

Trust Matters



**Department of the Interior—
Office of the Special Trustee
for American Indians**

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Special points of interest:

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- The 7th Quarterly Report is available on the OST web site at www.ost.doi.gov

New Trust Reform Charter Signed by DOI Leadership and Project Managers

As a demonstration of a renewed commitment to the success of trust reform among the Department of the Interior trust asset managers, a new *Charter for Trust Reform* was signed at a two-day meeting in Albuquerque. Special Trustee Tom Slonaker and Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb attended the session and were the first signatories to the Charter.



Neal McCaleb (left) watches as Tom Slonaker signs the Charter. Sharon Blackwell, Tom Thompson and Jim Cason also look on.

The meeting, held on October 2-3, 2001, was attended by representatives of all the trust reform projects currently underway within the Department.

The meeting attendees

focused their discussions on the current status, goals and objectives of trust reform. Subproject managers also provided information on the current challenges they face in accomplishing future program milestones as well as the lessons they've learned in the process of implementing the projects to date.

One theme of discussion was the interdependent nature among and between the different trust reform projects.

Increasingly, progress made in one subproject impacts the progress in another, or delays in one project can delay the progress of another. Acknowledgement of these interdependencies, as well as a sustained cooperative spirit among DOI bureaus and personnel and a commitment to the long-term success of trust reform, will be necessary to see these projects to their conclusions.

EDS Reviewing Trust Reform Projects

The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) has contracted with Electronic Data Systems (EDS), an independent consulting firm, to review the overall progress and coordination of the Department's trust reform efforts. This review

will provide objective information and guidance to the Department on future tasks necessary to successfully achieve the planned Indian trust reforms.

EDS is reviewing and analyzing the status and coordination of the pro-

jects outlined in the Department's trust reform roadmap document, the *High Level Implementation Plan*, and the work underway to correct the areas in which the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia found the Department in *(continued on page 3)*

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Secretary Norton Visits OST

OST staff in Albuquerque, New Mexico, welcomed Secretary Norton and Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb to their offices on August 10, 2001, to discuss the trust reform efforts currently underway, and the Department's commitment to the challenges ahead.

After providing warm greetings to the assembled OST staff from the Office of Trust Funds Management (OTFM), Office of Trust Records (OTR) and Office of Trust Risk Management, the Secretary

offered her appreciation and recognition to the commitment of the OST staff for their role in the progress of the trust fund and record management reforms already implemented.

The Secretary also reaffirmed

her personal commitment toward the continued implementation of the trust reform efforts underway.

Following her address, the Secretary and Assistant Secretary received a hands-on

demonstration of the Trust Funds Accounting System (TFAS), and a presentation of the complete trust asset management business cycle. This presentation tracked the steps and processes DOI bureaus and offices follow to administer the land and financial trust assets. In addition, a tour of the OTFM trust fund accounting operation was provided so that the Secretary and Assistant Secretary could observe the accounting process by which funds are deposited into and disbursed from beneficiaries' accounts.



Margaret Williams, Acting Director of OTFM (left), leads Secretary Norton and Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb on a tour

An afternoon discussion of the Indian trust records management program and a tour of the OTR Renaissance Indian trust records facility followed. This provided the guests an opportunity to better appreciate the vast quantities of

individual trust records stored at this central facility.

The Secretary and Assistant Secretary concluded their visit to OST offices after personally meeting the OST staff.

New Position for Trust Systems and Projects Created in OST

Special Trustee Tom Slonaker has tapped Donna Erwin, previously Director of the Office of Trust Funds Management, to be the Deputy Special Trustee for Trust Systems and Projects, a newly created position.

In her new role, Ms. Erwin will provide a more central and coordinated focus for the various trust reform projects and program managers within the Department. And as many trust reform projects become increasingly interdependent, the sharing of information among project management, including project progress, status, test results and lessons learned, has become in-

creasingly important. Ms. Erwin will provide the needed oversight and synchronization between and among the trust reform projects underway and will work to strengthen project management capabilities. Ms. Erwin will report to the Special Trustee.

In addition, Ms. Erwin will be responsible for the management of the EDS review of the overall progress of the Department's trust reform projects to date. This review will focus on the TAAMS and BIA data cleanup projects, as well as the coordination between the other trust reform activities.

Court Monitor Releases Reports Critical of DOI Trust Reform Efforts

In April 2001, Judge Royce Lamberth of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia appointed Mr. Joseph Kieffer to serve as a Court Monitor to review the Department's trust reform activities. To date, the Court Monitor has filed four written reports with the Court which have been critical of various components of the Department's trust activities.

