

## HONORING NATIONS 2000 Poeh Cultural Center & Museum

The Pueblo of **Pojoaque** is one of eight Native American tribes to receive High Honors from Harvard University's Honoring Contributions in the Governance of American Indian Nations Program, also known as Honoring Nations 2000. The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at the University's John F. Kennedy School of Government created this Program in 1998 to identify, celebrate and share outstanding examples of governance among American Indian nations in the United States. The Ford Foundation, a resource for innovative people and institutions worldwide, supports this Program.

This Honor, presented to the Pueblo at the National Congress of American Indian Conference in November, includes a \$10,000 cash award. It marks the first time any Native American arts organization has received this recognition. The Pueblo's model is entitled *Poeh Center: Sustaining and Constructing Legacies*. In presenting this award, Honoring Nations stated: *In 1993, the Tribal Council created Pojoaque Pueblo Construction Services Corporation to specifically generate revenues for, and to oversee the construction and maintenance of, the Poeh Cultural Center. By blending cultural revitalization and economic development into a unique partnership, the Pueblo is creating new revenues and employment opportunities through its construction company, providing a sustainable funding stream for cultural and artistic activities, and stimulating knowledge of Pueblo legacies and traditions.*

The Pueblo established the Poeh Center in 1988 as **the first permanent** tribally owned and operated **vehicle for cultural preservation and revitalization in the Pueblo communities of the northern Rio Grande**. The Center emphasizes arts and cultures of all Pueblo People with focus on the Tewa-speaking Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, San Juan, Santa Clara and Tesuque; and the Tiwa-speaking Pueblos of Picuris and Taos. **The Center's mission is to Support the future of Pueblo people by: Teaching the arts, Collecting great works of art, and Promoting public understanding of, and respect for, Pueblo history and culture. The Center, its educational initiative, Poeh Arts, and its Poeh Museum have taken that mission to heart and evolved into successful** mechanisms for artistic expression, Native American and public education, and successful economic development strategies. Financial resources from PPCSC have allowed the Center to develop appropriate facilities for its programs.

*Poeh Arts*, the Center's educational initiative, funded by U.S. Department of Education's American Indian Vocational Education Program, trains Native artists in traditional arts and in entrepreneurial skills. These artists create traditional work and modern interpretations and market their arts locally and, soon, worldwide, through e-commerce. *Poeh Arts* also teaches other Pueblo art forms, such as beading, embroidery and moccasin making through private support; and summer and school-based arts training for Native American children and youth. The *Poeh Museum* opened in 1991 in a 1,200 square foot temporary facility. Its exhibits highlight works of *Poeh Arts*' students and works of selected master Pueblo artists and artisans. The Museum's public programming informs audiences about integration of art into the greater Pueblo cultural experience. Its "Museum Internship" prepares Pojoaque Pueblo's young adults for museum careers by focusing on collections management, treatment, and preservation; and on arts administration.

In 1996, *Poeh Arts* moved into Phase I of its three-acre *Poeh Center* complex, new 7,000 square foot classroom/studio space, built with traditional adobe building methods and a four-story sun tower that will become a *Museum* gallery. A 12,000 square-foot Phase II facility, housing the Museum and Administrative offices, was completed in 1999. The staff is now focusing on completing the new *Poeh Museum* for a Spring 2002 opening. The *Museum's* planned 1,600 square-foot permanent exhibition, *Nah-Poeh-Me*, is Tewa for *On the Continuous Path*. It will portray history from within the Tewa worldview -- offering all visitors a unique opportunity to understand Tewa cultures through the art, word and history of the Tewa tribes. The Museum will also include a changing exhibition area, a demonstration area and workshop, a gift shop and a collections storage area to be open to the public for research.