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**2007 Award of Excellence  
AIA Montana Design Awards Program  
Honor Award**

*Architect of Record:*

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### **Salish & Kootenai Office Building**

The Salish and Kootenai tribes had outgrown their current facilities and had various departments of their tribes scattered around the town of Pablo, on the Flathead Indian Reservation. The main building that housed the executive branch of the tribe was surrounded by parking lots and underdeveloped bare land (minus a trailer house here and there), which provided a prime setting for a new building. The grouping of the existing buildings, along with the new building, could provide a campus-like setting for the various departments and reconnect them through proximity.

The new 42,000 sf building needed to provide space for five disparate departments: Lands, Executive Branch, Accounting, Personnel and Preservation/Education. At the same time, the tribe, which is similar to a city government, needed reception space for the public, as well as a tribal council room (similar to a city council meeting room). Thus, the front entry of the building is clearly communicated to welcome guests and faces the east in homage to greeting the day and rising sun. An abstract, organic winding path represent the flow of water and its importance in the American Indian's life and denotes the path to the front entry. The entry is concentric circular space that welcomes the visitor with its soft curve. It is flanked on the north and south wide by wings of the office building that house the various department. Harvested from the tribe's forested lands, Lodge Pole pines ad scale to these winds and suggest the interior poles of a tepee. Additionally, the indents where the pines are located have sun shades on the south sides to shield from heat and sun.

The exterior of the building has design set into the CMU that represents stars in the skies. Behind the curved walls on the east end of the north and south wings are exit stairs. A center panel in each is designed to accept artwork from one of the many talented Salish and Kootenai members. Materials were chosen for the building that have high durability factor, low maintenance and that will last a long time. Various products were used throughout the project that were as sustainable as possible and appropriate at the time of construction. Although the tribe did not communicate high sustainability goals or high design goals, the architects took it upon themselves to offer a building that communicated something about the tribe's culture and history and location on the land in this place and time.