

## MUSIC

# Marching band showcase a first for D60

## Participants plan to sound off Monday at Dutch Clark Stadium

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THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

For the first time, Pueblo City Schools (D60) will host a Marching Band Showcase at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Dutch Clark Stadium.

While not a competition, the showcase will allow the participating bands to be judged in preparation for the Oct. 19 state qualifier in Colorado Springs.

In addition to D60 high schools Centennial, East and South, Pueblo County High School and Colorado State University-Pueblo marching bands will show off their musical mettle before judges.

Also expected to take part is the Central drum line.

The showcase, according to D60 spokesman Dalton Sprouse, is designed to recognize musicians for the physically and mentally demanding work, which includes countless hours of practice and dedication.

Like their athletic counterparts, marching band members are no strangers to often grueling practice sessions, in some cases every day of the week beginning in the summer.

Precision, developed through repetition, is the key to success.

"Marching band is one of the most challenging combinations of the physical, mental, emotional and aesthetic work that kids can experience," said Zac Fruits, South's sec-



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**Thomas Smith, playing the baritone, performs with Centennial High School's marching band during the Colorado State Fair Parade Aug. 26. Centennial will be featured in the inaugural Marching Band Showcase on Monday at Dutch Clark Stadium.**

ond-year band director.

"It's incredibly rigorous, and to be successful requires laser-beam mental focus, a desire to succeed and the willingness to be a team player."

After being dormant since the mid-1950s, the marching program at Centennial is back in a big way, with more than 85 members and several awards to its credit in just two years.

Said Centennial's band director Josh Muller, "We went from having no marching instruments, no uniforms, no banner or podium and no experience to winning the Colorado State Fair Parade and the Canon City Apple Blossom Sweepstakes."

Like Fruits, Muller stressed the need for band members to be physically and musically fit.

"The beginning of a rehearsal is all about stretching and body warm ups. Typically, we do some cardio and stretches for 10 minutes before basic marching, which can last 20 minutes," said Muller.

"After that, we will warm up our instruments for 10 minutes before the rehearsal begins."

East's marching band is led by Dan Wiley, who has served as director for six years.

"Rehearsals are rigorous, and the students are constantly on the move. At the end of

the day, though, the process has to be fun for everyone involved," Wiley said.

The director is proud of the fact that many of his marching band members are involved in other extra-curricular activities, including sports, cheerleading, drama and student body government.

"Our drum majors, Kenny Walter and Noah Suazo, are student body president and vice president," Wiley said. "Too many people consider band to be closed off and cliquish, but it's not."

Added Muller, "Marching band has changed a tremendous amount over the past decade. It combines

music, athleticism, visual art and dance. In high school, the goal is to create a 7-minute musical production based on every member performing in such a way that the audience notices the whole group, not individuals, and how it works together."

Central's drum line was established in 2013. And while the school hopes to add a full marching band program in the near future, that is dependent on availability of instruments, uniforms and students who play wind instruments.

There is no charge to view Monday's showcase. [jpompia@chieftain.com](mailto:jpompia@chieftain.com)