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### Grant helps American Indians with tobacco prevention efforts

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**NEWS RELEASE**

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Nov. 19, 2001

**Contact:** Bernadette Bannister, resource center director, (406) 243-6098.

**GRANT HELPS AMERICAN INDIANS WITH TOBACCO PREVENTION EFFORTS**

**MISSOULA--**

The University of Montana has received a grant from the American Legacy Foundation for tobacco abuse prevention training through UM's Continuing Education Resource Center for Technical Assistance and Training.

The American Legacy Foundation, based in Washington, D.C., was created by the November 1998 Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement for recovery of tobacco-related health care costs.

UM was awarded \$523,640 for three years to support the "Many Voices, One Message -- Keep Tobacco Sacred" project. The project will provide American Indian populations in Montana with educational tools and materials to carry out an effective campaign that addresses the understanding of sacred use of tobacco versus everyday recreational abuse, said Bernadette Bannister, director of the resource center.

"This is really important for us at Continuing Education," Bannister said. "Last year we were cut out of the drastically reduced tobacco prevention program budget for the state. We had a six-year contract, but it had to be canceled."

The project is modeled after a conference sponsored by the Montana Department of Health and Human Services Tobacco Use Prevention Program held in March on the Flathead

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Reservation at Salish Kootenai College. The project will include training in Montana for Indians and an annual Northwest regional conference to be held in the spring. A significant part of the project will be organized by an Indian planning team.

The American Legacy Foundation has distributed more than \$8 million in grants to 32 organizations in 18 states to help reduce tobacco use. The grants are designed to address populations that have been disproportionately harmed by tobacco.

"Legacy is committed to working with partners at the local level to reduce tobacco use across the nation, and we believe that local organizations are in a great position to affect social and behavioral norms around tobacco use," said Cheryl Heaton, Legacy's president and chief executive officer.

For more information about the project, call Bernadette Bannister at (406) 243-6098 or e-mail her at [bernadet@selway.umt.edu](mailto:bernadet@selway.umt.edu).

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