Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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SHINNECOCK NATION, N.Y. – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell will visit the Shinnecock Nation in New York today, Thursday, October 1 to kick off the Tribal Solarthon as part of the Obama Administration's commitment to helping build clean energy and strong economies in Indian Country. GRID Alternatives, the nation's largest nonprofit solar installer, is partnering with the Shinnecock Nation to bring solar power to this northeastern coastal community, which suffered extensive damage from Hurricane Sandy three years ago.

This event helps to kick off part of GRID Alternative's two-week Tribal Solarthon to bring solar power and job training to four tribal communities in New York, California, Arizona and South Dakota. GRID Alternatives is working to raise funds and install solar energy infrastructure for 50 families on the Shinnecock Nation and a battery backup system, starting with two installations this week that will also provide hands-on job training for tribal members.

"Grid Alternative's partnership with the Shinnecock Nation and other tribal communities serves as a model for helping to build a sustainable energy future and solar technology workforce in Indian Country," Secretary Jewell said. "This partnership shows how the tribal, federal and private sectors can work together to remove barriers to economic development, advance tribal self-determination and add clean energy to the grid."

Tribal solar development harnesses renewable resources on tribal lands as a reliable and cost-effective way to provide jobs and power homes, businesses and economies. It also aligns with President Obama's Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote the deployment of renewable energy technologies and community resilience measures.

Last week, Secretary Jewell participated in the National Tribal Energy Summit to discuss progress on energy projects and clean energy jobs in Indian Country. The Summit was a joint effort between the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development and the National Congress of State Legislatures with participation from the U.S. Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, among others. Its purpose was to further tribal energy investment and economic development across Indian Country.

Last year, Secretary Jewell approved the 200-megawatt Moapa Solar Energy Center Project on the Moapa River Indian Reservation, located about 20 miles northeast of Las Vegas. The project – the second approved Moapa solar installation – will provide enough energy to power about 60,000 homes and support an estimated 500 jobs during peak constriction along with 10 permanent positions.

WHO: **Sally Jewell**, U.S. Secretary of the Interior

Bryan Polite, Tribal Chairman, Shinnecock Nation

Stan Greschner, VP of Government Relations and Market Development, GRID Alternatives

WHAT: Remarks at Shinnecock Nation Tribal Solarthon

WHEN: TODAY, Thursday, October 1, 2015

9:55 AM EDT – Media check-in

10:10 AM EDT – Press conference and media availability

10:40 AM EDT – Work on Solarthon project – *opportunity for b-roll*

WHERE: Shinnecock Community Center

100 Church Street Southampton, NY 11968

MEDIA: Credentialed members of the media are encouraged to RSVP here.
