

# Mission Area Four

## Serving Communities

Interior's fourth Mission Area has five Outcome Goals that describe Interior's efforts related to the safety and well-being of the American public and commitment to its trust responsibilities to Indians, Alaska Natives and island communities.

- ◆ Improve protection of lives, resources and property
- ◆ Improve understanding, prediction, and monitoring of natural hazards to inform decisions by civil authorities and the public to plan for, manage, and mitigate the effects of hazard events on people and property
- ◆ Fulfill Indian fiduciary trust responsibilities
- ◆ Advance quality communities for tribes and Alaska natives
- ◆ Increase economic self-sufficiency of insular areas

### Benefits

The measures contained under the Outcome Goals describe how the DOI works to improve the quality of life in the communities we serve. The Department assesses different types of activities under this Mission Area, from unplanned wildland fires to Interior's Indian fiduciary trust responsibilities to reducing the impacts of natural hazards on people and property through scientific research. A whole range of performance measures track how the Department is advancing the quality of life for tribes and Alaska natives—measures that assess our work in the arenas of education, public safety through crime control, and financial accountability.

The American public is the direct beneficiary of the DOI's focus in serving communities.

- ◆ Wildland fire measures deal with the effects of fire and fuel treatments on communities located near or adjacent to DOI lands. The Office of Wildland Fire Coordination tracks how many acres of land can be treated through fuel reduction so catastrophic fires are less likely to occur and how quickly fires are controlled. These efforts directly increase the safety of residents who live in those areas.

## Mission Area Four: Serving Communities

- ◆ The Department's science Bureau, USGS, offers technical assistance and advice to State and local communities that could be affected by natural hazards. The information they provide helps these communities develop emergency evacuation procedures, update city emergency plans and look for ways disasters can be mitigated through advance planning.
- ◆ Indian tribes benefit from Interior's funding for Indian schools that often serve children who live in such remote locations that no other school is conveniently accessible.
- ◆ Bureau of Indian Education helps serve the educational needs of Tribal communities through 184 BIE-funded elementary and secondary schools
- ◆ The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians is updating century-old trust recordkeeping so that Indian beneficiaries have confidence in the accounting and are promptly and accurately paid.

### Representative Strategic Plan Measures

The following representative Strategic Plan measures demonstrate the Department's performance in the Serving Communities Mission Area.

#### **GOAL: Improve protection of lives, resources, and property**

- ◆ Percent of unplanned and unwanted wildfires on DOI land controlled during initial attack

- ◆ Percent of acres treated which achieve fire management objective as identified in applicable management plans

#### **GOAL: Improve understanding, prediction, and monitoring of natural hazards to inform decisions by civil authorities and the public to plan for, manage, and mitigate the effects of hazard events on people and property**

- ◆ Percent of communities/tribes using DOI science on hazard mitigation, preparedness and avoidance for each hazard management activity

#### **GOAL: Fulfill Indian fiduciary trust responsibilities**

- ◆ Percent of financial information accurately processed in trust beneficiary accounts
- ◆ Probate: percent of estates closed

#### **GOAL: Advance quality communities for tribes and Alaska natives**

- ◆ Percent of IA/BIE funded schools achieving Adequate Yearly Progress
- ◆ Part I violent crime incidents per 100,000 Indian Country inhabitants receiving law enforcement services

#### **GOAL: Increase economic self-sufficiency of insular areas**

- ◆ Ratio of Federal revenue to total revenues in insular areas

Discussion

GOAL: Improve protection of lives, resources and property

Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Percent of unplanned and unwanted wildfires on DOI land controlled during initial attack

