

AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM

A project of the Native American Cultural & Educational Authority

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: **Shoshana Wasserman**

Phone: **(405) 239.5503**

Email: shoshanaw@aiccm.org

\$25 MILLION BOND LEGISLATION KEEPS CONSTRUCTION MOVING FORWARD

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (May 23, 2008) – The passage of the legislation authorizing \$25 million in bond funding ensures that construction will continue. It also demonstrates the state's commitment and vision to build an American Indian Cultural Center & Museum (AICCM) seated on the Oklahoma River at the Intersection of I-35 and I-40. This location is one of the most well traveled intersections in all of the United States at the center of the continent and in the heart of Indian Country. Oklahoma has a unique history that differentiates it from any other state in the nation. State leaders recognize the value of this legacy and how AICCM will position Oklahoma as a distinctive destination, offering the best of both Native and Western Heritage. It is anticipated that over the span of 20 years, the economic benefit to Oklahoma's economy is estimated to be in excess of \$2.6 billion. The Cultural Center project and site will be wholly owned and operated by the State of Oklahoma and is a tremendous investment in the states growth potential.

The Visitor/Welcome Center will be the first building completed this September 2008. The structural Steel has already been erected and begins to convey the unique architectural design that defines the entry sequence. Shoshana Wasserman, Director of Marketing & Public Relations shares, "The project's progress is hidden from view when traveling on I-35 or I-40. It is only when you enter from American Indian Boulevard, (formerly Eastern Avenue) that you see the Visitor Center structure and all of the building foundations. When you stand in the Center of the Courtyard of Nations and look up at the Promontory Mound, you really feel the scale and magnitude of this amazing place." (*Construction images can be viewed on the web page at www.aiccm.org under the UPDATES menu option*) Completion of the full vision plan requires an investment of \$150 million dollars to develop the American Cultural Center & Museum. This center is part of an overall vision to develop a 300-acre Cultural Park which includes: a Landscaped Park & Trail System, Visitor/Welcome Center and privately funded Commercial Enterprises including an Arts Market Place and Hotel/Conference Center. With \$50 million committed to date, this world-class, state-of-art cultural center is a successful, collaborative effort among the State, City, Tribal Nations, and Federal entities, as well as corporate and individual contributors. **The remaining \$75 million will come from private sources including American Indian Tribes.** Weaving together the unique perspectives and realities of Native communities with ideas of optimism and resilience illustrates how essential the American Indian people have been to the State, Nation and World.

The \$25 million dollars will fund all of the building structures including the North and South Galleries where the primary museum experience and changing art exhibitions will reside. The Hall of the People, a 100 foot glass and steel space, will serve as the central gathering space and an area where community members can host events. The East Wing includes the Children's Discovery Center, Resource Library, Art Studios and Classrooms. The Community Forum and the Administrative offices also are located in the East Wing. In 1994, state leaders had the vision and insight to set in motion a state owned project that would have far reaching impact on the states economy. The Oklahoma Legislature created the Native American Cultural & Educational Authority (NACEA) with one mission – to build and operate an American Indian Cultural Center & Museum. Now the Oklahoma legislature has sustained the vision for the future with the passing of the bond legislation. Executive Director Gena Timberman states, "We have reached an important milestone with the passage of this bond legislation. Now we can plan to progress construction of a world-class institution. Oklahoma deserves this and it is long overdue. We appreciate the vision and leadership of the state legislature in enabling this special project to move forward in positive stride."

- OETA filmed current construction on May 22, 2008. This footage is available upon request 405.841.9259.
- To arrange a construction site visit for filming purposes please contact Shoshana Wasserman at 405.651.8900 or shoshanaw@aiccm.org
- Construction images can be downloaded from the website at www.aiccm.org choose MEDIA menu item and then IMAGE DOWNLOADS. Photo credit for images should be given to Kimberly Rodriguez.