



## Local News

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### **National Powwow returns to area venue**

**By Brenda L. Holmes**

**brenda.holmes@flyergroup.com**

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DANVILLE — The National Powwow XVI returned to the Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds and Conference Complex for its tri-annual event this past weekend. It took hundreds of volunteer hours, many vendors, and a supportive group of spectators to make it a success.

This year's event was chaired by Chris Bryant of Goode, Va. He also chaired the event when it first came to Danville in 2011. The event has been held every three years since 1969. It has taken place in several parts of the country including Colorado, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Kansas.

"Between planning and meetings, I've taken about 20 trips to Indiana to get ready for the powwow," Bryant said. "Some of those trips were to introduce myself to the community at different meetings. We try to educate people on what we're all about."

He said the National Powwow organization is run completely by volunteers.

"This event is for all people who appreciate the Native American culture," Bryant said. "When we get together to dance, we learn from each other. We also build bonds."

Bryant said since the powwow does not take place each year it's been difficult to find sponsors to partner with. This year the event was sponsored by the National Relief Charities and Native American Jump Start.

Robbi Dietrich is the president of NRC and traveled to Danville to attend the powwow and bring awareness to the American Indian Education Foundation scholarships.

Dietrich is from Sherman, Texas, which is just north of Dallas.

"We work with 65 reservations in 11 states," she said. "It feels great to be here and to support this event."

The NRC had an information booth at the powwow. The organization provides humanitarian services for Native Americans living in isolated and poor communities on reservations in the Plains and Southwest regions of the United States.



Brenda L. Holmes | The WSF FANCY FEATHER: Max Yamane, a fancy feather dancer, performs at the National Powwow XVI.

Craig Jones, a volunteer with Native American Jump Start to Employment Program, also traveled to Indiana for the event. "We're just thrilled to be here," Jones said.

NAJSEP is a link between the employer and Native American high school graduates who want a summer job. Fancy feather dancer Max Yamane of San Antonio, Texas, has been dancing for nine years. This was the first National Powwow he has attended.

Yamane is adopted Lakota and is currently in college. He said he enjoys attending powwows because the dancers get to interact with the public. "I enjoy encouraging people to dance," he said. "We'll show them the steps to get them started."

Yamane said he enjoys talking about the Native American culture. "We go out to museums and schools to talk about our culture," he said. "I really enjoy helping to educate people."

Native American flute player Gareth Laffley, 16, performed several times during the powwow. He's from Gallatin, Tenn., which is just outside of Nashville.

Laffley is a multi-instrumentalist, vocalist, songwriter, and producer of his own album, "The Journey." The title song from his album is about the Trail of Tears, the forced relocation of Native Americans, which took place in 1830.

"We cannot forget the past," Laffley said. "We have to use the past to help us guide our future." Laffley is a home-school high school student who travels a lot to promote his music. "This has been a great event and I feel so blessed to be here," he said. "I do perform at other powwows and

Native music festivals." He said one of his favorite things to do is educate children. "I have an anti-bullying program that I take to schools," he said. "I just got back from a tour through Maine. I also help with Native American awareness programs in East Tennessee." Laffley said he hopes his music will touch those who hear it. "Music is a part of me," he said. "It will always be a part of my life."

Online: [www.nationalpowwow.com](http://www.nationalpowwow.com)  
[www.garethmusic.com](http://www.garethmusic.com)

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