

United States Secretary of Commerce Meets with Tribal Youth at GIS Conference

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, July 29, 2014 (Santa Rosa, Calif.) - This year's ESRI User Conference was a "first" thanks to a group of tribal youth from northern California, who became the first tribal youth group to ever participate in the conference. Several GIS students representing the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center (CIMCC) traveled from Santa Rosa to display their maps of California Indian country to a wide and diverse audience as part of ESRI's Youth Community GIS showcase.

In 2013, CIMCC began Tribal Ambassadors Through Technology (TATT), a program designed to address the STEM needs of tribal youth. Under Garet Couch, President of the National Tribal Geographic Information Support Center (NTGISC), new GIS students from 9 to 20 years old learned essential skills like creating maps, joining data, and presenting before an audience. Despite their busy schedules, youth consistently attend trainings and outreach events like the California Conference on American Indian Education, The For All My Relations Conference For Indian Families and Sonoma County GIS Day where they presented their project in preparation for ESRI UC.

At ESRI UC, TATT youth introduced, "California Indigenous," a multi-media exhibit featuring maps of "California Indians You Should Know," tribal headquarters, and more. Their work was well-received by conference attendees. Dr. Joely Proudfit, CIMCC Treasurer, coordinated a meet and greet with US Secretary of Commerce, Penny Pritzker, who discussed the project and heard from youth about the need to change the way California Indians are presented to public audiences.

This past summer, CIMCC held two GIS summer camps for tribal youth including 3 days and 2 nights in Cloverdale, and a hike through the Pepperwood Preserve in Santa Rosa. TATT youth documented plants, created traditional tools, and recorded positive messages for youth. Later this year, CIMCC will bring on GIS interns to help finalize, add to and maintain "California Indigenous," as it becomes open to the public.

TATT was implemented through grants and support from The Administration for Native Americans, The Institute of Museum and Library Services, The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, The Miranda Lux foundation, The Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians, The Morongo Band of Mission Indians and Middletown Rancheria.

About the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center (CIMCC)

The California Indian Museum and Cultural Center was founded in 1996 with the purpose of educating the public about the history, culture, and contemporary life of California Indians and to honor their contributions to civilization. For more information visit: www.cimcc.org

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