FIGURE 1-43

Performance vs. Cost

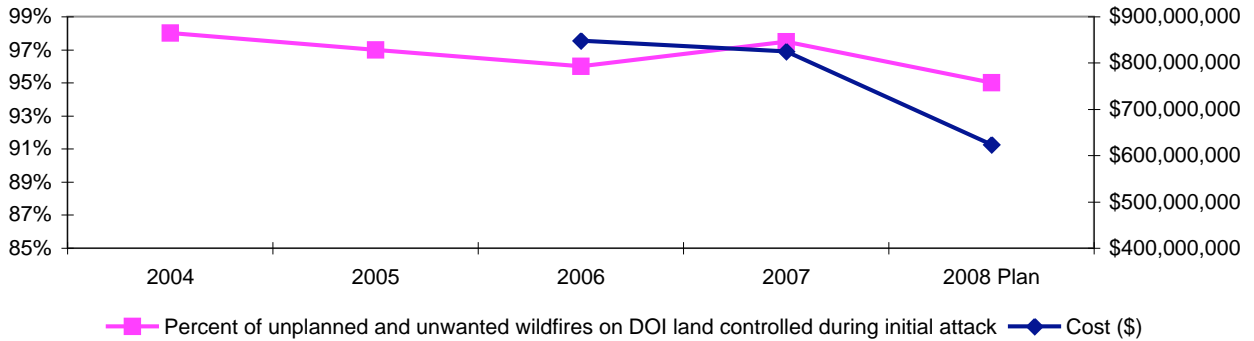


FIGURE 1-44

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Performance	98%	97%	96%	97%	95%
Fires controlled during initial attack	5,852	2,325	9,790	6,270	
Total fire ignitions	5,947	2,406	10,149	6,432	
Cost (\$)	Not Available	Not Available	\$847,893,380	\$825,011,119	\$623,479,918

After the unprecedented fire season of 2000, the President requested a report recommending how to respond to severe, ongoing fire activity, reduce impacts of fires on rural communities and the environment, and ensure sufficient firefighting resources in the future. The report became the cornerstone of the National Fire Plan. The Department of Agriculture Forest Service and DOI work collaboratively to provide seamless wildland fire protection. DOI fire management activities are performed by four Bureaus: BLM, FWS, NPS, and Indian Affairs. Interior's Office of Wildland Fire Coordination coordinates their efforts.

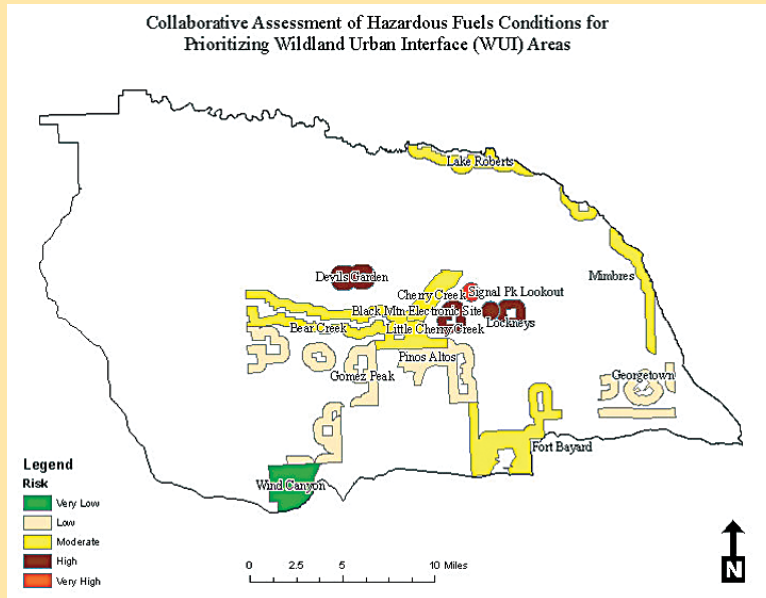
To address the slight decrease in performance, the 2008 budget proposes a shift in funds from firefighters whose job is extended attack and large fire support to firefighters available for initial response. The proposal would add 238 firefighters to better guarantee an initial attack strength that is able to maintain performance of at least 95 percent of fires suppressed on initial attack. Maintaining an effective initial attack capability is critical to controlling fires when they are small and less costly to suppress.

### Strengthening Wildland Fire-Fighting

The LANDFIRE program provides fire and land managers with information required to identify land vegetation and hazardous fuel build-up. Decades of land use, fire exclusion, exotic species invasions, and, to some extent, climate change have altered the landscape. As a result, the number, size, and severity of wildfires have changed significantly from those of historical conditions – sometimes with catastrophic consequences.

Hazardous fuel reduction, ecosystem rehabilitation and restoration, and firefighting safety are priorities of land managers. LANDFIRE produces maps of hazardous fuels and vegetation in specific areas that aid land managers in identifying fuel treatment opportunities.

