NEWS
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INTERNET

ACCESS IMMINENT FOR

AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

Ada E. Deer, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs announces that the Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP), within the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Projectneat, Inc., have entered into a partnership whereby Projectneat will provide Internet appliances to every elementary and secondary school in the BIA school system by September 1, 1997.

Projectneat, is an independent, non-profit public charity organized under I.R.S. 501(c)(3) and is based in Santa Clara, California. Founded in July, 1996, it has assembled a team of leading companies and associations to donate the hardware and software to connect schools to the Internet. Projectneat's mission is to connect every K-12 school in America to the Internet, with emphasis being placed on connecting under served schools first.

"This initiative will connect the 187 schools serving American Indian students in 23 states providing access to the information superhighway and expanding education programs at the schools," Ms. Deer said. "We are thrilled that our American Indian students will have this access because there is a wealth of educational material available on the Internet that they will now be able to use. This is truly a dynamic initiative."

The Internet appliance provided by Projectneat, is a simple push-button access system which displays information on a large television screen instead of a computer monitor. These devices are considerably cheaper and easier to use than a conventional computer hook-up, because of the 27" TV screen, an entire class may share information in a classroom setting. In addition, one system can serve an entire school. Schools will be able to access the Internet by dialing in through the Educational Native American Network (ENAN) which has been sponsored by the OIEP since 1988.

"The installation of this equipment addresses one of OIEP's primary goals -- to connect every school

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and tribal community to each other and the world -- as well as President Clinton's challenge to link every school to the Internet," Joann Sebastian Morris, Director of the Office of Indian Education Programs said. "I am very excited about this program. It will provide our isolated, rural schools a resource that they have not previously had."

The BIA's OIEP provides educational services to reservations across the Untied States from Maine to the State of Washington. More than one half (105) of the 187 schools are operated by Indian tribes through grants from the BIA with the remainder operated by the OIEP.

"This partnership is a natural one, as our initial goal states we want to serve schools in rural areas and BIA schools certainly fall into this category. Our preliminary discussions with the BIA have been very positive and many important milestones have already been achieved," Mr. Tom Rahimi, President, Projectneat said. "The distribution of the equipment will happen during the 8th, week of July in conjunction with a conference at Snowmass, Colorado."

"I can think of no better way to bring excitement to our classrooms then connecting them to the vast information superhighway. Our students have much to learn from others and a great deal to contribute to the pool of information available on the Internet," Mr. Peter Camp, Projectneat Coordinator said. "Through Projectneat Indian students will have the same access that other students have in urban areas."

For additional information on Projectneat, access www.projectneat.org. The Office of Indian Education Program's home page may be accessed through the BIA's home page www.doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html. Mr. Camp, BIA Project Coordinator can be reached at (202) 208-4411 and Mr. Tom Rahimi, Projectneat's contact is at (408) 235-7760.