BIE-IEED-ANL sponsored competition to promote careers in the green and renewable energy professions

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced a competition for students attending high schools and tribal colleges funded by the Bureau of Indian Education that will promote careers in the fields of green and renewable energy. The Indian Education Renewable Energy Challenge is being sponsored by the BIE in partnership with the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) and the U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory (ANL).

"The Indian Education Renewable Energy Challenge is an opportunity for students and teachers to learn about green and renewable energy technology that tribes can use to promote economic self-sufficiency and energy independence while providing futures for youth – all goals supported by the Obama administration," Echo Hawk said. "I am pleased to see the partnership between the Bureau of Indian Education, the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development and Argonne National Laboratory result in such an innovative approach to learning for our schools."

"This competition is a great opportunity to create interest among students and teachers in the renewable energy and green professions," said interim BIE Director Kevin Skenandore. "I encourage all of our high schools and tribal colleges to participate in what will be an exciting educational experience that will benefit all participants."

The challenge is designed as a two-part competition. During Phase I, each school and college will establish a team of students to design a small wind turbine that will harness wind energy, store it mechanically or electrically, and use it to power an array of light-emitting diodes (LEDs). Five high school and five college design teams with the best submissions will receive $1,300 apiece to construct prototypes of their inventions. In Phase II, the teams will conduct performance data collections to submit, along with detailed reports and videos of their prototypes in operation, to ANL for evaluation by a team of judges.

The ANL's educational programs division will develop the turbine's design specifications and rules for the competition.

"Argonne National Laboratory is proud to be a sponsor of the Indian Education Renewable Energy Challenge," said ANL's Director of Educational Programs Harold Myron. "Competitions such as this can inspire creativity and a love of learning in the sciences, which we believe are qualities that all students can develop within themselves if given the chance. We are glad to join with the BIE and IEED in providing BIE high school and tribal college students, and their teachers, with this exciting opportunity to further their science education."

One top project will be selected from the high school teams and one from the college teams. The two winning teams will see their turbines prominently displayed in Washington, D.C., where they also will have the opportunity to meet with senior Interior Department officials and attend a reception to be held in their honor.

According to IEED Director Bob Middleton, projects developed by the BIE-IEED-ANL partnership like the student challenge look to benefit tribes in the future: “We are continually seeking ways to use education and technology to assist tribes in building sustainable tribal economies as well as providing their members with the skills for life-long employment.”

Design proposals for the Indian Education Renewable Energy Challenge must be submitted to the ANL by October 31, 2009. The 10 teams whose projects have been selected will be notified by November 20, 2009. The submission deadline for projects is January 31, 2010. Winners will be announced by February 28, 2010.

For further information and application forms visit the BIE website at www.enan.bia.edu or the Argonne National Laboratory’s website at http://www.dep.anl.gov/indianed_energychallenge/.