MOREHEAD -- Twice during graduation ceremonies last week, Morehead State University President A.D. Albright referred to the Rowan County school as "The University of the Mountains."

The name is Albright's brainchild and university employees say he is enormously fond of it. As a marketing tool, the "subtitle," he says, has received "a very positive response" in Eastern Kentucky.

Do not, however, expect Albright to propose at today's board of regents meeting that the name be changed from Morehead State University to The University of the Mountains.

"I don't know of any movement to change the name," Albright said, chuckling, "unless there's something going on that my radar hasn't picked up."

Albright uses "The University of the Mountains" in speeches, and it has become a fixture in many of the school's advertisements aimed at recruiting students.

But that apparently is as far as anyone wants it to go.

"I don't think anything like that would ever go anyplace," said Keith Kappes, who is director of university relations and president of the Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce. "I feel confident that the rest of Rowan County, the citizens of Morehead and our alumni would strongly oppose such a change."

Albright said yesterday that by calling Morehead The University of the Mountains, he was attempting to "let the people of the region know we're identifying with them. It's had a very good response."

Some people do wish Morehead would change its name, but they live in Minnesota.

"We sure do," said Jerry Haukebo, public affairs director at Moorhead State University in Moorhead, Minn. "I'm sure it would be easier for them than for us to change ours."

The zip codes of Morehead State and Moorhead State, 40351 and 56560, respectively, aren't even close and KY looks nothing like MN on an envelope, he said, but the U.S. Postal Service, among others, frequently confuses the two.
Financial-aid packages, checks and admission applications get mixed up, he said. So do people. When the New York Giants won the Super Bowl in January, he said Moorhead State received some praise for producing the game's most valuable player, Phil Simms, a Morehead State graduate.

"It's something we live with," said Tim Rhodes, director of financial aid at Morehead.

Haukebo said that if Morehead State changed its name to The University of the Mountains, any confusion between the two schools would be ended forever. Moorhead, Minn., is located on a prairie, he said.

In Rowan County yesterday, Morehead city clerk Diana Lindsey said she was not sure the school was even in the mountains.

"Morehead is sort of on the edge of Eastern Kentucky," she said. "Maybe he (Albright) is referring to where most of the students come from."

Several Morehead graduates who live in Eastern Kentucky said yesterday that The University of the Mountains had a nice ring to it, but they objected to changing the school's name.

"MSU suits me just fine," said Bobby Smith, a Morehead graduate who is principal of Cordia School in Knott County.

"I think it would be bad on past graduates," said Anita Madden, a Cordia reading teacher who is a Morehead graduate. "People would eventually look at your diploma and ask, 'Where's that?' "

Mike Cassady, a Morehead graduate who lives in Inez, envisioned a different identity crisis.

"If we went to the NCAA tournament again, nobody would know where it was," Cassady said. "There's mountains everywhere."

Caption: A.D. ALBRIGHT

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