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WYOMING DEAF, HARD OF HEARING STUDENTS ADVANCE TO ACADEMIC BOWL NATIONALS

Cheyenne - Wyoming's Academic Bowl Team of Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH) high school students will advance to Gallaudet University National Academic Bowl competition in Washington, D.C. in April after a triumphant third place regional win in Salem, Oregon on February 13-16.

"I am so proud of these students," said WDE Special Programs Director Lisa Weigel. "Student team members put in a tremendous amount of effort collaborating with WDE coaches and school staff members throughout the entire school year in preparation for this very challenging competition!"

Gallaudet University is the only University for D/HH students in the world, and hosts five regional sites in United States. The Academic Bowl is unique, in that it fosters camaraderie among D/HH students.

The coaches traveled with eight Wyoming team members to the Oregon School for the Deaf, where Wyoming faced off against nearly 80 of their D/HH counterparts. The questions stem from all areas of academics, including arts, current news, and events.

"It's a learning and testing atmosphere for two days, all at the same time, from 8:00AM to 5:00PM," said Otterholt. "Although they are from other states, these kids form lasting friendships and stay in touch throughout the year. They support and cheer each other on."

Casper's KWHS sophomore, Gabi Reimann won an All-Star medallion—a prestigious award signifying academic excellence and a positive attitude among high school students nationwide, achievable by one boy and one girl in each pool.

Students receiving 3rd Place trophies and team plaque are: Gabi Reimann (KWHS); Stephanie Sutphin (NCHS); Rachel Lebsack (Wheatland HS); and Josh Graves (Green River HS.)

Coaches are Jo Otterholt and Meghan Watt. Other team members of Wyoming were Candace Papke (KWHS), Amy Olson (Laramie HS), Josh Parsons (Campbell County HS), and Dahlia Harvey (Campbell County HS). Coaches were Billie Wortham and Esther Hartsky. Janine Cole, Supervisor of Outreach Services for the Deaf, also traveled with the teams.

Teammates Reimann, Graves, Sutphin, and Lebsack will travel to the National Competition with coaches Otterholt and Watt. Gallaudet University provides all-expense paid flights, meals and lodging for 24 competing teams for five days, April 24- 28.

For more information, contact Janine Cole at 307-777-6376 or janine.cole@wyo.gov.