

Tribal member wins Oregon Kids state championship

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member Matthew Hofenbredl, 12, won the Oregon Kids Collegiate wrestling championship held at Newberg High School on March 7. He wrestled in the 75-pound novice division.

His first thought, he said, when the last match ended, was, "I won the state title!"

Representing the Dallas Mat Club, Hofenbredl won five matches in a day to take first place.

"One thing really caught my eye," said Dallas Mat Club coach Jeff Earhart. "After he won the championship

match, his eyes kind of teared up a little bit. I could tell how much he appreciated how hard he's worked and that it finally paid off for him."

Earhart also credited Steve Passantino, coach of the LaCreole Middle School wrestling team in Dallas, because Passantino also has long had a hand in training Hofenbredl.

"I'm glad they're my coaches," Hofenbredl said, and added, "Ev-

eryone that went did a good job."

It also helped that between the middle school wrestling team and the Dallas Mat Club, Hofenbredl practices probably four times as much as most young wrestlers, Earhart said.

"He only pinned one kid," said Matthew's father, Tribal member Leland Hofenbredl, of the tournament, "but he won pretty easily in the division."

"I don't think he lost a match all year," said Earhart, "and this is still his first year in middle school."

In the finals, Matthew defeated Jasiah

Williams from the Northwest Disciples Mat Club in Portland 9-1.

"I was kind of surprised that I won," Matt said, "but I already wrestled that kid before at other tournaments and had beaten him. I knew it would be harder this time."

"He had a lot of support from the entire mat club," Leland said. "Williamina Mat Club members were present when he won, so that was pretty cool, too."

"He's really a leader in our mat

room," said Earhart. "He's one of the older boys. He's a real hard worker, real dedicated, leads by example, but when he has to say something, then he'll let them know. He's a good role model and good kid all around."

The mat club went out for pizza afterward.

On March 25-27, Hofenbredl competed at the USA Wrestling Middle

School Dual National Championships in Danville, Ill. Matthew won two of seven matches there, Leland said.

Though Matthew did not place, he saw it as "a good experience," Leland said.

"I couldn't be any prouder of him," Leland said. "He worked seven years to get to this point. He earned it." ■



Matthew Hofenbredl

Honoring Regis



Photo by Carter Tollas

Tribal Council member Steve Bobb Sr. and Tribal Elder Donna Casey present TV personality Regis Philbin with a Tribal logo blanket before his March 20 concert at Spirit Mountain Casino. Philbin talked about his Spirit Mountain Casino appearance on his nationally televised talk show, saying he had never performed in the Northwest before.

More than \$100 million invested in community

KENNEDY continued
from front page

vice Web site, \$4.3 billion was appropriated in fiscal year 2008 to provide health care to Native peoples living on or near reservations and in rural communities in 35 states, mostly in the western United States.

However, a work group found that Indian Health Service appropriated funding provided only 52 percent of the necessary federal funding to assure "mainstream personal health care services to American Indians and Alaska Natives using the IHS system."

Kennedy, testifying before two Northwest congressmen (Norm Dicks of Washington and Mike Simpson of Idaho), said that when Tribes run out of Contract Health Services' funds, it disastrously affects Tribal members' health.

"Many Tribal members put off important medical care and procedures until funding is available again," Kennedy said. "Sadly, this creates undue illness and members are sometimes lost due to untimely diagnoses, due solely on the lack of funding."

"This process also creates a huge burden at the beginning of the fiscal year on the CHS budget and in many cases costs more money as the delay in care magnifies the problems associated with most diseases."

Kennedy offered an easy prescription for subcommittee members to ponder.

"The good news is that the solution is simple," she said, "fund the IHS at a needs-based level."

At the beginning of her testimony, Kennedy briefed subcommittee mem-

bers on the Tribe's history of being a Terminated Tribe for about 30 years and the Tribe's Restoration in 1983.

"For most Grand Ronde people, Termination meant a loss of home, identity as a Tribe, and services from the federal government," Kennedy said. "As you would expect, Termination forced the vast majority of Grand Ronde Tribal members to leave the reservation in search of work and sustenance. While today many Tribal members are returning to the reservation, Grand Ronde has Tribal members living across the United States and around the world."

She also informed subcommittee members that the Tribe's membership now totals more than 5,000.

But the majority of her testimony keyed in on under-funding of Indian health care.

"My testimony today is shaped in part by a 30-year career as a health administrator working to improve the access and quality of health care to Natives and, more importantly, as someone who personally experienced the immediate injustices of Termination and has lived long enough to witness and chronicle its long-term consequences," she said.

Kennedy said that current health care to eligible beneficiaries who reside in the Tribe's six-county area is provided by the Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center, which was built and financed and is owned by the Tribe.

The Tribe first contracted with Indian Health Service in 1986 and began running a Contract Health Services program. In 1995, the Tribe and Indian Health Service entered into a

self-governance agreement under Title V of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, which allowed Tribes to assume administration and operation of health services and programs in their communities.

Kennedy said that when the Tribe took over delivery of health care services, its goal was simple — to provide the best possible health care to its people and include as many possible health services in one location as possible so that care could be integrated and coordinated by physicians and other health care providers.

"Like most of the other Tribes," Kennedy said, "we have struggled to achieve and maintain a high level of health care service, despite chronic under-funding, especially of CHS funds."

"The challenge Grand Ronde has faced in providing health services to its members is an illustration of the impact that CHS under-funding and IHS under-funding in general has on Tribal health programs and Tribal sovereignty."

Kennedy also addressed earmark money for Indian Country included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

"I must, however, add that the recession the nation is now experiencing has long been the norm for Indian Country," she said. "In fact, Indian Country suffers from much higher rates of unemployment and poverty than the rest of the nation. Economic development is critical for Indian Country and Tribal governments know this better than anyone. But economic development requires good roads, good schools, good phone

systems and good health care among other things."

Kennedy said the 30-year gap in federal recognition affected the Grand Ronde Tribe's community and infrastructure development.

"Starting from ground zero, the effort to build and sustain our community has been a monumental challenge," she said, "significantly more complex than one faced by a mature, established municipality with a continuous history of development. However, we continue to advance our mission to improve the quality of life for our Tribal members."

"Since Restoration, the Tribe has worked diligently to develop the foundation necessary to sustain a viable community. We have invested in excess of \$100 million to date toward this effort. However, to accomplish our ultimate objective requires an additional investment of hundreds of millions of dollars in areas such as land acquisition, physical infrastructure, government institutional systems, support services and other resources which promote a sustainable community and provide a reasonable opportunity for our people to realize social and economic stability and progress."

Kennedy closed her testimony by challenging subcommittee members and Congress as a whole "to fulfill the treaty obligations of this nation by appropriating more economic development funds for Indian Country in the 2010 budget and any future stimulus package, and base the funding levels of the Indian Health Service on the true health care needs of Indian people." ■