LANDFIRE vegetation and fuels data, when combined with local fire weather, fire occurrence, resource information, and fire and ecological condition modeling, are deemed critical for developing management strategies and prioritizing potential projects to be applied in fuels planning, land use plan revisions, and fire management plans.



One example is the Signal Peak Assessment Area in Southwest New Mexico. The data were modeled and analyzed to classify lands into low, moderate, and high potential fire behavior hazard. Spatial comparisons were conducted to identify where treatments were most effective and assess options near wildland urban interface, Mexican spotted owl habitat, and other key resource concerns.

**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Percent of acres treated which achieve fire management objective as identified in applicable management plans**

FIGURE 1-45

**Performance vs. Cost**

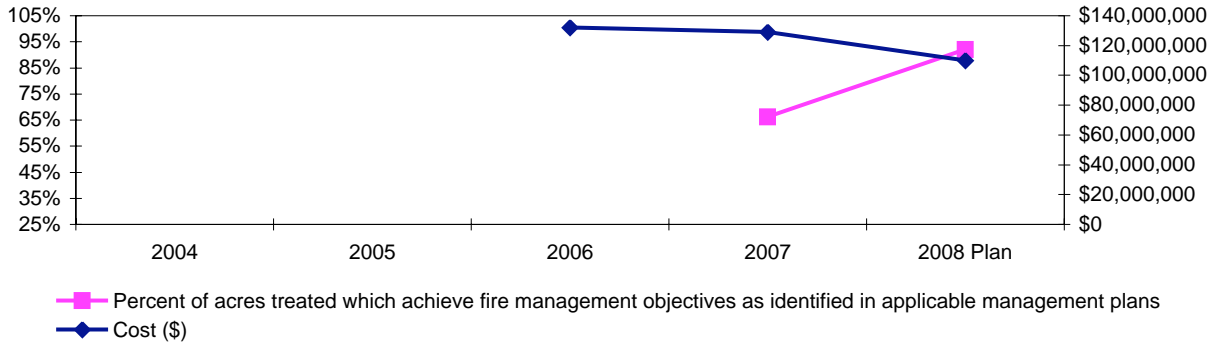


FIGURE 1-46

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Percent of acres treated which achieve fire management objectives as identified in applicable management plans			New for 2007	66%	92%
Cost (\$)	Not Available	Not Available	132,009,662	129,068,455	109,935,403

Years of natural fuels buildup, coupled with drought, insect, and disease damage, make our forests vulnerable to environmentally destructive fires. Many of our forests are fifteen times denser than they were 100 years ago. Where 25 to 35 trees per acre once grew, now more than 500 trees are crowded together.

This measure tracks the impact on acres treated through fuel reduction as a percent of targeted goals. The goal of treatments is to change fuel conditions by removing or modifying buildup of flammable underbrush in forests and woodlands and reducing threats from flammable invasive species on rangelands. A number of tactics are used to treat acreage by fuel reduction.

- ◆ prescribed fire
- ◆ mechanical thinning
- ◆ herbicides
- ◆ grazing

The ability to provide summary reports of fire funding and project performance information continues to be a challenge. Attention necessitated by the quantity and severity of fire incidents occurring over the past few years has drawn workforce efforts away from focus on enhancing information sources.

Pyro-diversity was recently undertaken in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Tennessee, in a prescribed burn to reduce accumulated hazardous fuels and to reduce hardwood crowding of pine stands. Ignition crews set a variety of fire types ranging from slow moving, backing fires to moderate flanking fires and fast moving, intense head fires. This pyro-diversity mosaic should lead to a healthy, biologically diverse forest stand that is more resistant to catastrophic wildfires.

The percent of acres treated that achieve fire management objectives was at 66 percent in 2007. Targets were initially estimated based on a higher success rate for overall treatment objectives than actually occurred. Consequently, the FY 2008 target is being reevaluated in light of 2007 results.

