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ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN CAN'T PUT BRAKES ON MUSIC Community Band to Receive National Award for Excellence

With all the bad news coming from Washington and Wall Street, a community of musicians in the Eastern Suburbs of Pittsburgh received some good news recently. The East Winds Symphonic Band has become the first band from Southwestern Pennsylvania to win the prestigious Sudler Silver Scroll Award from the John Philip Sousa Foundation. The highest honor available for community bands, the award is given to bands that have achieved and maintained high standards in concert performances and have contributed significantly to the high standards of cultural development in its community.

The East Winds Symphonic Band has been making music all around Pittsburgh for 28 years. The all volunteer band has more than 65 musicians. Under the baton of Music Director Susan Sands, the band plays approximately 12 concerts a year in various community settings. In 2008, the East Winds Symphonic Bands played indoor and outdoor concerts in Monroeville, Ligonier, Murrysville, Greensburg, Cranberry, and Oakland. The highlight of 2008 for the band was an invitation to perform at the Association of Concert Bands national convention in Corning, NY.

Susan Sands has been directing the band since 1990. "We are not just a band, we are a community group. We are honored to receive this type of recognition from the John Phillip Sousa Foundation," said Ms. Sands. She added "Our musicians come from all around Pittsburgh and from all walks of life. Our members are college students, engineers, public employees, bus drivers, retirees, and even some professional musicians."

The band will be presented with the Sudler Silver Scroll Award during their annual performance at the Three Rivers Community Band Festival. Acclaimed director Gerald Guilbeaux of Lafayette, LA will make the presentation on behalf of the John Phillip Sousa Foundation.

The sixth annual Three Rivers Community Band Festival features five bands from the Pittsburgh area. The festival starts at 2:30 PM on May 2 in the Upper St Clair High School theatre. In good economic times and in bad, admission to the festival is free.

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For more information about the East Winds Symphonic Band or the Three Rivers Community Band Festival, please contact Scott McElfresh, Concert Manager of the East Winds Symphonic Band, at 412-953-7917 or concerts@ewsb.org. Additional information may be found on the band's website, www.ewsb.org