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A new era is beginning on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. For a long time Rosebud had exhibited most of the handicaps of an isolated reservation -- a land base inadequate to support its increasing population, an average family income of less than $1,500 annually, a 65 percent unemployment rate for its labor force and an estimated 90 percent of· its families living in substandard housing.

One of the most dramatic examples of changes now taking place on Rosebud is the transitional housing program. "Anpo Wicharpi" is the official slogan for the program. In keeping with the new spirit on the reservation it is Sioux for "dawn of a new day."

Cooperation among all levels of government is a key element in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' administration of reservation programs. The Rosebud housing program is an example of that concept in action. The Office of Economic Opportunity, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Public Health Service are all involved.

Together these agencies are helping the Rosebud Sioux replace shacks, tents and a variety of makeshift housing with 375 new homes designed especially for those who cannot meet the income requirements for standard low-cost housing.

The homes are low-cost because they are pre-fabricated in a central plant and assembled at the site. Containing 620 square feet of living space, they are built to withstand the bitter Dakota winters. Admittedly utilitarian by American suburban standards -- most contain neither electricity nor running water although provisions to add both are built in -- they are a first step forward for those in emergency need. Sixty-nine homes are complete and another 34 nearing completion. An average of two houses are erected each day.

Improved housing is not the only goal of the "Anpo Wicharpi" program. Twenty-five Indian men are receiving on-the-job training in building crafts at the prefabrication plant. Almost 100 are employed in field assembly crews.

The project administrator, the Rev. Richard Pates, a local parish priest, believes these new homes can be a "breakthrough" for their new owners.

"Rosebud Sioux tribal members now are looking forward to living in a decent home with ordinary conveniences. This provides them with a new image of family life and gives them a new place in society," Father Pates reports.

This program is not the total housing development on Rosebud. A tribal housing authority has constructed and rented 92 low-rent homes, and has approved construction of 50 "mutual-help" units. Under the mutual-help housing program the family contributes labor in place of down payment.

New housing alone is not the answer to deep-rooted poverty, as the Rosebud Sioux leadership acknowledges. Therefore, an all-out effort to stimulate job producing business and industry is a parallel

feature of the Rosebud program.

Among the plants that have located on the reservation is the Rosebud Manufacturing Co. which arrived in November 1965. Established through tribal initiative and a $50,000 loan from the BIA revolving loan fund and the Small Business Administration, this industry uses a work force of 25 Indians, to manufacture kitchen cabinets and counter tops.

In September 1966 Fabritek, Inc., began production of electronic components on the reservation, employing 24 Indians.

A recent tribal announcement hailed the formation of Rosebud Foods, Inc., which will occupy a new $500,000 building built in cooperation with the tribe at St. Francis, S. D., and will employ 30 Sioux in the production of a new frozen food line. Employment is expected to increase to 200 within two years.

The Rosebud Reservation contains some of the most beautiful scenery in South Dakota and the tribe has begun the development of tourist-oriented enterprises among its pine covered hills and scenic valleys.

At Ghost Hawk Park on the Little White River near the town of Rosebud, the BIA and the Interior Department's Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife have assisted the tribe in creating a complete camping facility including water and sanitation systems, campsites, shower and laundry facilities and a stream well stocked with game fish.

The tribe participates in a wide variety of projects through the Office of Economic Opportunity. A recent grant of $134,977 will be used for more extensive park development and beautification and to begin a tree nursery and reforestation program. Jobs and training for 30 Indians will be added advantages of the project.

Other antipoverty programs have included the Upward Bound program which encourages education beyond high school; the Neighborhood Youth Corps, which provides Indian teen-agers with part-time jobs; and Operation Head-Start for preschool children.

The Work Experience Program provided training for men in such fields as building maintenance, heavy equipment operation, law enforcement, building trades, retail food merchandising and game conservation.

The same program helped women to become nurses ‘aides, cafeteria workers, library assistants, clerical workers, and sales clerks. A total of 201 adults took these courses. In addition many worked toward high school equivalency certificates and in other basic education programs.

In fiscal year 1966 a total of $661,685 in Federal funds was spent on Community Action Projects on the Rosebud Reservation.

In education, the reservation has achieved the goal of BlA's Indian education policy in having all Indian students enrolled in locally controlled public schools. The Bureau provides dormitory facilities for children from isolated areas, but all instruction is carried on under State and local programs.

This wide variety of program commitment on the reservation has been possible because of the initiative of tribal leadership and the enthusiasm of tribal members in trying new ideas and proposals. Two of the most active leaders, in the forefront of most developments, are Tribal Chairman Cato Valandra and

Community Action Program Director Dwaine LeBeau.

Even with the many programs and projects now in operation, much remains to be done on the Rosebud Reservation. Problems that have been years in developing do not disappear overnight. But the two necessary ingredients for progress -- hope and enthusiasm -- are evident on the reservation in the actions of tribal leaders, tribal membership and those who work to assist them.

Rosebud Reservation, S.D., has seen "Anpo Wicharpi," the dawn of a new day, and is working to make that new day bright with accomplishment and pride for all who live there.

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