**GOAL: Improve understanding, prediction, and monitoring of natural hazards to inform decisions by civil authorities and the public to plan for, manage, and mitigate the effects of hazard events on people and property**

**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Percent of communities/tribes using DOI science on hazard mitigation, preparedness and avoidance for each hazard management activity**

FIGURE 1-47

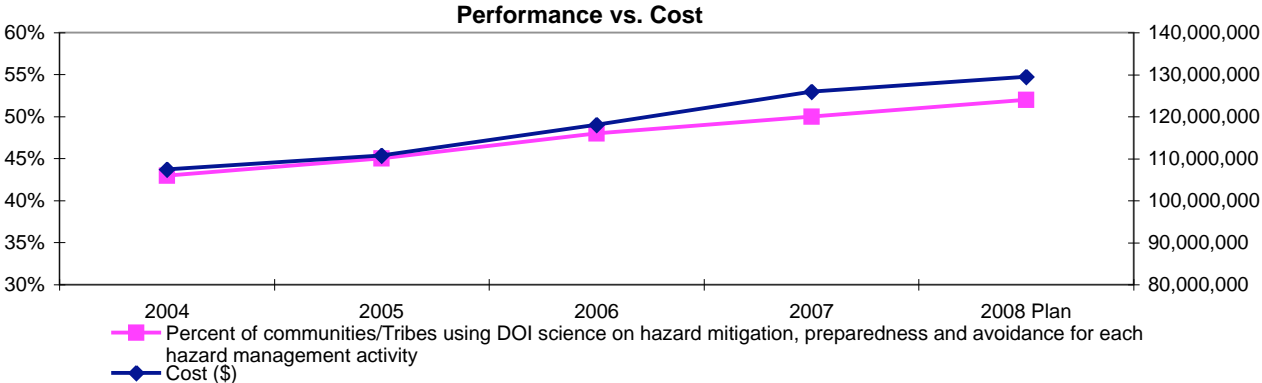


FIGURE 1-48

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Percent of communities/Tribes using DOI science on hazard mitigation, preparedness and avoidance for each hazard management activity	43%	45%	48%	50%	52%
Cost (\$)	107,436,102	110,733,990	118,005,777	125,913,313	129,428,617

USGS has primary responsibilities for the hazard mitigation measure, under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, by issuing alerts about volcano, earthquake, and landslide activity. USGS protects communities by significantly reducing the vulnerability of the millions of people most at risk from having their lives endangered by natural hazards.

Performance is tracked by the average percent of at-risk communities which use USGS science products to mitigate, prepare for, or avoid one of these hazards. The volcanoes program has identified 256 at-risk communities, of which 83 percent have applied the USGS science products; the earthquake program has 885 localities, with 63 percent who have adopted appropriate building codes; and 1,800 communities at risk of landslides, of which 5 percent have taken subsequent action. The information provided by USGS is considered used if a community implements a disaster

response plan, updates building codes, or revises city plans utilizing this information—all of which can take years.

Performance is expected to continue at comparable levels. Here, costs are a reflection of the size and level of effort needed by each study, depending upon the scope and complexity of the study subject. The level of application of the study findings is determined more by the usefulness and relevance of the work, along with the willingness of the community to implement, rather than the cost of the necessary effort.

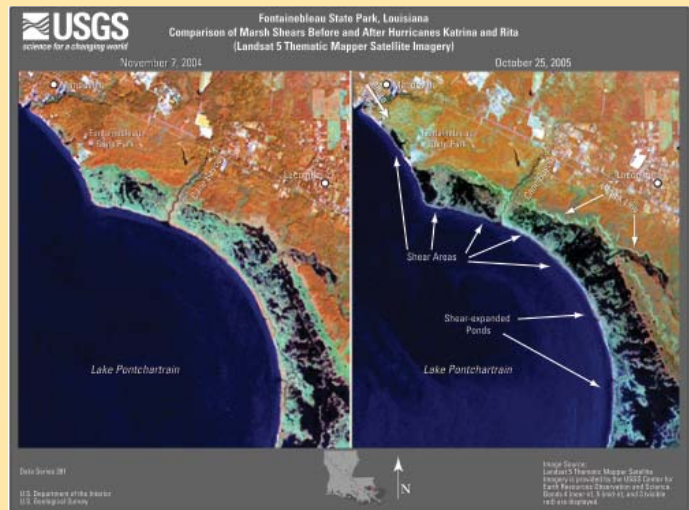
The volcanoes program released the first-ever comprehensive and systematic review of the 169 U.S. volcanoes in 2005. Currently erupting volcanoes are Mount St. Helens in Washington and Kilauea in Hawaii, and those exhibiting unrest are Mauna Loa in Hawaii and Fourpeaked in Alaska.

