

Pete Wakeland: First Fellow reflects on experiences

By Brent Merrill

After being the Grand Ronde Tribe's first-ever Hatfield Fellow, tribal member Pete Wakeland said he is better for the experience.

Wakeland was selected as the first recipient of the fellowship in late 1998 and spent nine months living and working in the nation's capital — Washington, D.C. Wakeland, who works as a forester in the Tribe's Natural Resources department, worked in Oregon Senator Ron Wyden's office.

Wakeland said a professor at the College of Forestry at Oregon State University took an interest in what he was doing.

"I talked with him (his professor) about policy issues and natural resource policy issues," said Wakeland. "I decided I wanted to go to Washington, D.C. to pursue a Society of American Foresters internship that the college set up. The professor said it looked like a good opportunity, but thought he could get me something better (the Hatfield Fellowship). So, he did the initial groundwork and I interviewed over the phone and got the fellowship. It was incredible. That was my first taste of policy making at the national level and it proved to me that I could make a difference in people's lives."

According to Wakeland, many things happen behind the scenes at the nation's capitol.

"I got exposure to that (the inner workings of the legislative process) and it really fueled my desire to keep pursuing policy and politics," said Wakeland. "When the Tribe was advertising for the Hatfield Fellowship, it looked like a perfect opportunity to get back to Washington and try to do some things that were more relative to Native American issues and I got an opportunity to do that."

Wakeland said he liked the big city if he is there for the right reasons and is interested in public office in the future, maybe the near future.

In what appears to be a smart career move, Wakeland is preparing himself and his family for public service in a public office.

Wakeland said he wished he could have seen more projects reach fruition, but understands how things work now.

"I like Washington," said Wakeland. "Working on 'the Hill' was more frustrating than working off the hill or with the hill. But, both experiences were great. It is frustrating in that you want to see some good things happen and you want to see it happen now. You want to see it happen in this session of appropriations, but unfortunately when you are talking



Photo by Tracy Dugan

about appropriating money you have to make your case three or four times before you can actually feel certain. You have to keep talking to the committee and keep trying to get those appropriations before they might actually act. That is where the frustration comes in. Laying the groundwork for someone else to see to completion.

"I love what I do here working for the Tribe, but in the long run, I think there is more for me to do and I'm looking for those opportunities," said Wakeland of his future in politics. "If I don't go back to Washington, then I will think about running for legislature here in the state."

Wakeland said he wants to remain connected to the Tribe wherever he goes and whatever he does.

"I want to do the work of the people that will benefit everyone," said Wakeland.

Tribes need to work together more often, especially during appropriations periods said Wakeland.

"Then, the tribes are connected," said Wakeland. "As we move into the future, the more things tribes support each other on, the more power we will have. Now, if we can get some connectivity there; some cohesiveness, then I think we will see the tribes continue to do better."

When asked if his time in D.C. changed him, Wakeland said it did.

"One of the biggest changes for me was being more creative in the way I think," said Wakeland of what he brought back with him. "If there are things you want to get done back there then one of the things you have to do is be creative in the way you think. You can't always use the most obvious way to get things done. You have to learn the level of involvement needed and you have to do your research and maybe I'm a little more patient now. What I brought back here was the knowledge that the Senator and his staff want to know more about what issues affect Indian Country, why they are important — that will help us in the long run."

Wakeland ended the interview by saying he wanted to encourage other young people to follow his path to the nation's capitol and he said he would be willing to listen and help others interested in the Hatfield Fellowship.

SURVEYS

Now that the year 2000 is here, many of the tribal programs will be looking at tribal member needs for the future. It is very important for you to respond to the upcoming surveys.

1 HOUSING NEEDS

All Grand Ronde tribal member households will be sent a survey this week as part of the Grand Ronde Tribal Housing Authority's effort to find out more about the housing needs of Grand Ronde tribal members. The last housing survey was conducted five years ago and tribal membership and individual circumstances have changed.

All households that return their completed survey by the deadline will be eligible to participate in a drawing for several cash prizes! The information that is collected from these surveys will be kept confidential and will be incorporated into a Housing Needs Analysis. This report will be the basis for making certain decisions about how to allocate funds for various housing programs over the next five years.

This is a very important opportunity for you to tell us about your current and future housing needs. The survey will only take about 15 minutes to complete, and housing staff will be available by phone to answer any questions you may have. If you receive more than one survey at your address, you will need to determine who is the head of the household and return only one survey per household.

Watch for your survey in the mail and return it quickly for your chance to win a cash prize!

2 EDUCATION & TRAINING CLASSES IN GRAND RONDE

To help us prepare for the 2000-2001 class schedules, the Education department is seeking your input. We would like to hear your ideas and suggestions for course offerings to be conducted at the Grand Ronde Tribal Education and Training Center.

Please take a few minutes to share your course interest.

1. The following courses were offered in Grand Ronde. Would you like to enroll in these courses if they are offered again?

Please check classes you would like to have offered:

- English Composition, Writing 121-123
- Speech (Intro & Professional Development) SP111/SP130
- Algebra (Intro & Intermediate) MTH 052-095
- Intro to Microcomputers, CS100-101

2. List other classes or training courses you would like to see offered. Please list specific levels of study (i.e. freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate levels), if applicable:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

3. Circle the day(s) you would like to attend:

M TU WED TH FRI SAT SUN

4. Specify the time frame that would best fit into your schedule:

- Daytime Evening Weekend

5. Here is a list of training classes being offered in 2000:

■ **Images of Native Americans in Film.** This series is about the journey of American Indians. It is rich with history and culture and the curriculum is about American Indians and taught by American Indians. NOTE: May 19, 2000, Sherman Alexie, writer for the movie "Smoke Signals" will be the presenter. At Mr. Alexie's request, admissions for his presentation will be two cans of food that will be donated to Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA). (On-going from 1999.)

■ **Tribal Administration Program (TAP)** with Portland State University graduate program. (On-going from 1999.)

6. Here is a list of classes suggested by tribal members:

- Freshman/Sophomore level Sociology
- First Aid/CPR course
- Early Childhood courses

7. **Your input is very important, so please make any comments or suggestions so we can better serve you:**

**Return this form to: CTGR Education Office
 Attn: Deena LaRue
 9615 Grand Ronde Road
 Grand Ronde, OR 97347**