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President Bush Proclaims November "National American Indian Heritage Month"

WASHINGTON - In an official proclamation issued by the White House, President George W. Bush has declared November "National American Indian Heritage Month." President Bush praised American Indian heritage and Indian role models who serve as a central part of America's history, including Sakajawea and the Navajo Code-talkers of World War II.

"These examples of our true American spirit reflect our shared history and serve as reminders of the unique heritage of American Indians and Alaska Natives," President Bush said in his proclamation today. "Upon its completion on the National Mall, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian will help educate all Americans about the lives, contributions and culture of our Native peoples."

Assistant Secretary of the Interior – Indian Affairs Neal A. McCaleb says the president's announcement serves as a clear reminder of this administration's efforts to improve the quality of life for American Indian and Alaska Native people.

"We are working to focus the efforts of government to create new jobs and new opportunity for American Indian entrepreneurs and tribally-owned businesses," McCaleb said today. "Our goal of building sustainable tribal economies and vibrant businesses is beginning to bear fruit, but there is much more work to do. I will continue to work with President Bush to expand these opportunities and provide renewed attention on education for our young people."

In his proclamation today, President Bush reaffirmed the administration's goal to expand economic opportunities and employment for all Native Americans. The President said the National Summit on Emerging Tribal Economies, held in Phoenix in September of this year, was an important part of that effort: "In order to build upon this effort, my Administration will work to promote cooperation and coordination among Federal agencies for the purpose of fostering greater economic development of tribal communities. By working together on important economic initiatives, we will strengthen America by building a future of hope and promise for all Native Americans."

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