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RELEASE
NEWS

THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION / EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

U.S. EMBASSY OPENS U.S.-AZERBAIJAN EDUCATION CENTER IN BAKU

Baku, October 9, 2003

The U.S. Embassy announces the official opening of the new U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center on October 10th. The opening will start with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan Reno Harnish and Minister of Education M. Murdanov. The center is located at 183 Suleman Rahimov Street.

The U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center will promote education and exchange opportunities in the U.S., help develop and equip libraries in Azerbaijan, provide internet access to Azerbaijanis interested in the U.S., serve as an alumni resource center for participants of U.S. educational and exchange programs, and distribute information about American society, education and culture. The Center will be the new home of four organizations responsible for promoting and administering U.S. Department of State-funded educational exchange programs: IREX, ACCELS, Project Harmony, and the Baku Education Information Center (BEIC). The new Center will also house the American Library, an alumni center, and a public access site for IREX's Internet Access Training Program (IATP).

Since Azerbaijan and the United States established diplomatic relations in 1992, almost one thousand Azerbaijanis have participated in U.S.-funded educational exchange programs. The U.S. Department of State has provided over \$40 million for educational exchange programs in Azerbaijan over the past decade. Many program alumni now hold high-level positions in government, business, and education. The opening of the U.S.-Azerbaijan Education Center will be followed by a two-day Alumni Reunion Conference on October 11th & 12th.

NOTE TO MEDIA: Journalists who wish to attend the opening ceremony should contact the U.S. Embassy's public affairs section at 98 03 35.