

Native American Tribes Are Saving Energy, Money

With the deregulation of the electric industry, Native American leaders are stepping up their efforts to address the high cost of energy, the demand for cleaner energy and the need for energy education in their communities. They're finding some solutions through Rebuild America.

The **Rosebud Sioux** of Rosebud, South Dakota, was the first Native American tribe to form a Rebuild America partnership, followed by the neighboring **Lower Brule Sioux**.



Dan Reicher (left) accepted a traditional Lakota star quilt on behalf of DOE from Rose Cordier.

Rebuild America program representatives Doug Avery and Dave Waltzman have also met with the Navajo, Yavapai Apache and Standing

Native American Partnerships

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Rock Sioux to discuss opportunities for the revitalization of tribal buildings.

The Rosebud Sioux alone expect to achieve a 20 percent energy savings in reservation schools and tribal and casino buildings through energy retrofits.

“Energy issues are important to us and something we as a people need to do something about,” says Rosebud Sioux Vice President Rose Cordier. “Before Rebuild America and organizations like the Intertribal Council on Utility Policy, when the subject of utilities or efficiency came up in council meetings, everyone would have to make phone calls. Now, people are listening.”

A Landmark Agreement

On June 10, 1998, in a special ceremony at U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) headquarters in Washington, DC, Cordier presented a traditional Lakota star quilt to Dan Reicher,

assistant secretary for energy efficiency and renewable energy, on behalf of the Rosebud Sioux.

The quilt was given in thanks for DOE’s continuing commitment to energy issues for Native American people and to signify the landmark agreement between the Rosebud Sioux and Rebuild America.

As a Native American drum group performed honor songs for the gathering, Cordier shared the quilt-giving tradition of her people. She explained that during World War II, Lakota women made quilts for their relatives in the service. Making and giving the quilts was an important activity for the women and reminded their far-flung loved ones that they still had a connection to the people.

Since then, receiving a star quilt is a great honor. Reicher accepted the quilt on behalf of DOE.