



TOP STORY

WVU Day at the Capitol: STEM on display, Mountaineer mascot makes the rounds

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From left: Aliyah Linkous, and Luke Brown, both 14, of Mercer County, watch as Connor Mann, 23, uses a controller to operate a robot (foreground) near the West Virginia Capitol Rotunda on March 5, 2025. Mann, of St. Albans, is a senior mechanical and aerospace engineering student at WVU, and a member of the WVU Rover Challenge Team. WVU had about 30 displays around the Capitol and about 115 students, faculty and staff on hand to celebrate WVU Day during the legislative session. CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE | Gazette-Mail

With a robot clicking, whirring and rolling around on the floor in front of him, Connor Mann was in his element.

As part of WVU Day Wednesday at the West Virginia Capitol, Mann, 23, of St. Albans, a senior mechanical and aerospace engineering student at West Virginia University, showed visitors how to use a wireless controller to operate the robot rover.

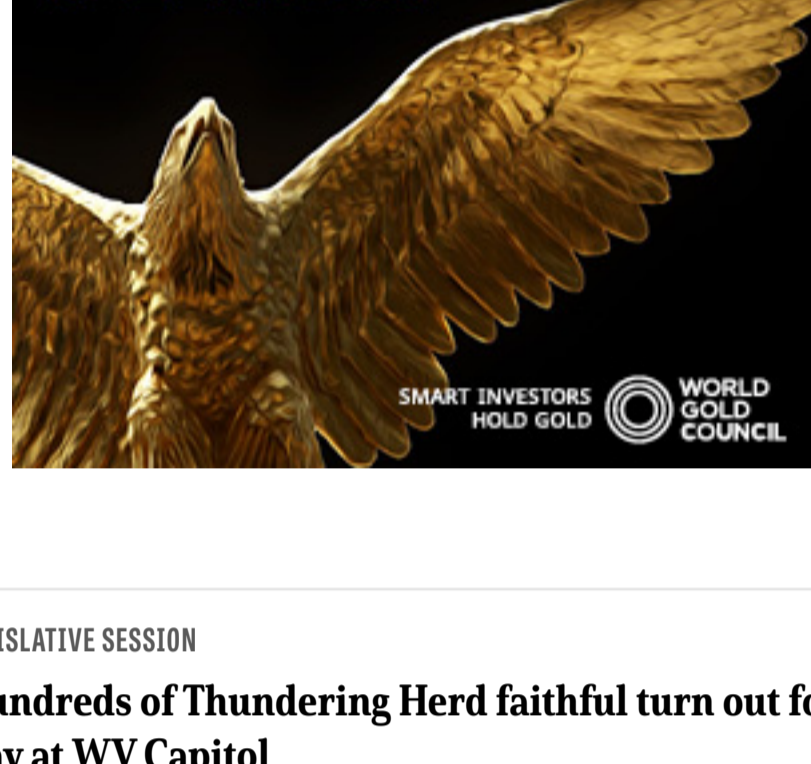
Luke Brown, 14, was all in on the impromptu STEM showcase.

"I'm interested in the engineering program at WVU," said Brown, who attends Pikeview High School. "I want to be able to design roller coasters," he said. "[WVU] would be a great first step."



Mann helps lead the [University Rover Challenge Team](#) and said he enjoys bringing the science he loves to other students, like Brown.

"The big reason I want to be here is for the outreach," Mann said, adding that he likes to, "get students on the ground, get their hands on robots [and] hopefully push people from West Virginia into more of those STEM fields. I think we have a lot of talent here that's underrepresented."



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In addition to Mann and the robot, nicknamed Heimdall, WVU had about 30 displays around the Capitol and about 115 students, faculty and staff on hand to celebrate WVU Day during the legislative session.



The WVU Mountaineer mascot Braden Adkins (at left) of Craigsville, Nicholas County, is photographed with Renee Spears (at right) near the West Virginia Capitol Rotunda on March 5, 2025. WVU had about 30 displays around the Capitol and about 115 students, faculty and staff on hand to celebrate WVU Day during the legislative session. Spears, of Winfield said she, her three daughters are all big-time WVU fans. "We bleed blue and gold," she said. "Even when they lose." CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE | Gazette-Mail

Making the rounds Wednesday was WVU Mountaineer mascot Braden Adkins of Craigsville, Nicholas County, who stopped to take photos with Renee Spears near the upper Rotunda.

Spears said she and her three daughters are all big-time WVU fans.

"We bleed blue and gold," said Spears, of Winfield. "Even when they lose."



WVU President Gordon Gee greets students, on March 5, 2025, near the West Virginia Capitol Rotunda in Charleston. WVU had about 30 displays around the Capitol and about 115 students, faculty and staff on hand to celebrate WVU Day during the legislative session. CHRISTOPHER MILLETTE | Gazette-Mail



Tags: West Virginia University, Wvu, Wvu Day, Legislative Session, West Virginia Capitol, Connor Mann, University Rover Challenge Team, Braden Adkins, Renee Spears

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