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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

SIAS donates PCs to virtual high school

E-learning helps Aboriginal students prepare for post-secondary studies

September 21, 2005 – The Prince Albert Grand Council's new virtual high school program received a welcome boost with the donation of 24 computers from SIAS. PAGC's pilot e-learning initiative, Credenda Virtual High School, will provide students with the math and science classes they need to qualify for post-secondary programs.

CVHS principal/project coordinator Vince Hill says, "Many of our First Nations youth from the North are unable to get the necessary science and math credits to enter directly into nursing, health and engineering programs. Our goal is to eliminate the need for them to enroll in post-secondary upgrading programs." Hill adds. SIAS's donation will help expand the pilot project and will enable it to reach more remote students.

PAGC Grand Chief Gary Merasty says, "Partnerships, such as the one between the Grand Council and SIAS, are critical and necessary to ensure our First Nations' youth succeed to make Saskatchewan prosper. We are eager to reap the educational benefits made available by Credenda for our youth and very proud of our partnership with SIAS."

"We're delighted to support the Grand Council's virtual high school," says Garth McCormick, SIAS's acting senior director of information resources. "Its emphasis on preparing Aboriginal students for post-secondary education and on the use of technology in education is an excellent fit with key SIAS priorities."

Thirty-five students from Deschambault, Little Red River, Southend, Stanley Mission, and Hatchet Lake are working towards their grade 12 through the CVHS program. Ten of the SIAS computers will be set up in a lab within Little Red River Reserve north of Prince Albert. Another 10 will be installed in the community of Stanley Mission north of La Ronge. The remaining computers will be provided to students for home study.

SIAS is Saskatchewan's primary public institution for post-secondary technical

education and skills training, recognized nationally and internationally for its expertise and innovation. Almost 12,000 students are registered in SIAST programs, which touch every sector of the economy; additionally, the organization draws more than 27,000 individual course registrations. It operates campuses in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon, and provides a number of courses and programs through distance education.

The PAGC represents 12 First Nations in Saskatchewan and has a membership of more than 30,000 people.

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