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Standing in the Mercer High School gym Saturday morning, March 22, huddled around the guard director Alex Smith, the students all stood poised. Some had nerves on their face, some focused, but all their faces showed that they wanted to do better going into their performance.

"This could be your last show... if you let your nerves get to you, if you let your mistakes mess with your head, this could be your last run," explained Smith.

Band Director Erica Ashford chimed in, "You have to shoot for fourth and keep an eye on first. That is what you are shooting for today."

The performance was at George Rogers Clark High School in Winchester for the Tri-State Indoor Marching Arts Semifinals. Advancing to finals at Northern Kentucky University on Saturday,

March 29, depended on their performance ranking.

They took the floor at 5:44 p.m. and laid it all out for the world to see. Performing their 3 minutes show Heart Strings, they delivered a story to the audience about the resilience of the heart in a fashion of color and movement. It was their best performance of the season. At the end of the 3 minutes they walked off the floor and believed they did the best they could. There were very few doubts otherwise.

"The goal for the group has been to always make finals and be as close to the top as we could be," said Ashford. She oversees the bands and colorguard at Mercer Schools. "When we were promoted to a higher class, that goal didn't change. Although we were initially discouraged by having to compete in a harder class, I told Alex Smith, the guard instructor, that we were capable and we weren't going to let the students fail. The students showed up, practiced long hours, and really pushed

to have a great performance on Saturday."

For the award ceremony each group lined up in retreat fashion. Mercer was aiming to make it into the top 12 that advanced to finals. In the end they were announced in third place in their class and sixth overall out of over 52 groups.

"The end result is placing sixth overall and earning a spot in finals at Northern Kentucky University. I am super proud of all the students and efforts over the past four months, and they have earned every bit of success they had on Saturday," Ashford concluded.

This Saturday, March 29, they travel to Highland Heights to the Truist Arena at Northern Kentucky University for the 2025 Tri-State Marching Arts Indoor Winterguard Finals competition.

"I am pleased with the scores. I am pleased with the performance. I am very happy with how we placed. This is our last week to clean and per-

fect the show, but I am looking forward to finals," said Smith.

Follow their socials for updates regarding the week-end's performance. On Facebook, Mercer County Band, and on Instagram mercerco-band and mercercoguard. Be sure to support the arts in all forms in your local schools.

#### ADVERTISEMENT TO BID

#### MERCER COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT MERCER COUNTY, KENTUCKY

THE MERCER COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT (OWNER) IS REQUESTING BIDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOLLOWING PROJECT:  
GWINN ISLAND SANITARY SEWER PROJECT  
SOUTH COLLEGE STREET- SMALL DIAMETER, LOW PRESSURE FORCE MAIN AND GRINDER PUMP STATION

Bids for the construction of the Project will be received by OWNER at 801 Pleasant Hill Drive, Burgin, Kentucky 40310, until Thursday, April 10, 2025 at 12:00 pm, local time.

The Project includes the following work: Installation of approximately 340 LF of 2" force main, approximately 160 LF of 1 1/2" force main and installation of one residential grinder pump station.

Project plans and specifications and details on the project can be obtained at the Mercer County Sanitation District office located at 801 Pleasant Hill Drive, Burgin, Kentucky 40310.

The Bids must include a Description of Work and Unit Price for all categories.

Bidders must comply with the requirements of the Build America Buy America Act and the Davis Bacon Act.

OWNER reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any technicality, and to accept any Bid which it deems advantageous. The contract award shall be made based on the lowest responsive and responsible Bidder.

The Bid is subject to Kentucky Revised Statutes Section 45A.490 through 45A.494, which in general provides a that a "resident bidder" of Kentucky is to be given a bidding preference over a "nonresident bidder" who is registered in a state that gives preference to its in-state resident bidders over a Kentucky resident bidder. The bidding preference is to be the same as that stipulated for the state of the "nonresident bidder". If the state of a "nonresident bidder" provides no specific preference, then the "resident" and "nonresident bidders" are to be treated the same with evaluating Bids.

All Bidders must comply with all Federal, State and Local Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations which prohibit discrimination in employment regarding race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.

All taxes are the responsibility of the successful Bidder.

For further information regarding Bid submittal or questions concerning the Project scope please contact Mr. Mike D. Sanford, Executive Director, Mercer County Sanitation District, 801 Pleasant Hill Drive, Burgin, Kentucky 40310 or (859) 748-5642.

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Mike D. Sanford, Executive Director  
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Photo by Mike Sims  
Alexis Clark (left) and Rylin Garcia (right) spinning their silks in the closing moments of their show Heart Strings while Lauren Waters (center) tows the symbolic rope.



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