## Before/After Hurricanes Katrina & Rita

### Changes in Coastal Louisiana

In 2007 the U.S. Geological Survey's National Wetlands Research Center published two reports documenting the 217 square mile loss of Louisiana coastal land after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

- ◆ The USGS Data Series Report 281, *Satellite Images and Aerial Photographs of the Effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on Coastal Louisiana* <<http://pubs.usgs.gov/ds/2007/281/>>, contains dozens of Landsat Thematic Mapper satellite imagery and aerial photography, acquired before and after the hurricanes, showing new water areas that represent land losses caused by direct removal of wetlands. They also show transitory changes in water area caused by remnant flooding, removal of aquatic vegetation, and scouring of marsh vegetation.
- ◆ The article, "Land Area Changes in Coastal Louisiana After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," describes in detail how land losses occurred in the various basins along the State's coast. Permanent



losses cannot be estimated until several more growing seasons have passed and the transitory impacts of the hurricanes are minimized, but this work serves as a regional baseline for monitoring post-hurricane wetland recovery. The report, a joint effort of many USGS biologists, geologists, hydrologists, and geographers, was developed and managed by the National Wetlands Research Center. It will soon be available on line at the USGS Pubs Warehouse <[www.nwrc.usgs.gov](http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov)>.

The Volcano Hazards Program monitors volcanoes to detect earthquakes, ground deformation, temperature change, and volcanic gas emissions. The monitoring network is maintained and operated by five volcano observatories located in Alaska, Hawaii, Yellowstone, Eastern California, and the Cascade Mountain range in Washington that function autonomously. A major goal of the VHP is to develop a National Volcano Early Warning System, a nationally integrated system that provides 24/7 situational awareness and data for all potentially hazardous U.S. volcanoes.

In FY 2007 the USGS Earthquake Hazards Program completed its five-year update of the National Seismic Hazard Maps. These maps influence the seismic provisions in National and international building codes—affecting billions of dollars of new construction every year. The maps are developed with broad community input through a series of workshops held with scientists, engineers, public planners and code developers. USGS tracks code adoptions by communities nationwide, as a key outcome measure for reducing

the Nation's earthquake risk. EHP also provides custom hazard mapping and analysis tools, to help users tailor a suite of hazard mapping products to their specific needs.

The Landslide Hazards Program focuses on research to better understand the causes of ground failure. Research is conducted on landslides related to steep slopes, heavy rains, and vegetation loss due to wildfires. Monitoring systems at sites in California near Yosemite National Park, and in Portland and Newport, Oregon provide continuous rainfall and soil-moisture and pore-pressure data needed to understand the mechanisms of landslide occurrence. Such a modestly funded program will never be able to reach every one of the 1,800 at-risk communities, so work is prioritized in areas where the hazard is greatest and where the most help can be leveraged from partners. For example, USGS is partnering with the National Weather Service to provide an early warning system for *debris flows*—the fast-moving type of landslides that commonly kill people—in several southern California counties.



**GOAL: Fulfill Indian fiduciary trust responsibilities**

**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Percent of financial information accurately processed in trust beneficiary accounts**

FIGURE 1-49

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Percent of financial information accurately processed in Trust beneficiary accounts	18%	99.7%	99.7%	99.8%	98.0%
Cost (\$)	14,679,497	12,574,349	13,695,762	17,178,852	Not Available

The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians was established by the American Indian Trust Fund Management Reform Act of 1994 to improve the accountability and management of Indian funds held in trust by the Federal government.

OST, through the Office of Historical Trust Accounting, continues to scan 120 years of financial records that document payments to American Indians for leasing rights to land parcels that were allotted to tribal members in 1887. Four hundred million pages of records are maintained at a secure, low-cost site in Lenexa, Kansas, and records are still arriving from around the country.

Trust income is generated from the sale or rental of Indian-owned land and natural resources for timber harvests, grazing, and royalties received from oil and natural gas exploration and production. Funds also are derived from interest earned on invested funds, as well as awards or settlements of tribal claims. OST maintains about 1,800 accounts for tribal entities and approximately 371,000 open Individual Indian Monies accounts and manages about \$3.3 billion of investments.

Since 1996, the trust has been the subject of a class-action lawsuit, *Cobell vs. Kempthorne*, in which trust beneficiaries seek an accounting of trust fund transactions.

