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North American Inter- Tribal Drug Task Force

Press Release

Yankton Sioux Tribe to Host Substance Abuse and Meth Summit

March 24th – 25th, 2016 at the Ft. Randall Casino & Hotel.

WAGNER, SD – The Yankton Sioux Tribe and the North American Inter-Tribal Drug Task Force will host the Third in a series of Methamphetamine Awareness Summits at the Ft. Randall Casino & Hotel on March 24th and 25th, 2016.

Methamphetamine Addiction is having a huge criminal impact on all reservation families, communities, and districts at epidemic proportions. The purpose behind having the Methamphetamine Awareness Summits is to bring Tribal Leadership from the Great Plains Area as well as Federal, State, and Tribal Departments & Law Enforcement Agencies and Tribal Members together to create a dialogue driven event for all those in attendance to discuss the strategies needed to adopt tribal resolutions and ordinances that are designed specifically to combat the **Use and Distribution of Methamphetamine**, to develop the tribal legislative actions necessary to remove meth dealers from reservation communities and boundaries, to discuss ideas and remedies for prevention and treatment of those addicted to Methamphetamine.

Due to the many concerns addressed by tribal elders and concerned membership, the First Methamphetamine Awareness Summit was held by Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Chairman Harold Frazier and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribal Council on January 14th, 2016 at the Wakpa-Sica Building in Ft. Pierre, South Dakota. This Summit was a major step forward in the war on this reservation meth pandemic.

The North American Inter-Tribal Drug Task Force was conceived at this first summit out of the need for there to be a center point in the unification of Tribal Governments, Federal, State, and Tribal Departments, Law Enforcement Agencies and Community Members to coordinate and cooperate in addressing all the variables and multi-layered issues caused by reservation meth addiction. A team of experts in James Iron Shell, Rosebud Sioux Tribe – Law Enforcement, Kelly Marie King, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe – Child Protection & Advocacy, and Gaylene Pretty Bird, Rosebud Sioux Tribe – Grant and Fundraising were chosen at this First Summit to drive this agenda.

Since then the North American Inter-Tribal Drug Task Force has been at the forefront in guiding this strategy. Child advocate Kelly Marie King Stated, *“It is understood that the ultimate victim of this Methamphetamine Epidemic are always the children. Though we all have different cultures and traditions as Native Nations across this country we do share one common belief “Our Children Are Sacred” they are the future. These Methamphetamine Awareness Summits sponsored and hosted by Native Tribes are a step in the right direction in the protection and safety of the children. Tribal leadership know that in order to have a successful strategy they must take a unified stand against this Methamphetamine Epidemic destroying our people. These Summits bring hope to an otherwise hopeless situation by uniting Native people against this common enemy.”*

The Second Methamphetamine Awareness Summit was sponsored and hosted by the Spirit Lake Tribal Council and their Tribal Chairwoman Myra Pearson at the Spirit Lake Casino & Resort, Fort Totten, North Dakota on February 25th and 26th, 2016. The newly formed North American Inter-Tribal Drug Task Force was able to provide a welcoming statement to the over 300 attendees from President Barack Obama which stated, *“I send greetings to all those gathered at the Spirit Lake Tribal Substance Abuse Summit. Substance misuse challenges our shared dream of building a healthier, safer, and more prosperous future for our children. All Across America, ordinary women and men are taking courageous leaps to treat substance use disorders and rid their communities of drugs. Tribes like yours play an important part in the ongoing work of addressing the epidemic that has taken too great a toll on our society – jeopardizing our economy, by contributing to the unemployment and decreased productivity, and causing over dosed deaths... As you come together to create lasting change in your community, I wish you all the best.”*

The Third Methamphetamine Awareness Summit sponsored by the Yankton Sioux Tribe will continue this dialogue and this unified approach to fight this substance abuse epidemic.

For Release, Saturday March 19th, 2016