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***Video Letters from Prison, a powerful new film from NAPT and NET Television, comes to public TV in Spring 2010***

LINCOLN, NEB. – Native American Public Telecommunications, in association with Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET), announces a powerful new film from producer Milt Lee (Cheyenne River Sioux) about the effects of incarceration on Native families. ***Video Letters from Prison*** follows three teenage Lakota girls from the Pine Ridge Reservation as they form a tentative relationship with their incarcerated father through the exchange of video letters. The National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA) will distribute the film beginning in Spring 2010.

Lee became involved in a project to reconnect kids on the Pine Ridge Reservation with their incarcerated parents several years ago. “Especially on the reservation, prisons can be very far away, so incarceration is a big deal,” he says. “There was a huge need to keep fathers connected with their children.”

Over time, the video correspondence he recorded between the three sisters and their father grew into an hour-long documentary about the challenges of establishing trust after a history of broken promises. As the girls journey into adulthood and think about their future, they struggle with what place their long-absent father should have in their lives.

The issues raised in ***Video Letters from Prison*** reach beyond Indian Country and prisons, says Milt’s wife and writer Jamie Lee. “It’s about what happens when children miss their families.”

When David Feingold, assistant general manager of content at NET Television, first saw the documentary, he knew it would resonate with families nationwide. Now Nebraska Educational Telecommunications is working with Lee to finish the film and get the story into as many living rooms as possible. “We have a long history of partnerships with NAPT and their producers,” he says. “Working with independent filmmakers gives us a fresh perspective and brings more diverse voices to public TV.”

***Video Letters from Prison*** was an audience favorite at NAPT’s VisionMaker Film Festival in Lincoln, Neb., last fall, says NAPT Executive Director Shirley Sneve (Sicangu Lakota). “We think this film has tremendous possibilities for helping people everywhere who struggle with their relationship with an incarcerated relative. And we know that parolees who have family support are far more likely to stay out of prison than those who don’t.”

**Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT)** shares Native stories with the world by supporting the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media. NAPT’s Fall 2009 offerings included *To Brooklyn and Back: A Mohawk Journey*, *For the Rights of All: Ending Jim Crow in Alaska*, *River of Renewal* and *Power Paths* on Independent Lens. Other NAPT services include **AIROS.org**, which features streaming and downloadable audio stories, and **VisionMaker Video**, a distributor of *Jim Thorpe, The World’s Greatest Athlete* and other documentaries by and about Native Americans. For more information, visit **[www.nativetelecom.org](http://www.nativetelecom.org)**.

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