With a staff of 641 employees, OST has overseen efforts to overhaul the trust’s accounting system, collect its records, and consolidate the trust’s software systems. Those efforts have paid off as reflected in the performance results for FY 2007—99.8 percent accuracy.

Historical accounting efforts continue on nearly 270,000 IIM accounts resulting from land-based income receipts. Interior’s Historical Accounting Project document, published on May 31, 2007, projects the reconciliation to be completed by FY 2011. The majority that are post-1985 “electronic era” accounts are expected to be completed by FY 2009. During FY 2007, the *Judgment and Per Capita* accounts (those results from court decisions or tribal allocations to individual tribal members) reconciliation were deferred in order to devote greater priority to the IIM accounts. Before the change, however, 86 percent of nearly 97,000 accounts were reconciled with only a few errors identified.

Due to *fractionation*, in which descendants of beneficiaries receive interest in land rather than discrete parcels, the office must manage a proliferation of tiny land shares that are tracked despite costing far more to administer than they will ever pay out. Each time a generation passes away, it is likely that more and more people will become owners of an interest in fractionated land.



**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Probate—percent of estates closed**

FIGURE 1-50

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Probate: Percent of estates closed	New for 2007			89%	100%
Cost (\$)	Not Available	Not Available	80,445,363	89,702,443	Not Available

Indian Affairs is responsible for increasing the efficiency of probate case preparation and distribution and OST for improving the accuracy and timeliness of ownership information. Reliable trust ownership records are crucial to making accurate payments to trust beneficiaries and also essential to economic development of Indian lands. This measure was assessed in a new manner beginning in FY 2007. The program estimates that the FY 2007 target will not be met using assigned performance quotas that are regularly tracked. The data are projected using the Probate Tracking “ProTrac” database.

The probate program prepares probate cases for submission so that legal heirs can be determined and estates can be distributed. One of the challenges has been the probate backlog, due to fractionation, which has delayed distribution of assets. Fractionation occurs when ownership of Indian trust land is divided, generation after generation, among all eligible descendants. Typically an estate is not considered closed until the assets have been disbursed to the heirs. This situation has improved to such an extent that,

at the end of 2007, all backlog case preparation was completed. The expected outcome from this effort is that the percent of estates considered closed will increase to address virtually all pending cases in FY 2008.

OST is also reducing the size of the “Whereabouts Unknown” list. OST manages approximately 371,000 Indian trust accounts. Of these, a significant number receive \$10 or less in income each year. Beneficiaries move and often don’t notify OST that their address has changed. If these beneficiaries die, OST and IA must know where they are because the interest has to be probated, no matter how small, to keep the chain of title current. In FY 2007, approximately 37 percent of Whereabouts Unknown accounts were resolved, exceeding the annual target of 25 percent. Additionally, collaborative efforts between OST and IA resulted in approximately \$21.8 million being distributed to individual Indian trust account holders who were previously on the Whereabouts Unknown list.

This is a new measure in 2007. Performance will likely remain at the high level established in 2007.

**GOAL: Advance quality communities for tribes and Alaska natives**

**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Percent of IA/BIE funded schools achieving Adequate Yearly Progress**

