Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, DC- Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk announced today that savings in the Indian Affairs' American Recovery and Reinvestment Act construction projects will be used to start four additional high-priority school projects in Arizona, New Mexico and South Dakota.

Favorable pricing and aggressive management of the Recovery Act large construction projects have resulted in savings of $33 million, or 11 percent of Indian Affairs' construction allocation under the Recovery Act. Indian Affairs will use these savings to undertake the four school construction projects, putting more people to work in ways that will also make critical enhancements benefitting students and Indian Country communities.

"The Recovery Act has given us a great opportunity to meet some of our longstanding infrastructure challenges in Indian Country, including repairing and replacing schools. We're thrilled to be able to fund these four additional projects that will improve the learning environments for additional Native American school children, while also creating additional jobs," said Assistant Secretary Echo Hawk.

The additional projects include:

- ***Kaibeto School Replacement Project (Phase 2) in Arizona (Navajo):*** The original ARRA project list funded the first phase of the Kaibeto School Replacement project. Due to the cost savings on the Rough Rock school replacement project, the entire Kaibeto School project can now be completed, providing a new K-8 school for 276 academic and 45 residential students.
- ***St. Francis Indian School gymnasium construction project in South Dakota:*** This project will provide a high school gym and kitchen facilities that were not included in the original replacement school project (completed previously with non-Recovery Act funds).
- ***Santa Fe Indian School gymnasium construction project in New Mexico:*** This project represents completion of the gymnasium /wellness center at Santa Fe Indian School. Phase 1 was funded by the State of New Mexico to complete the exterior of the building. This project supports the completion of the interior and makes the facility functional.
- ***Shonto Boarding School gymnasium construction project in Arizona (Navajo):*** This project involves the repair and replacement of a snow-damaged and currently unusable gymnasium.

In addition to these changes, Indian Affairs has also cancelled or deferred six projects totaling $2.9 million originally scheduled to be completed with Recovery Act funds. The Department of the Interior established and follows a formal but efficient process for making timely decisions on project funding reallocations and project substitutions to ensure they are supporting the ARRA goals of quickly stimulating the economy and creating jobs. These merit-based criteria include expediency of implementation, job creation potential and ability to address high-priority mission needs. All deferred projects will remain funding priorities for Indian Affairs in future budget years.

The current list of the Indian Affairs ARRA projects can be found at the following link:

http://recovery.doi.gov/press/bureaus/bureau-of-indian-affairs/

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act offers a unique opportunity to invest in improvements to Indian communities that enhance the long-term economic development potential and promote near-term economic recovery. The $500 million allocated to the Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education will repair and upgrade Indian schools and detention centers, construct reservation housing, provide for road and bridge maintenance, spur economic development, and train a workforce with viable skills that can be used now and in the future.
