

**Tim P. Jones**, Chairman of the Board, ETSU Foundation

**Dr. Fred Mackara**, President, ETSU Faculty Senate

**Dr. Richard A. Manahan**, ETSU VP for University Advancement

**Dave Mullins**, ETSU Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

**Dr. Roy S. Nicks**, Chancellor Emeritus of the Tennessee Board of Regents

**Jerry Robertson**, retired ETSU Athletic Trainer

**Josh Shearin**, President, ETSU Student Government Association

**Dr. Phil Roe**, Vice Mayor, Johnson City Commission, and OB-GYN physician

**Ken Bates**, President of the ETSU Pirate Club