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NAPT Announces the Open Call Results for FY2010 Funded Films: Seven Films Awarded Funding

Native American Public Telecommunications, Inc. (NAPT) announces the results of its annual open call, which provides funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) to filmmakers who tell Native stories. This year, NAPT has awarded more than \$455,000 to seven projects headed up by filmmakers from the East Coast, West Coast, Midwest and Southwest. None of these filmmakers have previously been awarded funding by NAPT.

“The goal of the open call is to increase the diversity of voices available to PBS viewers,” says NAPT Executive Director Shirley K. Sneve (Rosebud Sioux). “We encourage Native Americans to take on significant creative leadership roles, such as director, producer and editor. We want Native voices to be in control, and not just in an advisory capacity.”

The seven funded films, which are produced by both Native and non-Native filmmakers, explore Native perspectives on history and tell contemporary stories about Native women firefighters, young athletes and the Red Power Movement. Several films trace the lives of Native youth as they come of age and develop new understandings about their identity and their communities’ expectations of them.

NAPT is encouraged to see more independent producers teaming up with local public TV stations to produce their films, says Sneve. “We like to promote that, because it creates friendships and often leads to more projects. Then stations always have go-to Native filmmakers to work with.”

NAPT received 34 proposals through the 2009 open call. Five panel members—an independent filmmaker, station programmer, educator, PBS representative and journalist—discussed the proposals and chose the best stories from production teams with the experience to complete a PBS-quality film. Each project was awarded between \$19,000 and \$100,000.

The 2009, Fiscal Year 2010, awarded projects are as follows:

Up Heartbreak Hill

Producers: Erica Scharf, Christina King (Creek/Seminole/Sac & Fox)

Status: Post-production

As their high school graduation approaches, three Native American teenagers in Navajo, New Mexico, must decide whether to stay in their community—a place inextricably linked to their identity—or pursue opportunities elsewhere.

Thin Places: A Recollection of the Chitimacha Tradition

Producer: Tika Laudun, The Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting

Status: Research and development

Through the perspective of the small Chitimacha Indian tribe of Louisiana’s Atchafalaya Basin—known as “the people of the many waters”—the film explores the different ways of knowing and remembering Native American history and offers alternative accounts.

Apache 8

Producer: Sande Zeig

Status: Production

The all-female wildland firefighting crew from the White Mountain Apache Tribe has been fighting fires on the reservation and throughout the United States for more than 30 years. With humor and tenderness, four extraordinary women from different generations of the Apache 8 crew share their personal stories.

Injunuity

Producer: Adrian Baker (Hopi)

Status: Production

Using a mix of animation, music and ideas from people who see the world from a Native American perspective, the film explores such topics as Creation, First Contact and the Soul of America and offers a visually stunning, thought-provoking mosaic of reflections on our shared past, turbulent present and undiscovered future.

Racing the Rez

Producer: Brian Truglio

Status: Production

Moving beyond stereotypes of the past and present, the film tells the complex story of contemporary life on the Navajo Nation—America's largest Indian reservation—from the perspective of three high school boys' cross-country teams.

Warrior Women

Producer: Elizabeth Castle

Status: Pre-production

From the perspective of Lakota activist Madonna Thunder Hawk, the film traces the untold history of women's activism in the Red Power Movement and follows Thunder Hawk as she encounters the major players in events that changed the landscape of Indian Country forever.

The Medicine Game

Producer: Lukas Korver

Status: Production

Two brothers from the Onondaga Nation pursue their dreams of playing lacrosse for national power, Syracuse University. With the dream nearly in reach, the boys are caught in a constant struggle to define their Native identity, live up to their family's expectations and balance challenges on and off the reservation.

Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT) shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media. Founded in 1977, through various media—public television, public radio and the Internet—NAPT brings awareness of Indian and Alaska Native issues. Through the CPB-funded Production Fund, five to ten new projects are supported each year. Last year, we worked with *American Experience* in the award-winning *We Shall Remain* five-part Native history series. NAPT operates the **AIROS Native Network**, a 24/7 Internet radio station that features music, news, interviews, documentaries and audio theater. We also feature downloadable podcasts with Native filmmakers, musicians and Tribal leaders. **VisionMaker Video** is now the premier source for quality Native American educational and home videos. Profits made from video sales are invested in new NAPT productions. All aspects of our programs encourage the involvement of young people to learn more about careers in the media—to be the next generation of storytellers. Through our location at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, we offer student employment, internships and fellowships. Reaching the general public and the global market is the ultimate goal for the dissemination of Native-produced media.

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