



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Rural Development
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SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE AND USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT CELEBRATE EARTH DAY 2008

(Spirit Lake celebrates Earth Day 2008)

SPIRIT LAKE, April 24, 2008 — Marking the 38th anniversary of Earth Day, Deputy Administrator for the USDA Rural Development Rural Utilities Programs, Curtis Anderson, joined today North Dakota State Director Clare Carlson and staff, Spirit Lake Tribal Chairwoman Myra Pearson and Tribal representatives, and Indian Health Services (IHS) to celebrate Earth Day with the announcement of federal funding to construct a solid waste facility totaling \$1 million.

“These four grants totaling \$1 million have been awarded to the Spirit Lake Tribe,” said Anderson. “Only by working together can we ensure that the environment we leave our children and grandchildren is a healthy and strong inheritance. We only get one chance to do this right.”



Earth Day is observed annually on April 22 to raise awareness about the role citizens, businesses, and communities can play in protecting the environment. Since the first Earth Day celebration in 1970, the event has expanded to include participation by citizens and governments in more than 175 countries.



With today’s announcement, Rural Development congratulates the Spirit Lake Tribe and its community for making the improvements to their solid waste management system. The old system was inefficient and the waste needed to be handled three times before being disposed of at Devils Lake, 13 miles away, which was the nearest transfer station to the reservation. It not only had the highest tipping fees per ton in the state, but the cost of collection was significantly increased due to continued flooding in the area.

“This project will improve the activity of the solid waste management for the Spirit Lake Tribe and the community,” said Clare Carlson. “USDA Rural Development is proud to be a partner in this project along with other environmental and health improvement projects.”

The solid waste management facility was constructed in three phases. Rural Development awarded four water/waste Native American set-aside grants totaling \$1 million to the Spirit Lake Tribe to construct a solid waste transfer station, an inert disposal site, and the purchase of solid waste equipment. The engineering design and construction administration was provided by IHS.

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Total cost of the project is estimated at \$2,246,508. Other sources of funding include \$1,125,500 from IHS, and \$121,008 from the Spirit Lake Tribe.

Rural Development employees attending the event include Business and Community Program Specialist Jane Tesch and Civil Engineer Rod Beck.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested nearly \$91 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments.

In North Dakota, USDA Rural Development invested **\$298.5 million** in Fiscal Year 2007 and **\$1.5 billion** since 2001.

Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>