

AJ Teenager Hot On Wakeboarding Circuit

While most 13-year-old boys were wondering what group to sit with at the lunch tables, Ahren Benziger was pursuing his dream to become a wakeboarding champion.

Now 15 and a student at Apache Junction High School, Benziger has been wakeboarding the area's lakes and moving up through the divisions of the Arizona Wakeboarding Association.

Starting in the Novices Division, he moved up to Intermediate Division after only one competition. He competed in the Laughlin River Fest last fall and placed second in the Intermediate Division.

He kicked off this year in the Advanced Division and placed second at the first competition of this season on May 1.

After more hours of practice, he added a few more difficult

tricks into his run and moved up the highest division, Outlaw, where he can perform as many invert tricks as he wants. The Outlaw Division pits Benziger against riders who are much more experienced.

On May 15, Benziger performed and ended his run with a one-handed Raley. In current standings points, Benziger is in fourth place, with three more competitions to come.

Benziger owes his success to riding three times a week before or after school and even in the 50- or 60-degree water through the winter. Benziger has spent many practice hours at Canyon and Saguaro lakes, getting up at 5 a.m. to get a good run in on the glassy water.

The AWA has been in Arizona for five years and offers

competitions to all ages of wakeboard and wakeskate riders. The competitions are held at Lake Pleasant.

Century Marine on Main Street and Bombwake are his local sponsors. He plans on attending competitions in Southern California as well competing in the AWA. For more information on the AWA, visit www.theawa.com.

At right, 15-year-old Ahren Benziger practices his wakeboarding tricks on Saguaro Lake during the winter.



Students Win Food Drive



The Apache Junction High School Student Council won the United Food Bank's Annual Fall Food Drive for the school's division by collecting more than 228 pounds of food which fed over 200 people in the county. Colleen Maccallum is the sponsor of the AJHS Student Council. Melissa Forrester from the United Food Bank visited the AJHS Student Council on Monday, May 17, to present the award. Pictured from left are student Chyna Gade, Forrester and student Lauren Stewart.

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