Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk announced today that a groundbreaking ceremony will take place at the St. Francis Indian School in South Dakota on Monday, September 27, 2010. This ceremony marks the Department of the Interior's 4,000th American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) project, a $7.2 million school improvement project at a Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) school.

Representatives from the Department of the Interior will be on-site at the 4,000th project. The project will provide St. Francis Indian School with a new gymnasium and kitchen facilities that were not included in the original replacement school project (completed previously with non-Recovery Act funds). St. Francis Indian School serves more than 550 students for Grades 7-12 for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe on one of the poorest reservations in the nation.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Education, which operates one of two federal school systems (the other is under the Department of Defense). The BIE funds 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools located on 64 federal Indian reservations in 23 states serving approximately 42,000 American Indian and Alaska Native students. The Bureau also services American Indian and Alaska Native post secondary students through higher education scholarships and support funding to 26 tribal colleges and universities, two technical colleges including the United Tribes Technical College, and it directly operates two institutions: Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M. and Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan.

WHO: Larry Echo Hawk, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior; Wizipan Garriott, Policy Advisor to the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs; Jack Rever, Director of the Office of Facilities, Environmental and Cultural Resources - Indian Affairs; Brian Drapeaux, Chief of Staff, the Bureau of Indian Education; Rodney Bourdeaux, President of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; and other officials.

WHAT: The Department of the Interior American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 4,000th Project Gym – Kitchen Addition Groundbreaking Ceremony for the St. Francis Indian School serving the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. WHEN: Monday, September 27 th from 10:00 a.m. (CDT).

WHERE: St. Francis Indian School, P.O. Box 379, 502 East Warrior Drive, St. Francis, SD.

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NOTE: All media must present government-issued photo I.D. (such as a driver's license) and valid media credentials. Media inquiries regarding logistics should be directed to Marlene Short Bull or James Hogan of St. Francis Indian School at 605-747-2299 x2104 or x2116.