Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Kendra Barkoff (DOI) 202-208-6416 | Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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ANADARKO, Okla. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today visited the Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Oklahoma as part of Interior's commitment to expanding quality educational opportunities for American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. Riverside Indian School is run by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and is an Off-Reservation Boarding School (ORBS) that serves over 500 students representing 72 federally recognized tribes.

"Quality education is critically important to the fabric of healthy communities and is a key part of our nation's effort to win the future," Secretary Salazar said. "I am impressed with the work Riverside students are doing on a daily basis, and I'm confident they can be our leaders of tomorrow. Improving Indian education is a top priority for Interior, and the Bureau of Indian Education will continue to work to provide our young people with the best resources and education available and to support and promote tribal self-determination and self-governance."

The largest Off-Reservation Boarding School in the BIE system, the Riverside Indian School serves 540 students in grades 4 – 12 between the ages of 8 – 21 years old. Established in the 1870's, the campus consists of 52 buildings. In 2009, the school opened a new cafeteria and received $1.1 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to replace a water tower and deteriorated water lines.

During his visit, Secretary Salazar and Deputy Assistant Secretary Jodi Gillette toured the school's facilities and met with Riverside faculty and students to learn about existing programs designed to provide quality education opportunities, support tribal cultures, and strengthen economic opportunities.

Riverside Indian School specializes in gearing programs to help students succeed. The A Credit Recovery (ACE) Program works with students to gain enough credits in order to be eligible for graduation. Another program, the Caddo-Kiowa Vo-tech (CKV), allows students to train and receive credits toward careers in child care, pre-nursing, welding, cosmetology, and computer programming. Another program works with incoming freshmen to build solid reading and math skills so students can enter into regular grade-appropriate classes.

"Having Secretary Salazar visit our school is a great honor for our students, faculty and staff," said Riverside Superintendent Tony Dearman. "We are excited by his interest in us, and welcome the opportunity to share with him what we are doing a Riverside Indian School to prepare our students both mentally and physically for the future."

Riverside, like all BIE schools, is participating in the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) Challenge, a program inspired by the First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation. PALA is a six-week physical fitness challenge managed by the President's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports and Nutrition and is part of the Let's Move! Campaign.

Secretary Salazar visited Riverside Indian School as part of his commitment to help build safer, stronger, healthier, and more prosperous Indian communities. In coordination with Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk, Secretary Salazar has responsibility to fulfill our nation's trust

responsibilities to tribal and individual trust beneficiaries and to promote self-determination and self-governance for the nation's 565 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. For more information, visit the Indian Affairs website at www.indianaffairs.gov.

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 and provides funding to 183 elementary, secondary day, boarding schools and peripheral dormitories located on 63 reservations in 23 states and serving approximately 41,000 students. The BIE also serves post secondary students through higher education scholarships and support funding to 27 tribal colleges and universities and two tribal technical colleges. BIE directly operates two post secondary institutions: Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan., and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque, N.M. For more information, please visit www.bie.edu or www.indianaffairs.gov.
