



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CALIFORNIA TRIBES COME TOGETHER FOR CALIFORNIA NATIVE
AMERICAN DAY CELEBRATION AND STUDENT CONFERENCE**

**State Holiday and Educational Initiative Credited as Setting the Stage for a
National Native American Holiday**

San Manuel Indian Nation – September 15, 2009 (San Bernardino, CA) – Traditional brush dancers, Southern California bird singers, food and arts will highlight the annual celebration of Native American Day on Friday, September 25 at 6 p.m. The activities will be held in the Lower Commons area at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB). The event hosted by the San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians and co-sponsored by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians is free and open to the public, and marks the culmination of the weeklong California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference (CICAC) held each year at California State University, San Bernardino.

"We invite the public to join us and learn more about the history of California and its Native peoples," said San Manuel Chairman James Ramos, California Native American Day Project Director and California Native American Heritage Commission Chairman. "This year we have to a greater degree involved regional tribes and their educators to fulfill the educational mandate of the state's Native American Day holiday."

In 1998 the California Legislature passed Assembly Bill 1953, authored by then Assemblyman Joe Baca establishing the day as an official state holiday. In 2008 former President Bush signed into law legislation introduced by Congressman Joe Baca (D-Rialto), to designate the Friday after Thanksgiving as Native American Heritage Day. Congressman Baca credits Chairman Ramos for laying the groundwork for the state holiday which set out the path for creating a national day of recognition in November.

Since 1999, several thousand students and teachers have participated in the CICAC, a week-long forum offering a variety of educational activities about Native Americans indigenous to California, through workshops, educational resources and informative discussions by tribal members and academics.

This intertribal collaboration involves several presenters taking time from teaching at reservation schools such as Noli School on the Soboba Indian Reservation as well as the Pechanga Reservation Education Department to participate in this educational outreach program.

Over five days of this year's conference, 1,500 students from San Bernardino and Riverside County schools are scheduled to participate in such educational endeavors as music, Serrano language introduction and discovery of traditional lifeways. The student conference is held Sept. 21-25 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. in the Santos Manuel Student Union on the CSUSB Campus.

About the CICAC (California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference)

The CICAC is sponsored by the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians and organized by the tribe's Tribal Unity and Cultural Awareness Program. Founded in 1999, the CICAC was developed to coincide with California Native American Day. Partners in the event include California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB), Dr. Herb Fischer, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, the San Bernardino City Unified School District, the City of San Bernardino, and the California State Department of Education. For more information on California Native American Day or the California Indian Cultural Awareness Conference, the public can call 909-537-8709 or visit www.nativeamericanday.com.

About the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

The San Manuel Band of Serrano Mission Indians is a federally recognized American Indian tribe located near the city of Highland, Calif. The Serrano Indians are the indigenous people of the San Bernardino highlands, passes, valleys and mountains who share a common language and culture. The San Manuel reservation was established in 1891 and recognized as sovereign nation with the right of self-government. Since time immemorial, the San Manuel tribal community has endured change and hardship. Amidst these challenges the tribe continued to maintain its unique form of governance. Like other governments it seeks to provide a better quality of life for its citizens by building infrastructure, maintaining civil services and promoting social, economic and cultural development. Today San Manuel tribal government oversees many governmental units including the departments of fire, public safety, education and environment.

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