



Media Release

**For Immediate Release
March 11, 2009**

An American Indian Non-profit Organization

White Bison, Inc. 6145 Lehman Dr. Suite 200
Colorado Springs, CO 80918-3440 719-548-1000

Contact **White Bison, Inc.**
Colorado Springs, Colorado
March 11, 2009

Toll Free 1-877-871-1495
e mail: info@whitebison.org
www.whitebison.org

The Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness to Visit Numerous Former Boarding School Sites

Beginning on May 16, 2009, White Bison Inc. will undertake a 40-day cross-country journey to bring awareness about the Native American Boarding School era in the U.S. The Journey is being undertaken in order to promote healing from the intergenerational trauma that still affects many American Indian and Alaska Native people in diverse ways. The Journey to the boarding school sites will begin on May 16, 2009 in Salem, Oregon at the Chemewa Indian School, and conclude on June 21, 2009 at the site of the former Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, PA. The Journey itself will come to an end at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC on June 24, 2009.

The Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness will offer unique presentations at each of the twenty-four visits across the country. Each presentation will include learning material, ceremony, and the opportunity for local and regional communities to share their knowledge of the issues and history of their particular site. Some of the sites are still in operation as upgraded modern schools, while others ceased operation sometime during the 20th Century.

Another objective of the Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness is to request an apology from the U.S. government for the abuses and atrocities to American Indians and Alaska Natives committed on its behalf during the boarding school era. Both the Australian and Canadian Governments made such an apology to its Indigenous people in 2008. White Bison, Inc. is circulating a petition for an apology by the government on behalf of the Wellbriety Movement. Those feeling strongly about the need for an apology by the government may sign the petition on the White Bison, Inc. website, www.wellbrietyjourney.org. The petition is also being circulated throughout Native American communities so that individuals may express their feelings by signing copies of the petition. **The petition will be presented to President Obama on June 24, 2009.**

The boarding school era began in 1879 with the opening of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Although US government policy about the culturally repressive nature of the Indian boarding schools changed in 1934, the destructive practices of boarding schools in fact continued into at least the 1960's. Both BIA schools and those run by diverse church denominations continued to suppress free expression of Native culture and spirituality until about 1970. The resulting historical trauma is now understood to be a root cause of most present day problems affecting Native American individuals, their families, communities and tribal nations.

Elders, educators, health care workers, scholars and researchers alike now know that the disproportionate issues of alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, and disparities in jobs and educational opportunities among Native Americans today are symptoms of the intergenerational and historic trauma of the boarding school era.

White Bison, Inc. invites those who understand the need for healing from issues of the boarding school era to participate in the funding of the Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness. There are opportunities for individuals, corporations, associations of all kinds, tribal governments, faith based organizations and others who feel an affinity with Indian issues to help make this life-saving event a reality. White Bison, Inc. is a 501(c)(3), Indian owned non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible. Please visit the website, www.wellbrietyjourney.org or call toll-free 1-877-871-1495 to sign the petition and to learn more about the boarding school era, intergenerational trauma, and the Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness.