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News Release

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Rosebud Sioux Receive Nearly \$7 Million Veterans Cemetery Grant *VA's First Tribal Cemetery Grant Goes to South Dakota Tribe*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded the Rosebud Sioux Tribe a grant of \$6,948,365 for 100 percent of allowable costs associated with establishing the Sicangu Akicita Owicaha Veterans Cemetery in Mellette County, S.D.

"This is the first Veterans cemetery grant VA is awarding to a Native American government," said Secretary Shinseki. "We are proud to begin working with these sovereign tribes to provide additional burial benefits where Veterans live."

Public Law 109-461, signed into law Dec. 22, 2006, authorized the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award Veterans cemetery grants to tribal governments in the same manner that they are given to U.S. states and territories.

This grant will fund construction of the main entrance, an administration building, a maintenance facility, roads, an assembly area, a committal service shelter, pre-placed crypts, burial areas for cremated remains, traditional burial areas, columbaria for cremated remains, landscaping, a memorial walkway and supporting infrastructure. The project will develop approximately 14.4 acres of the 74-acre property on the Rosebud Reservation near Mission, S.D., and will include 600 pre-placed crypts, 544 in-ground sites for cremated remains and 32 columbarium niches.

VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program is designed to complement VA's 131 national cemeteries across the country. Since 1980, the program has awarded grants totaling more than \$438 million to establish, expand or improve 81 Veterans cemeteries in 41 states or territories including Guam and Saipan. These cemeteries provided nearly 28,000 burials in 2010.

Tribe members who are military Veterans with a qualifying discharge and have completed a period of active duty service as required by law, along with their spouses and eligible dependent children, may be buried in the Veterans cemetery. For more information, contact Orlando Morrison, Rosebud Sioux director of Veterans Affairs, at 605-747-2593.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000 or from the Internet at <http://www.cem.va.gov>.