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Anika Pundir, who will represent Lorain County at the National Scripps Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., next week, browses the shelves Wednesday at Avon Library.

Avon speller ready for bee

Laina Yost

The Chronicle-Telegram

AVON — Anika Pundir finally has gotten her chance to make it to the national stage for the spelling bee — and she's ready to impress.

The seventh-grader is leaving Sunday to travel with her family to Washington, D.C., the site of the National Scripps Spelling Bee competition, after she won the local competition.

In third and fourth grade, she placed fourth in the local competition and wasn't sure she would ever get her chance to go to D.C. But now she's going, and she said she's ready to get up on stage and start spelling.

"I'm really excited," Anika said. "... There are so many different words to study. I've been studying a bunch of different word lists from previous spelling bees."

Anika, 12, attends Avon Middle School. She correctly spelled *détente* and then *cheka* at the 36th annual Educational Service Center of Lorain County and The Chronicle-Telegram Spelling Bee.

Rahul Pundir, Anika's father, said she is a visual learner and often types out the words, which helps her see how

they're spelled. To challenge herself and prepare, Rahul said she's been trying to spell without typing, so she can get into the habit of it.

Anika said she studies about three times a week and said it's actually helpful for her to know the language of origin of the words.

"It helps me identify the words," she said. "I'm pretty confident about the first two rounds, I think."

Rahul Pundir said the family is looking forward to seeing her on stage. They've traveled to D.C. before, but never for this type of event.

Anika is identified as speller number 364 on the national spelling bee's website. The preliminaries will be Tuesday and Wednesday and will be broadcast on ESPN3. The finals are Thursday, and part one will be broadcast on ESPN2, while part two will be broadcast later on ESPN.

"It feels exciting," Rahul Pundir said. "She has definitely done something really big. We've been receiving compliments from people we don't even know. ... We're hoping she does great."

Contact Laina Yost at 329-7121 or lyost@chroniclet.com.