

**PERSONAL STATEMENT FROM CHAIRMAN JOSEPH BRINGS PLENTY
CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX**

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has declared a state of emergency after a severe ice storm cut electricity and water across our reservation in north central South Dakota. We are doing the best we can but there are estimates that the power won't be restored to some areas of our reservation for another three weeks. We have an immediate need for emergency heating including oil, propane, and kerosene heaters along with fuel and generators. Food and water are also needed.

Some of our families with the financial means have temporarily relocated but many have remained. I estimate we have 1,500 to 2,000 homes without power and we are trying to assist 9,000 tribal members in need along with helping our non-Indian neighbors who are also struggling. Beyond immediate needs we are finding that some homes have been damaged and will need repair, and food that many of our families set aside in their freezer to get them through the winter has begun to spoil due to a lack of electricity.

I know there are hard economic times across the country and those who are able continue to respond with prayers, money and muscle to help our neighbors in Haiti. I find myself in the humble position of appealing for your support in our time of emergency.

I would not ask you for assistance unless I was confident we are doing all we can. We are. I am proud and grateful to the people of the Cheyenne River Sioux and our neighbors who are committed to working long hours undergoing difficult working conditions. We have a long way to go and we have experienced heartwarming generosity: the Oglala Sioux Nation has opened their health care facility to take in some of our ailing citizens; the Navajo Nation in the southwest U.S. has offered to dispatch a utility crew to help us restore electricity; the South Dakota National Guard, South Dakota Department of Public Safety, and the Army Corps of Engineers have responded with equipment and generators; the Rosebud Sioux Tribe responded by sending us crews to clear our roads; the Santee Tribe has sent us much needed drinking water; Wal-Mart has generously given us emergency food and supplies. And, there are many individuals who are also sending donations.

I ask you to join them and to join us in responding to our need.

I give thanks to the Creator that we have not experienced a loss of life, and pray we never will. I pray for the safety of our community and for the safety of yours.

Sincerely,

Chairman Joseph Brings Plenty
Cheyenne River Sioux
Eagle Butte, South Dakota

Additional background information:

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe has declared a state of emergency after a severe ice storm cut electricity and water across the reservation in north central South Dakota. Ongoing frigid conditions hinder recovery from this disaster and raise the potential for loss of life.

According to Chairman Joseph Brings Plenty, many homes remain without heat, and in some areas power will not be restored for another three weeks. The power outage also took its toll on

their aging water system. While power might be restored to the water system this week, water delivery cannot resume until water quality tests are satisfactory and water storage capacity is refilled. The earliest water might be restored is at the end of the first week in February.

Chairman Brings Plenty has estimated there are 1,500 to 2,000 homes without power. "They are doing the best they can," he said, yet families have an immediate need for oil, propane and kerosene heaters and fuel. In addition, generators and batteries are also needed. The Chairman also estimates that in addition to the 9,000 tribal members affected by the storm whom the Tribe is trying to support, there are also non-Indians living on the reservation who are also in need.

Families with the means to relocate are temporarily seeking refuge off the reservation as the Tribe continues to work to restore water and power under ongoing and challenging frigid conditions. As the situation persists, the Tribe anticipates more families will seek to relocate but will face the challenge of limited financial resources to acquire food, shelter and supplies off the reservation. In the winter, unemployment on the reservation climbs beyond 70%, leaving families with limited financial resources.

People with medical needs have been relocated to Rapid City and the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Chairman Brings Plenty expressed his gratitude to Oglala Sioux President Theresa Two Bulls for opening up the health care facilities on the Pine Ridge Reservation to take in ailing citizens from Cheyenne River.

"It is heartbreaking trying to keep pace with Mother Nature," the Chairman stated. The situation is complicated by the reservation's remote nature, spreading over more than 2.7 million acres.

Chairman Brings Plenty was quick to acknowledge that many people are going out of their way to respond to the crisis. "It is extremely humbling to receive any donation." The South Dakota National Guard, South Dakota Department of Public Safety, and the Army Corps of Engineers have responded. Wal-Mart has provided emergency food and supplies. In addition, the Navajo Nation from the southwest U.S. has offered to dispatch a tribal utility crew to assist in restoring power.

A growing concern is the loss of their winter food resources. With no electricity to run household freezers, some food has already begun to spoil. The food will need to be replaced to carry some families beyond the winter and spring.

There has been some damage to homes caused by freezing temperatures. In addition, some homes where families have fled have been broken into as people search for needed supplies.

Chairman Brings Plenty is grateful for the "prayers, the response and the people in the field," and the fact there has been "no loss of life."