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Five more years of state wrestling

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The Illinois Elementary School Association Board of Directors last month extended Northern Illinois University's contract to host the Illinois Elementary School Association Boys Wrestling State Championship.

Our bureau and other local partners have been working with Steve Endsley, executive director of the IESA, to re-sign the state wrestling finals event. We've been in conversations for months as the current contract to host the event at the NIU Convocation Center expires at the end of the 2013 wrestling season.

This contract extension will keep the state finals at the Convocation Center for an additional five years through 2018.

"We sincerely appreciate the working relationship we have with NIU and the Convocation Center," Endsley said. "The Convocation Center is a beautiful facility that allows the wrestlers, coaches, parents and fans to have a great experience when attending our state wrestling finals."

The IESA State Wrestling Championship fills between 300 and 400 hotel room nights and brings anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 visitors for the event on an annual basis. The estimated economic impact of the event is approximately \$125,000. The total economic impact is approximately \$500,000 over the span of the agreement.

Arch Richoz has been the IESA State Wrestling Tournament manager since 1998. We are very fortunate to have someone so dedicated to both wrestling and our community well-being. He received his bachelor's degree in physical education and his master's in educational administration in 1969 from NIU. He taught and coached for the DeKalb School District, retiring from teaching in 1999. He was inducted to the DeKalb Wrestling Hall of Fame as a coach in 2005, is a past-president of the DeKalb Wrestling Club and has been a board member for 14 years.

As tournament manager, Richoz rallies more than 150 volunteers who work tirelessly during the championship weekend to ensure that the event runs smoothly. These volunteers make it happen and are a large part of the reason the IESA extended its contract to hold the event here.

"On behalf of DeKalb Wrestling, the DeKalb Wrestling Club, and the 150-plus volunteers of past, present and future, I want to express our gratitude for the opportunity to help host the Illinois Elementary School Association State Wrestling Tournament for the next five years," Richoz said.

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