Cecelia Fire Thunder
Moving Herstory Forward

Women’s History Month 2007
Keynote Address
presented by
The Women’s Center, All Tribes Council,
and the American Indian Center

Wednesday, March 28
7:00 p.m.
Kimberly Ritsche Auditorium,
Stewart Hall
A reception in Fire Thunder’s honor will be held at 8:30 p.m. at the SCSU American Indian Center. Please join us.

The 2007 theme, Generations of Women Moving History Forward,” acknowledges the many generations of women who have overcome great odds and exhibited amazing strength, courage and tenacity to move history forward.

Cecelia Fire Thunder was elected in December 2004 as the first female president of the Oglala Sioux tribe on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Her decisive victory was credited to the women’s vote by both her and her challenger. Fire Thunder is living testimony of history in the making through her groundbreaking election and her public stances on behalf of women, children, and families.

A former practical nurse and an advocate of improved services to respond to domestic violence and sexual assault in American Indian communities, Fire Thunder has long championed changes that address the root causes of violence and discrimination in an effort to improve the lives of women, children and families. She created the organization, Sacred Circles, to respond to the problem of domestic violence and was one of the original founders of the National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS).

Fire Thunder made national headlines in 2005, after vowing to create a medical clinic for women on the reservation, in response to the South Dakota’s Legislature’s total ban on abortion (even in the case of rape, incest or harm to the woman’s health). Her proposal for a health clinic on sovereign land centered on the concept of reproductive choices, as well as the demand that, “It’s time for women to reclaim their bodies.” As she has reminded the majority population time and time again, Native American women are three times more likely to be victimized by a sexual assault than white women.

Her decision to propose a clinic led to controversy among the Tribal Council. Fire Thunder was impeached in June 2006 for her courage to discuss these issues and propose bold initiatives.

Fire Thunder will speak about her experiences as the first woman elected as an Oglala tribal leader, as well as issues of sovereignty, reproductive rights, violence against women, and power. Thank you for joining us to learn more about the work and life of Fire Thunder. We honor her for her leadership, courage and inspiration to all generations!