

SERVING COMMUNITIES



This culture of service, this culture of serving something greater than yourself in life is becoming real in America.

President George W. Bush, August 22, 2002

The Department of the Interior is committed to protecting lives, resources, and property; advancing knowledge through scientific leadership and informing decisions through science applications; fulfilling Indian trust responsibilities; achieving quality communities for Tribes; and increasing the economic self-sufficiency of insular areas. The 2004 serving communities budget proposal totals \$5.1 billion.

SERVING COMMUNITIES MISSION

The Department of the Interior will safeguard property and financial assets while improving quality of life for communities and trust beneficiaries.

TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

This request includes \$168.5 million in funding increases to better fulfill Indian trust responsibilities. Interior's 2004 budget funds continued improvements in trust management, a new organizational structure, historical accounting for individual Indians and Tribes, and consolidation of fractionated interests in lands. It provides funds for a more secure computer network and improvements in records management.

The Department serves tribal communities through extensive services, including elementary and secondary education for nearly 48,000 Indian students. The 2004 budget includes \$528.5 million for education, including an increase of \$3.0 million for administrative cost grants for new Tribes that enter into partnership with Interior to operate schools. The budget continues funding for the repair and replacement of school facilities at \$292.6 million, including \$141.4 million to build new facilities at a minimum of seven schools and for planning and design of future projects.

AFFILIATED ISLAND COMMUNITIES

In serving communities, Interior has responsibility for analyzing and promoting appropriate Federal policies for the Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Further responsibility includes overseeing financial assistance to the freely associated States: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. To assist the islands in economic development, Interior provides financial and technical assistance that totals \$377.0 million in 2004.

WILDLAND FIRE

The 2004 budget includes \$698.7 million for Wildland Fire Management. The Department's proposal reflects a commitment to better coordinate Federal, State, and local firefighting efforts and to improve the health of forests and rangeland with implementation of the President's Healthy Forest

initiative. The Department's participation with the U.S. Forest Service, State foresters, and the National Association of Counties in an agreement that focuses multi-agency efforts on fuels treatment to reduce risks to communities exemplifies this commitment. Interior and the Forest Service have also entered into an agreement with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and State foresters to better leverage funding for local fire protection and firefighting efforts.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SECURITY

Interior advances the goal of protecting communities through security and law enforcement activities with a 2004 request of \$34.7 million for improved security of borders, critical assets, and infrastructure.

SCIENCE

Science is a cornerstone for all of our land management decisions undertaken to achieve resource protection, resource use, recreation, and serving community goals. The 2004 budget continues science programs that generate relevant, objective information for land managers and for communities throughout the Nation. A total of \$895.5 million is requested for U.S. Geological Survey scientific leadership and partnerships with communities in information sharing, mapping, and technology development.

SERVING COMMUNITIES GOALS

Protect lives, resources, and property.

Advance knowledge through scientific leadership and inform decisions through applications of science.

Fulfill Indian trust responsibility.

Advance quality of communities for Tribes.

Increase economic self-sufficiency for Insular areas.

The Department manages one in every five acres of land in the United States, operates over 800 dams and irrigation facilities, provides drinking water to 31 million people, oversees water projects that irrigate the land generating 60 percent of our Nation's vegetables, holds special responsibilities for American Indians, Native Alaskans, and affiliated island communities, and plays a major role in environmental and conservation decisions. The common thread running through these diverse topics is their direct impact on real people, their hopes, and abilities to pursue their dreams.

Assistant Secretary P. Lynn Scarlett, August 29, 2002