Facility is sixth established with IEED 's support

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WASHINGTON - Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development - Indian Affairs George T. Skibine today congratulated the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe on the grand opening of the Cheyenne River Reservation Achievement Center in Eagle Butte, S.D. The Center was established with support from the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED), Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) and Wal-Mart Stores. Skibine was represented at the Sept. 18 opening by IEED Division of Economic Development Chief Jack Stevens.

"The Cheyenne River Reservation Achievement Center combines two of the most elemental requirements for building reservation economies: education and technology," Skibine said. "I want to extend my congratulations to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and its partners on this important achievement. I am pleased that Indian Affairs has played a role in seeing this center established."

The Cheyenne River Reservation Achievement Center is the seventh such facility to be established, and the sixth with the IEED's support, through a partnership launched in 2006 by SeniorNet, a leading technology educator of older adults, in conjunction with IBM and the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Houston, Texas, to bring computer technology access and education to low-income, remote tribal reservation communities across the U.S. Each center offers computer and Internet access, education and training for reservation residents of all ages and comes equipped with 10 new computers, printers and a variety of software programs. Each is also expected to become self-sustaining with tribal members training other users and with tribal funding for computer maintenance and replacement and the acquisition of new software and upgrades.

In addition to facilitating donations of computer hardware and software, the IEED identifies tribes for participation in the initiative, works with tribes to identify suitable locations for their centers, and provides partial funding for trainers. The centers also play a role in the IEED's job training mission by providing computer training that covers the fundamentals through more advanced courses and by serving as an education center for their communities offering classes on topics such as family history and genealogy, health, language training, work skills and tutoring, as well as a host of life skills and enrichment curriculum.

Additional centers that have opened since 2006 are the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Achievement Center in Cass Lake, Minn. (2007), the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tigua Achievement Center in El Paso, Texas (2007) and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Technology Achievement Center in Houlton, Maine (2008). In addition to the Cheyenne River site, two new centers also opened this month: on Sept. 12 in Rock Hill, S.C., on the Catawba Indian Nation reservation and on Sept. 16 in Pine Ridge, S.D., on the Oglala Sioux Tribe's Pine Ridge reservation.

All but two of the centers have been developed with support from SeniorNet and IBM. The centers in South Dakota were developed with support from BNSF and Wal-Mart.

The Secretary of the Interior created the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development to encourage economic development in Indian Country. The IEED's mission is to foster strong Indian communities by creating jobs, Indian-owned businesses, and a trained workforce, and by developing Indian energy and mineral resources, and increasing access to capital. The IEED believes that thriving economies and opportunities for work are the best solutions to Indian
Country's economic and social challenges.
