

Changing of the Fellows

Ambrose reports on her year in Washington, D.C., as Stacia Martin looks forward to her experience

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

Tribal member and 2008-09 Mark O. Hatfield Fellow Francene Ambrose called her year living and working in the nation's Capitol "a great year and a wonderful time to be in Washington, D.C."

From the office of Sen. Ron Wyden, she said, "By the third day, training was over, and they asked me to work on a letter of support from Oregon Tribes."

In the year that followed, Ambrose said she worked on legislation affecting Tribal roads, health care, crime and funding.

As the youngest of a supportive and talented group of interns that included doctors and lawyers, journalists and professors, she came to be called "the kid."

She met with Indian groups and Tribal leaders from across Oregon. She listened to their issues and brought the most important to Wyden's attention.

She wrote questions for Wyden to ask during Interior Secretary Ken Salazar's Congressional hearings. And recently, she "dropped" the 99-Year Lease bill at the Capitol, which is a big thing, she said, because that's where the process starts, and where all bills are assigned to committees for first consideration.

The 99-Year Lease bill, currently in the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, would allow Tribes to increase to 99 years the length of time they can offer Trust land for lease to others, including private industry.

Ninety-nine years is up from 25 years in some cases and up from 50 in others under current law, said Ambrose.

"Each tribe is different," she said.

In an exchange program with her Canadian counterparts, she traveled to Ontario where the American group was welcomed, and then hosted them in Washington, D.C. With Mexican counterparts participating for the first time, the exchange will soon include this third country exchange, she said.

Traveling back to Oregon for Wyden, she was hosted on a river trip by representatives of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and Tribal law enforcement teams to view dams slated for removal.

"The most powerful thing to me," she said, was viewing the original treaties with Oregon Tribes.

At year's end, she returned to Oregon by way of her first cross-country drive. Her next stop is The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., where she has a year to go to complete her Master's of Public Administration in Tribal Governance.

Tribal member Stacia Martin, 24, currently interning in the Tribe's Legal Department, said she looks



Photos by Michelle Alaimo

Tribal member Francene Ambrose, 2008-09 Mark O. Hatfield Fellow, is gifted a Pendleton blanket that Tribal Vice Chair Reyn Leno is wrapping around her during the Hatfield Fellowship reception in the Atrium of the Governance Center on Thursday, Aug. 13. Ambrose recently finished her fellowship working in Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden's office in Washington, D.C.

About the Fellowship

Spirit Mountain Community Fund started the Mark O. Hatfield Fellowship Program in 1997 to offer Native Americans the opportunity to learn the federal legislative system and become skilled at working within the system to meet Tribal needs.

It was named to honor former Oregon Gov. Mark Hatfield, who was instrumental as a U.S. senator in helping the Tribe gain Restoration in 1983.

Of the 11 Hatfield Fellows since 1998, seven have been Grand Ronde Tribal members, three have been Warm Springs Tribal members and one belonged to the Coeur D'Alene Tribe in Idaho.

forward to her internship in the office of freshman Congressman Kurt Schrader, who succeeded Darlene Hooley as representative for Oregon's 5th District.

The letter of welcome read by his spokesman, Trevor Sleeman, said that Schrader was "looking forward to working with and learning from" Martin.

"I'm excited and honored," Martin said, looking toward to "a better understanding of federal-Tribal relations" and "to become a more effective leader in our community."

Tribal Council Secretary Jack Giffen Jr. said that the value of the Hatfield Fellowship should not be



Tribal member Stacia Martin, 2009-10 Mark O. Hatfield Fellow, talks with Tribal Council member Wink Soderberg during the Hatfield Fellowship reception in the Atrium of the Governance Center on Thursday, Aug. 13. Martin will be working in Congressman Kurt Schrader's office.

underestimated. "In Washington today, you have to develop partnerships. Having an intern there has given the Tribe a step inside

the door."

The reception was held in the Tribal Governance Atrium on Aug. 13. ■

2009 Tribal Marketplace dates

- Sept. 4-6, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Oct. 2-4, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Nov. 6-8, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Dec. 4-6, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Dates subject to change due to conflicting Tribal or SMC events. Located across from Cedar Plank Buffet. For more information, call Dakota Whitecloud at 503-879-4240.

