Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and NIKE, Inc. The MOU presents an opportunity for both the BIE and Nike to address health and social lifestyle choices in American Indian and Alaska Native communities that contribute to disease and other medical conditions. Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Paul Tsosie was present on behalf of Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk for the signing ceremony May 12, 2010, at Nike's World Headquarters in Beaverton, Ore.

"This MOU is one important step towards acknowledging the collaboration needed across Indian Country to help promote healthy lifestyles," Echo Hawk said. "It is an opportunity for students and teachers to promote BIE's Health Promotion Initiative to Eliminate Health Disparities. I am pleased to see the partnership between the BIE and Nike occur so that we can work together to improve and enhance our students' awareness of the importance of healthy minds and bodies."

Craig Cheek, Nike North America Vice President and General Manager, signed the MOU on behalf of NIKE, Inc. "We celebrate this signing as a milestone in our work to deepen connections with Native American communities around creating opportunities for health and wellness, and providing access to sport for young people."

Under this MOU, the BIE and Nike will launch a campaign with a series of healthy lifestyle messages for Indian Country. The campaign will focus on bringing the best health information to American Indian and Alaska Native communities to help them gain a better understanding of the importance for every individual to exercise at any age, particularly those with diabetes. The BIE and Nike hope to motivate individuals to take charge of their healthcare with a healthy exercise program.

The BIE and Nike agree to collaborate in the following areas:

- Promote healthy lifestyles and healthy choices for all American Indian and Alaska Natives through program activities, such as co-sponsored educational and informational events, marathons, and sports demonstrations.
- Improve communication with, and among, tribes and tribal organizations to exchange information relevant to healthy lifestyles and fitness choices in an effort to combat diabetes, a disease that affects nearly 13 percent of the American Indian and Alaska Native population.

NIKE, Inc began its programs for Native American communities in the U.S. more than 10 years ago. Through its N7 program, Nike provides grants to sports and physical fitness programs to American Indian and Alaska Native communities aiming to create access to sport for the youth of these communities. The development of the Nike Air Native N7 shoe and N7 Collection supports the N7 Fund, which provides grants to sports and physical fitness programs. For more information, visit www.niken7.com.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Education, which operates the

federal school system for American Indian and Alaska Native children from the federally recognized tribes. The BIE implements federal education laws, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, and provides funding to 183 elementary and secondary day and boarding schools and peripheral dormitories located on 64 reservations in 23 states--serving approximately 42,000 students (School Year 2009-2010). The BIE also serves post-secondary students through higher education scholarships and support funding to 26 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges. It directly operates two post secondary institutions: Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M.