

Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:
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Riverside Indian School Chosen for Pilot Education Program Sponsored by NASA

Washington -- Acting Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Aurene Martin announced today that Riverside Indian School, Anadarko, Okla., has been chosen for a pilot program, sponsored by NASA and presented by the Busey Group. The grant is for the purpose of promoting careers in the math, science, IT and healthcare area with special emphasis in the space industry.

"The effort to prepare American Indian students for careers in science and technology is very important to the economic development efforts of tribal nations," the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs said. "My congratulations to the staff and students of Riverside Indian School."

Riverside Indian School was chosen for this pilot project because its student population is 100% American Indian. Students come from rural and urban areas of the country. A major project for the students will be the design of a space station that combines American Indian culture with modern technology.

The grant will be used to provide a field trip on May 6, 2003, for 120 students to travel to Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, to visit the distance learning lab and Safford Museum. The students will meet Bernard Harris, the first African-American astronaut and will participate with Mr. Harris in a direct link-up using telecommunications technology with John Harrington, a Chickasaw tribal member and first American Indian astronaut. A follow-up trip for 60 students to travel to Southwestern Oklahoma State University is planned for May 27, 2003. Also, a field trip for 30 students and 10 chaperones will travel on May 30, 2003, to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. The school will hold an Indian Taco luncheon on May 15, 2003, for tribal leaders, who will judge the American Indian themed space stations made by the students. A special request from NASA has been made to have the students' Native American Space Station sent to the Johnson Space Center to be put on display. It will be displayed with artifacts donated by various tribes. Mrs. Luann Williams, high school science teacher, will serve as project director and will participate in the NASA's teacher training program during that time.

Established in 1871, Riverside Indian School is a federally operated off-reservation boarding school located at Anadarko, Okla. It has an enrollment of 600 students in grades 4 through 12, and is accredited by the state of Oklahoma and the North Central Accreditation Association.

For specific information on the project call Don Sims, Riverside Indian School at:
405-247-6670.

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