

The tribe has spoken

Palmyra native Hawk falls short of 'Survivor's' top prize

By KARI RICHARDSON
Freeman Staff

MENOMONEE FALLS - It was a good run while it lasted, but dreams that Susan Hawk, the 39-year-old Eagle trucker who was a contestant on the summer television hit "Survivor," would win the \$1 million cash prize ended abruptly for her co-workers Wednesday.

"I didn't think it would turn out like that," said Brian Ganos, chief executive officer of Sonag Ready Mix, the Menomonee Falls concrete company where Hawk works as a truck driver. "It's too bad the way she got booted off."

Hawk was one of four islanders who made it to the final round of "Survivor," a so-called reality television show in which 16 Americans were voluntarily marooned on an island off the coast of Borneo. Each episode chronicled the castaways' efforts to survive the island - and each other - and ended with a vote to decide who would be sent packing.

Three remaining contestants voted Hawk off the island within the first hour of Wednesday's episode, which aired on CBS, crushing co-workers' hopes that the Wisconsin native would win the top cash prize.

"Maybe she can ride this out and still be set," said Ganos, indicating that Hawk might now have the opportunity to do product endorsements or to act. "That would be kind of nice."

About 100 people - a mix of Hawk's co-workers, business associates and members of the media - gathered at Sonag Ready Mix on Wednesday to cheer on Hawk, who was in Los Angeles at the time preparing for a "town hall" meeting that followed the two-hour finale. The Sonag crowd hooted each time Hawk appeared on screen and booed when corporate trainer Richard Hatch - who ultimately won the \$1 million - ap-



Associated Press

Eagle resident Susan Hawk, a castaway from the CBS reality television series "Survivor," gives her autograph to CBS employees at a party following the final episode at CBS studios in Hollywood on Wednesday in Los Angeles.

peared.

The contest was decided months ago, before filming wrapped on the show last spring. But CBS required islanders to keep "Survivor's" details a secret.

Hawk's co-workers gathered next to the truck she drives, painted with the word "survivor" surrounded by a snake and rat on either side, creatures that played roles in the island story.

"I thought she'd go a long way, but I didn't know how far - I still don't know how far," Sonag Ready Mix President Nick Rivecca said before the crowd settled down to watch "Survivor" on two big screen television sets.

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Hawk

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Rivecca and Ganos hired Hawk to haul concrete last spring - a difficult, dirty job they said few women do.

"It's muddy and it's filthy," Rivecca said. "She (Hawk) handles it. She really is a survivor literally. You take her and dump her off somewhere and she's going to make it."

"She doesn't let her guard down," Hawk's co-worker D.J. Johnson said. "What she wants, she gets."

"But I'm still thinking (another cast member) Rudy's going to win,"



he added.

Appearing on a live "town hall" meeting that aired after the two-hour "Survivor" finale, Hawk said, "If I'm going to make \$1 million, I'd rather work for it."

That's just what she'll do - work for a living - when she returns to her job Sept. 15. Hawk continued to haul concrete throughout the summer while "Survivor" episodes aired, Rivecca said.

Most of Hawk's fellow workers at Sonag Ready Mix said they had few opportunities to watch the show, which aired at 7 p.m. Wednesdays. Summer is the busiest season in the concrete business.

And while they were sad to see her fall short of the \$1 million, they said they could use her help back at work.

"You always want somebody to be able to win \$1 million," Ganos said after learning Hawk had been voted off the island. "She's so nice. She's fun to be around."

"By the same token, maybe we'll see her (back at work) again."

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