

Five MVTHS musicians in Heartland Honor Band

22nd Annual festival will be held this weekend at SIU-Carbondale

BY JASON SILVEY
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MT. VERNON — Music is the mission this weekend at Southern Illinois University Carbondale where several local students will have a unique opportunity to add

to their musical repertoire.

Several students who are members of the Mt. Vernon Township High School were recently selected to take part in the Heartland Honors Bands-Choir Festival scheduled for today and Saturday on the SIU-C campus.

“SIU has been doing the Honor Band Festival for a number of years, and Mt. Vernon Township High School has always sent students to it,” according to MVTHS band director Nicholas Loafman. “It’s a tradition for us.”

This year will mark the 22nd annual Heartland Honor Festival. The event draws more than 200 high school band and choir students from schools in a wide radius of Southern Illinois and neighboring states.

Other local schools with students selected include Waltonville High School in Jefferson County and Trenton’s Wesclin High School in Clinton County.

“Interested students are nomi-

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nated by their directors, and from that pool, SIU selects some for the festival,” Loafman said. “It’s competitive, and not everyone gets to go so it’s definitely an honor to be selected.”

The MVTHS students chosen to be in the festival include sophomores Bethaney Brown on flute and Garrett Calvert on saxophone, juniors Veronica Justice on flute and Jeffrey Wright on French horn, and senior Emma Fox on flute.

The students will be in rehearsals today and Saturday with a freshman/sophomore concert band and a junior/senior symphonic band of

all those selected as well as SIUC students.

“That’s one of the parts they really like, meeting students from other schools,” Loafman said.

While there, the students will have the opportunity to work with guest conductors Thomas Caneva from Ball State University and Richard Suk of Ohio University. A recital will also be given by SIUC music faculty.

All of the activities will culminate in a free concert performance by the Heartland Honor Symphonic and Concert Bands joining with the SIUC Wind Ensemble at 3 p.m. in Shryock Auditorium.

“They’re excited and looking forward to it,” Loafman said. “It’s a chance for them to play excellent music with peers from a couple different states.”

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