



Lakota West Upbeat Club

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Lakota West Marching Firebirds in Final Sprint to the 2008 Rose Parade®

Anticipation mounts as band members prepare for their big trip to Pasadena. Boosters seek sponsors to cover \$75,000 deficit.



The excitement is growing as the 300 members of the Lakota West "Marching Firebirds" enter their final month of preparations for the Rose Parade on January 1, 2008. As it marches the 5.5 miles down Pasadena's famed Colorado Boulevard before a world-wide audience of 500 million people, the band will be the first ever to represent Cincinnati and Southwest Ohio. The band recently learned that it will have a highly visible 11th position in the parade lineup.

"It's suddenly becoming very real," said Lakota West band director Greg Snyder. "You can see the intensity in our kids increase with every practice. I'm really proud of this group!"

As the major fundraising efforts come to an end, the band is \$75,000 short of the \$800,000 needed for this major trip involving more than 350 students, chaperones, and band staff; equipment transportation across country; and instrument and uniform upgrades/repairs. Most of the funding has come from the travelers themselves, but there are a number of students who need financial assistance. There are no school funds involved.

According to Peter Bartram, President of the Lakota West Upbeat Club (the parent band booster organization), community support of the fundraising effort has been strong, but business sponsorships have been lagging. "Our fundraising efforts have gone as well as we hoped," said Bartram. "But based on the experience of other Rose Parade bands, we had anticipated greater support from the local business community."

Several businesses, however, have stepped up in a big way. One made an anonymous contribution of \$20,000 for Rose Parade jackets to be worn by all the band members on their travels to California. Another anonymous sponsor is providing free transportation of instruments, equipment and uniforms. In October, the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra performed a benefit concert for the Lakota High School band programs – and part of the money raised will support the Rose Parade trip.

"This has been an amazing year," stated Teresa Armstrong, Rose Parade Trip Coordinator for the Upbeat Club. "And January 1 is going to be such a great moment of pride, not only for our students, but for everyone in our entire area. Now, if we can just find a few more sponsorships!"

Businesses interested in sponsoring the Marching Firebirds should contact Peter Bartram at (513) 254-1561 or rosefund@lakotawestbands.org. Corporate and individual donations can be made by check payable to "Lakota West Upbeat Club," P.O. Box 1637, West Chester, OH 45071-1637 or by credit card online at www.lakotawestbands.org.

Rose Parade caps an amazing year for the Lakota West band program.

Last December, the school's top concert band, Symphonic Winds, performed an hour-long concert at the Midwest Clinic in Chicago. The Midwest Clinic, an international band and orchestra conference held annually since 1946, is the premier event for music educators and performers each year. Over 14,000 directors, composers, music publishers and dealers from all 50 states and over 30 countries come to see the newest and best in musical talent. Because of the tough performance standards and the outstanding caliber of applying bands, an invitation to perform at the Midwest Clinic is considered the highest achievement that a high school band can attain – only five or six are invited each year. Lakota West also had the distinction of performing at The Midwest Clinic in 2000 and was the first Cincinnati area band to do so. Among music educators, The Midwest Clinic is sometimes referred to as the "Superbowl" of concert bands.

Last spring, for the second straight year, the school achieved a state record with all four concert bands receiving the top rating at the Ohio Music Education Association (OMEA) state band contest. The bands earning a Superior rating were Symphonic Winds in Class AA, Red Symphonic Band in Class A, White Symphonic Band in Class A, and Concert Band in Class C.

Also last spring, the Lakota West Winter Guard captured the gold medal in the Regional A Division at the MEPA Circuit Championships in Dayton, Ohio.

Finally, band director Greg Snyder was inducted into the American Bandmasters Association (ABA) at the group's annual convention in San Luis Obispo, California in March. The ABA is considered worldwide as the most prestigious organization for concert band conductors and composers. It is comprised of the most respected professional, military, university, high school, middle school, and community band directors in the United States and Canada. Among its most notable members was legendary bandmaster John Philip Sousa, who was named the first honorary life president in 1929. Of the 290 active members in the ABA, Greg is one of only 30 who are high school band directors.

About Lakota West Bands. Since its formation as a high school in 1997, Lakota West has become recognized for having one of the premier band programs in the country. There are four high school concert bands (grades 10-12) and two freshman bands (at the Lakota Freshman School). Symphonic Winds, the school's top band, has received straight superior ratings in Class AA at the OMEA state contest every year since the founding of the school. It has been invited twice to perform at The Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, the foremost international music educators' conference. In 2004, the group completed a European tour, performing at venues in Paris, Brussels and London.

The school's jazz bands and 300-member marching band have also received national exposure and recognition. The Marching Firebirds have earned over 30 Grand Champion awards since the formation of the school and have received a superior rating in Class AA each year at state finals. The costs for travel, uniforms, and most instruments are paid through private fundraising and by students and their families. The Lakota West band directors are Greg Snyder, Tony Marinello (freshman), and Drews Mitchell (jazz studies). For pictures and more information, please check our web site at www.lakotawestbands.org.

About Lakota West Upbeat Club. The Lakota Upbeat Club, Inc., is a parent booster organization established to provide physical and financial assistance for the band program and to promote community participation and awareness of the program. It consists of the Lakota East Upbeat Club Division and the Lakota West Upbeat Club Division. The President of the Lakota West Upbeat Club Division is Peter Bartram (513-254-1561 or rosefund@lakotawestbands.org).