

★ NEWS ★

Cheerleaders finish 4th in nationals

POPLARVILLE - The Pearl River Community College cheerleaders recently attended their first national competition and finished fourth in the 2006 Universal Cheerleaders Association National Cheer and Dance Championship in Orlando, Fla.

"This was the first year in PRCC's history that the cheerleaders attended the championship," said Candace Harper, PRCC cheerleader advisor. "The devastation of Hurricane Katrina and the untimely injury of one of our members did not keep us from going to this competition."

Sophomore Chastity McLemore of Picayune, a captain on the squad, said the competition was good for PRCC and the cheerleading team.

"One good thing about this competition is we got our school's name out there," said McLemore. "We were able to see what other schools are doing, so in the future, we can be more competitive. And, this gave the other universities an opportunity to see us perform."

According to Harper, the first step to enter the competition was to make a skills tape and send it to UCA to see if the squad had the skills necessary to be accepted.

"Depending on your skill and safety tape you would be entered into three different rounds; preliminary, semi-finals, or finals," said Harper. "The week before we left for the competition, UCA had posted that we were going straight to the final round. We were so excited that we only had to compete once."

McLemore said the squad put in countless hours of practice, both before Hurricane Katrina and after.

"Katrina put us a month or two behind," she said. "So we had to practice every day, sometimes three and four hours. We even practiced over the Christmas Holidays. As we got closer to the competition, we did some two-a-days, and worked four and five hours a day."

The practices were not without challenges. One male member, Eddie Bledsloe of Hancock, tore an anterior cruciate ligament. Then the day before the team was to leave for Orlando, Kimberly Stewart of Picayune fell and tore her ACL, eventually resulting in

surgery. Said McLemore, "We had to practice all day after that happened and change almost everything. We accomplished a lot in that short period of time, and then we left the next day."

During the trip, the cheerleaders were able to go to MGM, Magic Kingdom, Epcot, and Animal Kingdom when the competition was not in session.

McLemore said the squad was nervous leading up to the event. But the crowd of some 6,000 people helped eliminate some nervousness.

"The crowd got really involved," said McLemore. "They yell with you, which helps give you confidence. The best feeling of all is just being out there on the floor."

"When the cheerleaders entered the competition mat, PRCC's fight song was playing and their crowd highlight tape was showing on three big screens," said Harper. "The crowd highlight tape was a tape that showed the PRCC cheerleaders cheering at football games and trying to get the crowd involved. Once the fight song was over, the music for their competition routine began."

"They performed a series of advanced stunting techniques and tumbling sequences. Their routine was 21/2 minutes long and consisted of one minute of cheering and 90 seconds worth of music for stunting and tumbling. Once the routine was over, the cheerleaders got to go to watch a replay of the routine over the big screens."

Preparations for the competition actually began last summer when the cheerleaders hosted a camp to raise funds for the trip.

"We all had to go out and raise our own money, which was hard after Katrina," said McLemore. "But we found the sponsors, and we want to thank them all. This competition will help us become more competitive in the future, and Pearl River will be able to go out and recruit more good people for the squad next year."

Plans are already underway for next year's competition.

■ Cheerleading Tryouts for Fall 2006 are March 10 and 11. For more information regarding tryouts, contact Candace Harper at 601-403-1327 or email at cmooney@prcc.edu.



Members of the Pearl River Community College cheerleading team that finished fourth in the 2006 College National Championship in Orlando, Fla. include from left: Front row - James Rivenbark of Gulfport, Andee Kelly of Oak Grove, Ashley Ladner of Bay St. Louis, Ashley Mayeux of Slidell, La., Kalah Holmes of Carriere, Chastity

McLemore (captain) of Picayune, Lindsey Stovall of Brandon and Paul Picou of Hancock. Standing - Adam Spiers of Picayune, Frank McKinley (captain) of Hancock, Brian Griffin of Gulfport, Jeremy Bailey of Hattiesburg, Will Rouse of Poplarville, Brandon Slade of Waveland and Jake Pearce of Bay St. Louis.



During their visit to DisneyWorld for the 2006 Universal Cheerleaders Association National Cheer and Dance Championship in Orlando, Fla. recently, the PRCC cheerleaders practiced their routine for visitors to the park.

RiverRoad travels to Seattle, Wash., on April 20-23 to perform at the Phi Theta Kappa International Convention



Members of the 2006 RiverRoad show choir includes: Brett Barnes of Carriere, Ashley Burge of Carriere, Leslie Burge of Lumberton, Peter Caruso of Lumberton, Arthur Clough of Picayune, Amanda Collins of Hattiesburg, Jennifer Crawford of Bay St. Louis, Emily Davis of Poplarville, Faith Davis of Picayune, Regan Deal of Columbia, Brian Flanner of Purvis, Erin Fortenberry of Prentiss,

Chad Fountain of Columbia, Chris Foxworth of Foxworth, Ron Hughes of d'Iberville, Jamie Ingram of Laurel, Terrod Jackson of Columbia, William Jones of Lumberton, TJ Jordan of Picayune, Devon Laird of Lumberton, Aaron Lee of Picayune, Kayla Lee of Lumberton, Erik Marsh of Waveland, Talley Martin of Poplarville, Jason Mikell of Columbia, Ashley Miller of Picayune, Chris Miller of

Hattiesburg, Katie Morgan of Laurel, Daniel Porter of Hurley, David Porter of Hurley, Anna Sanford of Columbia, Luke Schallot of Foxworth, Adam Slinkard of Bloomington, Ind., Brianna Stark of Lumberton, Brydon Terrell of Columbia, Ashley Veerkamp of Picayune, Isaac White of Columbia and Jay Wesley of Poplarville. RiverRoad is under the direction of Dr. Mark Malone.