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USDA AWARDS \$4.7 MILLION FOR TRIBAL COLLEGE GRANTS

WASHINGTON, D.C., September 3, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that 22 tribal colleges in nine states have been selected to receive \$4.7 million through the USDA Rural Development Tribal College Grant program. Joe Leonard, USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and Deputy Assistant Secretary Mary McNeil made the public announcement at Sitting Bull College in Fort Yates, N.D., on Vilsack's behalf while attending the USDA/American Indian Higher Education Consortium Leadership Group meeting.

“This funding will help tribal colleges make a variety of much-needed infrastructure improvements so they can continue to provide job opportunities for local residents and spur economic development,” Vilsack said.

USDA Rural Development's Tribal College Grants are provided to land-grant institutions for education and outreach to provide essential services to Native American communities and to help meet residents' needs. Leonard and McNeil were in North Dakota during a tour to further USDA's partnership with tribal colleges and universities.

In North Dakota, for example, United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) has been selected for a \$220,000 grant to help remodel and expand the cafeteria for the College. The current cafeteria was built over 40 years ago and does not meet the needs of a much larger student body. The student population at UTTC has increased by 173 percent since 2002. The project will expand the facility by 3,500 sq. ft and double the number of people that may be served as well as increase space for food preparation, serving, cooking, and storage. It will also replace small appliances with more energy efficient ones. UTTC is a private not-for-profit two year college originally established by an intertribal organization and is operated by the five tribes located in North Dakota. UTTC has provided education and job training opportunities for primarily Native American students since 1969 and has an average enrollment of 450 students.

Sitting Bull College at Ft. Yates, ND has been selected for a \$220,000 grant to build a financial operations center. The new financial operations center, as part of the new campus that is under construction, will house the college's business offices and bookstore. The new center will replace an old, inadequate facility that has high maintenance costs. The new facility will provide a centralized delivery of services, which are currently split between two campuses. Sitting Bull College is a tribally controlled college on the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota and has operated since 1973. The student population is approximately 350 per semester and more than 87% Native American, most of who live on Standing Rock Reservation.

In 2008, Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, Mont., used a \$272,350 USDA Rural Development grant to add three classrooms to an existing art building to accommodate increased enrollment. The building is expected to be completed next month. USDA Rural Development funding has played a significant role in upgrading and expanding facilities on the campus, which has helped boost enrollment. In past years, USDA funds have been used to help fund a performing arts center, a wellness facility at the college, renovation of a day care center, as well as paving and infrastructure work.

Below is a complete list of the selected recipients. Funding of each award is contingent upon the recipient meeting the conditions of the grant agreement.

Alaska

- Iisagvik College; \$220,000 grant

Arizona

- Tohono O’odham Community College; \$220,000 grant

Minnesota

- Leech Lake Tribal College; \$219,625 grant
- White Earth Tribal & Community College; \$199,500 grant

Montana

- Salish Kootenai College; \$220,000 grant
- Little Big Horn College; \$220,000 grant
- Fort Peck Community College; \$220,000 grant
- Fort Belknap College; \$220,000 grant
- Chief Dull Knife College; \$220,000 grant
- Blackfeet Community College; \$220,000 grant
- Stone Child College; \$220,000 grant

Nevada

- Little Priest Tribal College; \$85,000 grant

North Dakota

- United Tribes Technical College; \$220,000 grant
- Cankdeska Cikana Community College; \$220,000 grant
- Turtle Mountain Community College; \$220,000 grant
- Sitting Bull; \$220,000 grant
- Bay Mills Community College; \$220,000 grant

South Dakota

- Oglala Lakota College; \$220,000 grant
- Sisseton Wahpeton College; \$220,000 grant

Washington

- Northwest Indian College; \$220,000 grant

Wisconsin

- College of Menominee Nation; \$220,000 grant
- Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College; \$220,000 grant

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA Rural Development's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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