

Poms and pep: ICCA competition to bring cheerleaders from nearly 20 different schools to Alton

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ALTON - Cheerleaders from nearly 20 different schools will be coming out in droves to **West Elementary School** in Alton for the **Illinois Cheerleading Coaches Association (ICCA) Region 5 Invitational**.

After last year's successful invitational, which was held at Alton High School, **Alton Middle School Cheer Coach Felicia Alexander** was excited to bring the competition back to the area.

"We did it last year and had some good reviews from the judges," Alexander said. "We thought, hey, why not do it again?"

Middle school and high school-age cheerleaders from **Collinsville, Roxana, Granite City, Coolidge, Gillespie, East Alton-Wood River**, and of course, Alexander's team from AMS, will be showcasing their skills in order to qualify for the state competition in **January**.

"This is a qualifier that the ICCA does every year," she said. "Different cities around the state host one. Usually, you put in a bid to host the competition. They put all of the schools in a hat and pick dates from November until the end of December."

Alexander, along her coaching partner, **Casey Hansen**, are constantly amazed by the talent that both young female and male cheerleaders alike exhibit.

"People don't really think that cheerleading is a sport, but it is," she said. "Giving these boys and girls the opportunity to build some skills or build upon what they already have is great."

The doors will open for parents and spectators at **9 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10**. The cost to attend the event is \$5 for adults and children over the age of 2. The final of two awards ceremonies will be held at **4 p.m.**

"Come out and see some wonderful talent," she said. "You'd be wowed at some of the things they can do."