FIGURE 1-51

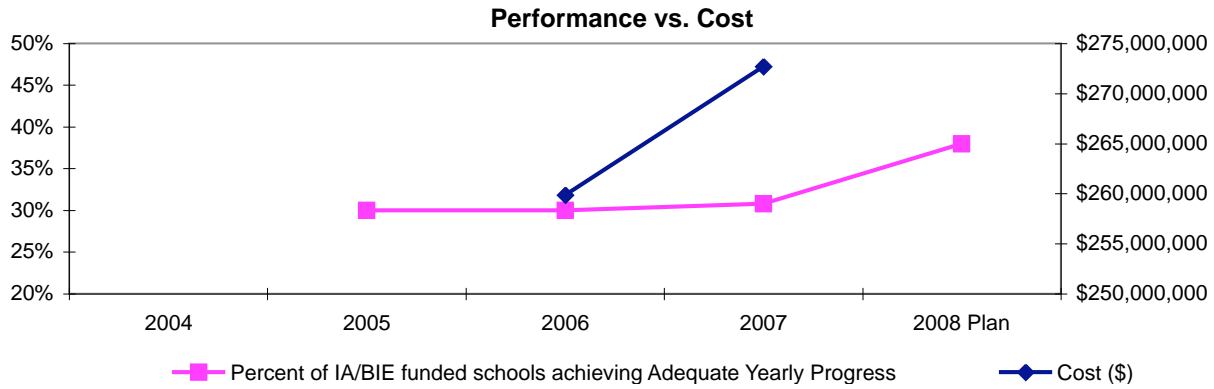


FIGURE 1-53

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Performance		30%	30%	31%	38%
Schools achieving Adequate Yearly Progress	New Measure	51	51	53	64
Total number of schools		170	170	172	170
Cost (\$)	Not Available	Not Available	259,856,744	272,683,614	Not Available

Achieving Indian education goals continues to be a challenge. The No Child Left Behind Act established Adequate Yearly Progress in math and language arts as the determining performance factor for success in schools nationwide, including those in the BIE school system. Currently, 31 percent of BIE schools met AYP, with an increase to 38 percent targeted in 2008. However, the most recent figures show some additional progress: 27 percent of schools not making AYP improved in math and 20 percent improved in reading.

Raising the AYP level is a BIE priority. After receiving the AYP results for School Year 2004–2005, BIE held consultations with the Department of Education, the Office of Inspector General, and principals of BIE schools to identify key risk areas that would likely improve student performance. One of the major risks was lack of a functional management structure. The implementation of a management structure capable of improving academic outcomes and program administration will be ongoing in FY 2008.

By 2014, the No Child Left Behind Act requires:

- ◆ Every student must read and do math at grade level or above
- ◆ Every student must demonstrate proficiency through use of annual assessments

The proposed FY 2008 budget includes an increase of \$15 million for the Improving Indian Education Initiative. The funds will provide the following:

- ◆ Educational program reforms designed to improve student achievement by the 2014 target date



### DOI Environmental Achievement Award Goes to First Mesa Elementary School

Polacca, AZ

First Mesa Elementary School can serve as many as 400 Indian elementary students. As the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified school in Arizona, and the second for the Department, the school facility responds to a variety of environmental issues important in this remote and arid region.

The colors and materials selected for the exterior of the building were chosen to complement the surrounding natural environment and reflect traditional Hopi culture. The school boasts many environmentally preferable features. No potable water is used for irrigation. Fixtures,

including sinks, urinals and toilets, achieve more than 30 percent savings in water usage. All mechanical and electrical systems were commissioned to maximize performance. Despite the remoteness of the site, the school has initiated an aggressive recycling program.

The school facility includes classrooms, media center/library, a 600 seat gymnasium, administrative area, cafeteria and food service facilities, an art/music classroom, play fields, playgrounds. A weather station and educational displays throughout make the building a learning experience in itself.

- ◆ Improvements in the safety and reliability of the BIE-funded school bus fleet to assist reduction of student absenteeism
- ◆ Targeted program enhancements, such as tutoring, to assist under-performing schools in achieving AYP goals
- ◆ Upgrade of the Native American Student Information System to support the reporting requirements of the NCLBA

AYP goals are also supported by providing quality learning environments. Conditions of the school buildings have improved over the past five years. Funds either provide maintenance to bring facilities up to standard or, if the cost of restoration is more than the cost of replacement, are used to build a replacement school.

**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Part I violent crime incidents per 100,000 Indian Country inhabitants receiving law enforcement services**

FIGURE 1-53

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Part I violent crime incidents per 100,000 Indian Country inhabitants receiving law enforcement services	Baseline Re-established in 2006		492	374	492
Cost (\$)	Not Available	Not Available	30,480,251	25,690,548	Not Available

The level of Part I violent crime is the determining measurement for safety in Indian Country. Part I violent crime refers to murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault as reported to the FBI for purposes of the Uniform Crime Reports.

Indian reservations suffer high homicide rates, juvenile crime and gang activity, child abuse, and substance abuse. The spread of methamphetamine is compounding the problem.

The spread of methamphetamine is a critical culture-threatening issue. Drugs flow across the border, and reservations are prime locations for delivering methamphetamine. A recent Indian law enforcement agency survey indicated a relationship between meth proliferation and increases in violent crime.

