

# New exhibits to promote Native American cultural tourism

## **Pine Ridge Chamber, attractions to share information**

PINE RIDGE, S.D. – (3/12/10) Education programs at Badlands National Park, Crazy Horse Memorial and Mount Rushmore National Memorial that introduce visitors to Native American history and culture will be expanded this summer.

These area attractions plan to add new displays that will invite visitors to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to learn more about today's Oglala Lakota people. And in an initial three-year exchange, the new Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center at Kyle will also exhibit information about the nearby Badlands and the Crazy Horse and Mount Rushmore monuments.

“This agreement is intended to be mutually beneficial,” chamber executive director Ivan Sorbel said. “This joint promotion will significantly enhance the opportunities at all the sites for visitors to learn about Native American history and culture.”

Representatives of the chamber, the nonprofit Crazy Horse Memorial and the National Park Service units are working out details about the exhibits. The goal is to have the displays in place by June.

Steve Thede, acting superintendent for the Badlands, said, “The park is excited about fostering this new partnership, which we believe will be mutually beneficial to all parties involved while promoting South Dakota's rich cultural and natural heritage to the state's many visitors.”

Badlands National Park will feature the chamber's information in the Ben Reifel Visitor Center, the park's year-round headquarters near Interior. The park's seasonal White River Visitor Center, near Scenic, has Lakota cultural exhibits and is operated by the Oglala Sioux Parks and Recreation Authority.

Crazy Horse Memorial tentatively plans to display the Pine Ridge chamber's exhibit near the entrance of the Crazy Horse Welcome Center. Museum director Anne Ziolkowski-Christensen said that location already showcases information about the Badlands, Mount Rushmore and the Red Cloud Indian School Heritage Center at Pine Ridge, among other regional attractions.

Mount Rushmore officials, in partnership with their concessionaire, Xanterra Parks and Resorts, will place the Pine Ridge chamber's material with other visitor information exhibits in the park's Carvers Cafe along the Avenue of Flags leading to the mountain carving.

Sorbel said the Kyle visitor center adjoins the chamber's new offices, which opened last July. The complex is at the geographical center of the reservation and is near the Oglala Lakota College main campus, which features the OLC Historical Center and a new privately-owned motel and restaurant.

In addition to the displays, the member groups will hold orientation training for their respective employees to enhance their knowledge of the reservation, as well as the other attractions in the information exchange consortium.

The chamber is a volunteer nonprofit organization and is not a tribal entity. Sorbel said a federal Administration for Native Americans grant will help the chamber pay its costs for the cultural education promotion. The program is part of the chamber's effort to improve the reservation's economy.

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