

# Stores expect increased revenue

## Owners attribute spike to alumni

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STAFF WRITER

As Homecoming Week rolls around, many Franklin Street businesses are anticipating slightly higher revenue from the thousands of students and alumni who will purchase food and paraphernalia.

Judging by the massive amount of boxes ready to be sorted out and stored behind the bar at Top of the Hill, restaurants in the area are bracing for the crowds flocking into Chapel Hill for Homecoming.

"As you can see, we are getting ready," said manager Guy Murphy as he sat next to dozens of boxes.

"It will start picking up around Thursday of Homecoming week."

Other bars popular among alumni include Goodfellas, Lucy's and He's Not Here.

Area restaurants expect to see an increase in sales from 10 to 25 percent during Homecoming. This year's Homecoming will feature a football game against Arizona State University.

Business owners said they expect to see an increase in student turnout, as well as more sales from alumni retuning to town for the event.

"There will be a great number of ... alumni coming back and visiting their old hangouts," said Aaron Nelson, executive director of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce.

In addition, he said events such as Homecoming always have had a great impact on the town's economy. "Carolina football definitely draws a good deal of people."

Local owners said it is hard to say whether this year's revenue will rise compared to previous years, but UNC football — even with a losing record — greatly influences

the Chapel Hill economy.

And employees said they are not particularly worried about the outcome of the game.

"If there is a good crowd, it doesn't really matter," said Jerry Brooks, manager of Ham's of Chapel Hill.

He said games against teams like Florida State University tend to attract a lot of people even if the team is having a bad season.

"But of course we want the team to start winning," he said.

Greg Turner, a manager at Johnny T-Shirts, said that if the Homecoming game were against a rival school or even another ACC team, overall business might see a far more noticeable increase.

"During football weekends we see a lot of former students, some that graduated anywhere from 10 to 30 years ago," he said.

Businesses around the University do not appear to be affected by the economic slump that has slowed down some industries.

"We assume it would be better, but so far it hasn't been bad at all," Murphy said.

Shelton Henderson, owner of The Shrunken Head Boutique, has been selling UNC paraphernalia since 1969, and said he enjoys every minute of it, Homecoming or not.

"On Saturdays, we give away buttons and tattoos, the line goes out the door," he said. "We have a lot of loyal costumers and friends that come over. ... It is our love for the school."

Though that kind of welcoming attitude keeps people coming back for more, Henderson admits that "if the teams wins, we win."

But no matter the record, he said Homecoming can be described in one way. "It's good business, and lots of it."

Contact the State & National  
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DTH FILE PHOTO

Patrons gather around for a drink at the bar of Top of the Hill on a Tuesday night. The restaurant, bar and brewery, located at 100 E. Franklin St., is one of Chapel Hill's most popular night spots among alumni and students.


*"There will be a great number of ... alumni coming back and visiting their old hangouts,"*

AARON NELSON,  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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