In the FY 2008 Interior Budget, the Safe Indian Communities Initiative has proposed \$16 million in 2008 to combat the methamphetamine and related problems. IA will put an additional 50 law enforcement agents in targeted communities based on the crime rate, population, and current staffing levels, and also invest in specialized training for the current force. The certified drug officer total will go from eleven in 2007 to 111 in 2008. More officers on patrol will have the knowledge and tools to break up drug trafficking, disrupt the activities and organization of crime groups, and seize illegal substances.

The 2008 target will be reconsidered based on the performance level achieved in 2007.



### **Methamphetamine Dealers Routed**

In the last three years, the Wind River reservation has been targeted by the Sinaloa Cowboys, a group of highly organized, violent Mexican drug dealers, as a prime area to sell methamphetamine. IA law enforcement officers sought permission from the Tribal counsel to take action. Tribal officials gave permission and strong support.

IA officials formed a task force with the State of Wyoming, federal agencies, and the cities of Lander and Riverton, Wyoming. Wire taps were obtained and in May, 2006, approximately 53 suspects were charged and 43 arrested for drug crimes. This was one of the largest operations conducted on Indian land.

In January 2007, the task force learned that methamphetamine was once again being distributed in the same area. BIA generated enough information to apply for an affidavit for a Title III wire tap. All wire taps were completed and in September, an IA Special Agent presented testimony before a U.S. Grand Jury and returned with 38 federal indictments. On September 25, 2007, about 150 law enforcement personnel arrested 35 defendants.

*The photo shows IA law enforcement officers in training.*

**GOAL: Increase economic self-sufficiency of insular areas**

**Representative Strategic Plan Measure: Ratio of Federal revenue to total revenues in insular areas**

FIGURE 1-54

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008 Plan
Federal Assistance as a percentage of GDP for insular economies	26%	25%	28%	30%	28%
Cost (\$)	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available

The insular areas in this measure refer to Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the Northern Mariana Islands, as well as the three freely associated states: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

The Office of Insular Affairs assists the island governments to develop more efficient and effective financial management practices and increase development opportunities so that island contributions to their total revenues increase.

Three of the four territories face economic challenges, and all are facing fiscal difficulties.

- ◆ The Mariana Islands rely heavily on tourism, especially from Japan. There has been a change in regional tourism patterns, leading to a 15 percent decrease in 2006 from the previous year. The rapidly dwindling garment industry has been negatively impacted by trade agreements affecting clothing and textiles.
- ◆ Guam depends primarily on tourism and is a popular destination for Japanese, Korean and Chinese tourists. Tourism took a recent downturn along with tourism in the rest of Asia, but is expected to stabilize when U.S. Marine personnel and operations, currently in Okinawa, transfer to Guam sometime in 2007–2008.

- ◆ American Samoa relies on two tuna canneries that employ 10,000 people for 80 percent of the private sector economy. Unfortunately, these are likely to shut down soon as a result of changes in international trade and tariff policies.

- ◆ The American Virgin Islands is a popular tourist destination. Its manufacturing sector consists of petroleum refining, textiles, electronics, rum distilling, pharmaceuticals, and watch assembly plants—a more diversified economy than the other territories. However, it faces a potentially serious challenge from changes in tax law.

The fourth Conference on Business Opportunities in the Islands was held on Guam in October 2007. The conference provided an opportunity for U.S. business people to meet with island entrepreneurs and business owners to strengthen the island economies. The conferences draw business people from the construction, airline, travel and tourism, environmental technology, and communications technology industries.

Improving island economies continues to be extremely challenging, especially due to the remote locations of these territories and their relatively small populations. Performance is expected to remain essentially the same for 2008. Funding for this measure is over \$70 million annually.

### Infrastructure Key to Successful Economics

OIA has worked to improve the environment for economic development in the insular areas. OIA's facilitation efforts are beginning to yield results.

- ◆ A company is exploring financing options to bring a fiber-optic cable to American Samoa. The cable will provide several benefits to the islands, such as allowing a call center to open on the island and providing high speed internet access.
- ◆ A financial investment firm is relocating a large portion of its operations to the U.S. Virgin Islands. This will provide new jobs and tax revenue for the local government.

Through OIA's infrastructure development programs, the foundation for further economic growth is being established. For example, 62 classrooms were completed in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in FY 2007.



Additionally, a Public Health and Dialysis Center was finished this past year on the island of Saipan in the Northern Mariana Islands. These activities will assist the islands in their economic development efforts.

