

Alton High's Chamber Singers heading to state level competition this week

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON – Making it to state-level competitions is a huge success for high school students participating in extracurricular activities.

While many people know when their favorite high school sports teams are going to state competitions, other extracurricular activities compete on the same level with incredible talents as well. The Alton High School Chamber Singers were one such local group. They were invited through an application process to perform a featured concert at the

Illinois Music Educators Conference at 7:30 p.m. this Thursday, Jan. 24, in Peoria. They were chosen based on submitted videos and written letters of recommendation to a panel of judges.

“It is an incredible honor to be selected to perform, akin to a sports team making a state tournament,” their director, Dayne Newberry said in an email.

In order to prepare themselves for the big event, the Alton High Chamber Singers will be holding a preview concert on Tuesday night at 7 p.m. located at Main Street United Methodist Church. The concert is expected to last 25-30 minutes with a small reception to follow.

The Chamber Singers is an elite and auditioned choral ensemble at Alton High School open for sophomores through seniors.

“Students in Chamber Singers have the opportunity to take lessons from our voice teachers through Conservatory Program, where they routinely have masterclass and recitals throughout the school year. In addition, students are required to audition for Illinois Music Education Association (ILMEA) in the fall. Many students in Chamber Singers are also involved in band, orchestra, and theater.”

Newberry believes the students will gain notoriety among the state's top high school choir programs following Thursday night's performance.

“I hope to instill a love of performing and learning in my students, and strive every day to make them more independent musicians,” he said. “My goal for them when they graduate is to be able to join a community choir or collegiate ensemble so that their talents can continue to be expressed once they leave Alton.”

Newberry himself is a graduate from Milliken University in Decatur where he received a Bachelor of Music in Music Education with a Vocal Emphasis. He has performed across the world in locations such as Carnegie Hall and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Mary B. Merris Award, which recognizes outstanding vocal students. He is a native of Bethalto and currently sings with the Bach Society of St. Louis, where he lives, as well as the Missouri Choral Artists.