



# NAPT

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### LAKOTA LEADERS RECOUNT HISTORY IN NEW REGIONAL EMMY-NOMINATED DOCUMENTARY

LINCOLN, Neb.—Oct. 8, 2008— Across the rolling plains of the Midwest, a great nation was created by a people who had their own system of government and a livelihood that was forever changed by settlers. The *Oyate*, the people, tell their own story in this new, hour-long documentary, ***Oceti Sakowin: The People of the Seven Council Fires***.

Produced by South Dakota Public Broadcasting with a grant from the South Dakota Department of Education, this **Upper Midwest Emmy-nominated educational film** incorporates interviews from leading Lakota, Dakota and Nakota historians and tribal leaders to share the origin of the *Oyate* and educate people about how present-day things became to be.

“To understand the *Oyate* is to know everything in life is a circle,” said lone Quigley (Rosebud Sioux), chairwoman of Lakota Studies at Sinte Gleska University. “If you see a bird’s nest, it’s usually round and it is a circle encompassing the young, nurturing the young within that circle. What we learn from the animals is how we set up our homes.”

In the 1600s when French trappers came into there area, they heard a description of the people in this region of the Plains. Misunderstanding the name, which the French heard as *Nadouessi* (meaning “snake” in Ojibwe, the *Oyate*’s enemies), the French added the suffix “oux” to pluralize the name they had heard and pronounced it *Nadouessioux*. The word eventually became “*Sioux*.”

But the *Oyate* (Lakota meaning “the people”) were a diverse tribe that spoke different various dialects, Lakota, Dakota and Nakota. They believe they came from the earth and were governed by the Seven Council Fires or the ***Oceti Sakowin*** (pronounced osh-SHAY-tee shaw-KOO-wee; ***oceti*** meaning fires and ***sakowin*** meaning the number seven), with each fire representing where the *Oyate* live. Today, the *Oyate* are primarily settled in Minnesota and North and South Dakota.

And life for the people of the ***Oceti Sakowin*** remained good until the 1800s when the nomadic tribe and their various bands were forced to farm and be confined to a reservation. But the *Oyate* continue to persevere.

To show this determination of survival, Rosebud Tribal Council Member Russell Eagle Bear says the *Oyate* like to tell a story about the buffalo, which during a blizzard, will face the blistering wind instead of turn its back to the storm.

“And that’s what we want people to ...That’s our walk of life here as Lakota people,” Eagle Bear said.

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***Oceti Sakowin: The People of the Seven Council Fires*** was created with an **educational guide** to aid **K-12 teachers** in instruction of Lakota, Dakota and Nakota, and other **Native American children**. The guide, developed by the South Dakota Department of Education, can be found at NAPT's program pages at [www.nativetelecom.org](http://www.nativetelecom.org) or the SD Public Broadcasting Web site at: <http://www.sdpb.org/TV/oto/Oceti/Oceti%20workshop%20guide%20final.pdf>.

Teachers who reviewed the guide said:

"I am an enrolled member of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe located in central South Dakota. The workshop facilitator's guide can be broken down into subsections for teachers to do even more research in their classrooms. *Bridging the Gap* is also a great tool for teachers, students and administrators to learn more about the viewpoints and opinions of Native American students. Both programs and the workshop guide are greatly needed in our public, private and Native schools in South Dakota because they provide history, culture and factual information."

-Silas Blaine, K-8 Principal, Crow Creek Tribal School, Stephan, S.D

"I particularly like the layout of the guide with sections for video synopsis, key concepts, program interviewees, pre-viewing, post-viewing, general teaching issues, small group discussion and content based questions. The questions in the guide were also well-written and align very well with the content of the programs. The variety of questions allows a facilitator to pick and choose between different topics to lead a discussion that does not overemphasize one area while leaving out other key issues."

-Becky Guffin, Director of Education Services, Aberdeen School District, Aberdeen, S.D.

***Oceti Sakowin: The People of the Seven Council Fires*** is presented by **Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT)**, and the **National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA)**. Program information about ***Oceti Sakowin*** is available at [www.nativetelecom.org](http://www.nativetelecom.org).

**NAPT** shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media. **NAPT** support makes it possible for public television audiences to view such quality programs as ***Way of the Warrior*** and the upcoming documentary about a 1950s damming project that displaced the Fort Berthold Reservation, ***Waterbuster***. Other NAPT products include **AIROS.org**, and **VisionMaker Video**, distributor of ***Oceti Sakowin*** and other documentaries by and about Native Americans.

**NAPT** one of five members of the **National Minority Consortia** chartered by the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** to provide diverse programming to **PBS** and other public broadcasting systems. For more information on NAPT, go to [www.nativetelecom.org](http://www.nativetelecom.org).

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