

PRESS RELEASE – January 27, 2010

Cheyenne River Sioux Indian Reservation, South Dakota

## **DISASTER DECLARED ON THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX INDIAN RESERVATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA**

Severe Ice Storms and Freezing Temperatures Have Knocked Down 3,000 Utility Poles – Tribal Residents Have Been without Electricity, Heat, and Running Water for Six Days

The Chairman of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has declared a state of emergency in central South Dakota, an Indian reservation approximately the size of Connecticut with nearly 15,000 Tribal members. The Tribe is still awaiting a Presidential disaster declaration.

Days of ice storms and strong winds have downed over 3,000 utility poles across the reservation. Thousands of already impoverished tribal residents have been without electricity or heat for five days, with wind chill factors well below zero. Experts estimate it may be as long as a month before all areas have electricity restored.

“Making matters much worse” said Tribal Chairman Joe Brings Plenty, “the loss of electricity has also knocked out the Reservation’s aging water system. We have no running water on the entire Reservation, it is also affecting off Reservation communities such Faith, whose water is supplied from pipes running through the Reservation.”

The Tribe is working hard to bring families in out of the cold into shelters. The South Dakota National Guard, the State’s Department of Public Safety as well as the Army Corps of Engineers have come to the reservation and supplied some emergency generators. The Tribe would especially like to thank Wal-Mart for providing emergency food and supplies, and the Navajo Nation for sending up a tribal utility crew to help with the downed electrical lines.

However, much more assistance is still needed. No one facility can host a shelter large enough for all the Tribal residents; additional generators are needed to set up additional shelters. The Tribe’s one and only grocery store has lost all its perishables, additional food is needed. And dialysis patients have had to be evacuated to Rapid City.

As electricity is restored and immediate safety and survival needs are met, the Chairman worries perhaps the most about the long term effects of having lost their water system in this crisis. The water intake and distribution system has

already been at capacity for decades. In addition to the severe health and safety issues the Tribe now faces, it remains one of the biggest impediments to economic development on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. "For years we have had a complete ban on any new housing or business building because we don't have the water infrastructure to support it. This crisis has exacerbated an already impossible situation."

The Chairman further stated "We have been trying to get this water system replaced for decades. It is a public shame for any community in America to be without safe drinking water. I hope our friends in Washington, DC are listening; this is a life and death situation here. Help us protect our families, and help us create jobs and open up our stifled economy for tomorrow." May the creator keep safe my people.

For further information:

Joe Brings Plenty, Tribal Chairman (605) 964-4155  
Robin Lebeau, Incident Commander (605)964-7711 or 964-7712  
Leo Fischer, Tri-County/Mni Waste Water System (605) 365-6940

Any supplies to the Tribe that can be donated, contact Stacy LeCompte at Wakpa Sica, United Sioux Tribes, Inc. at (605) 280-8588.

WIRING instructions United Bankers Bank, Bloomington, MN  
Direct to: United Bkrs Bloomington ABA # 091 001 322

Beneficiary Bank: Account Number 250 3373; State Bank of Eagle Butte, Eagle Butte, SD 57625

Beneficiary or Final Credit: Account Holder @ UBB Customers Bank  
for Account Holder: Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe CRST 2010 Disaster, Account Number 103173

If you have any questions regarding wiring instructions please contact Wiring Dept. at (605) 964-3411.