In each report, the Court Monitor has expressed his strong concerns that the Department has not adequately addressed its trust responsibilities in certain areas. In three of the reports issued to date, the Court Monitor has recognized the contribution of the career civil servants within the Department to the trust reform efforts. The Monitor has characterized these trust personnel as the "ultimate source of successful trust reform if they receive the leadership and resources they need and deserve."

The first report of the Court Monitor was filed on July 11, 2001 and focused on the Department's progress in providing an accurate, historical accounting to Individual Indian account holders of their funds held in trust.

The second report was provided to the Court on August 9, 2001, and centered on the progress of the creation, deployment and implementation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Trust Asset and Accounting Management System, known as TAAMS.

On September 17, 2001, the Court Monitor filed his third report, which examined the BIA's progress on the review, correction and cleanup of the data it manages relating to the trust assets.

The fourth report was filed on October 16, 2001 and reviews the DOI Seventh Quarterly Report to the Court with respect to the BIA Data Cleanup project, and the process by which that Quarterly Report was verified prior to being filed with the Court.

As provided in the order establishing the Court Monitor, the Department may provide comments to the Court on each of these reports. If you are interested in obtaining copies of these documents, please go to the OST web site at www.ost.doi.gov or contact OST at (202) 208-4866.

New Secretarial Orders Issued



On July 10, 2001, Secretary Norton issued two new Secretarial Orders relating to trust reform. These Orders were developed to set up a new Office of Historical Trust Accounting within the Department, and to improve the overall coordination, accountability and efficiency among the Department's Indian trust reform activities.

The first Secretarial Order (Number 3231) creates a new Office of Historical Trust Accounting under the Office of the Secretary. This office will oversee the planning and implementation of the historical accounting of Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts. The

Office has developed a "Blueprint" document describing how it will prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the development and implementation of a valid, timely and cost-effective assessment of balances for IIM account holders.

The second Secretarial Order (Number 3232), provides additional authority to the Special Trustee to ensure his capacity to implement the Department's trust reform projects currently underway and in the future.

Both of these Secretarial Orders are posted on the OST web site at www.ost.doi.gov.

OST Manager Receives Presidential Award

Thomas Thompson, Principal Deputy Special Trustee for American Indians, received the Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Executives on October 15, 2001. Each year, a small number of Senior Executives within the federal government are recognized to receive this award.

At a ceremony led by President George W. Bush, the awardees were thanked for their superior commitment to public service. Mr. Thompson received this award specifically for his efforts in support of trust reform.

Congressional Staff Travel to Billings to Review TAAMS

On August 29, 2001, staff members from the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives heard from trust employees at the Rocky Mountain Regional Office on the progress, capabilities, current status and challenges faced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs' in its implementation of the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS).

The status of the development of the TAAMS system is the subject of a critical report issued by the Court Monitor assigned to the Department of

the Interior in the Cobell v. Norton lawsuit. The project also is being independently examined by EDS as part of its evaluation of the Department's trust reform projects. Congressional staff from the Senate Indian Affairs Committee and the House Committee on Resources sought to discuss the status of TAAMS with local users and project management to gain additional information with which to assess the project.

A full day of meetings in Billings, MT, was planned to include briefings on the various components of the TAAMS

project. Discussions centered around how the land title and realty information has been maintained by the BIA in the past, the goals of TAAMS, the process by which TAAMS has been developed, and future challenges in the implementation of the system.

When implemented, TAAMS is expected to replace existing systems to track information related to the lease, billing and accounts receivable, collection and land title of Indian trust assets.

EDS Review of Trust Programs (continued from front)

breach of its trust responsibilities to American Indian trust beneficiaries. This review of trust programs is in accordance with Secretary Norton's memorandum that accompanied the recently-issued Secretarial Orders providing additional authority to the Special Trustee and creating the Office of Historical Trust Accounting.

As part of its comprehensive review, EDS will provide specific attention to

both the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Trust Asset and Accounting Management System, or TAAMS, and the underlying data that will be used in the TAAMS system. This review will include an examination of the TAAMS development and testing activities, the data clean up activities underway and planned for the future, and a comparison of TAAMS capabilities with industry standards in light of applicable court decisions and public laws.

The EDS assessment will provide information to OST, BIA and the Department that can be utilized in planning for future trust projects as well as subsequent phases of TAAMS implementation and deployment.

Trust Foundations 2 classes are now offered. Call toll free 1-866-427-9053 to register.

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CHARTER FOR TRUST REFORM

We the undersigned affirm our longstanding principles, expressed herein:

1. While working together we must always remember that the Indian tribes and individual Indians, who are the beneficiaries of our work, are real people expecting their assets to be properly managed and protected. Hence, Trust Reform is not an abstract exercise in government policy; instead, it is a dynamic corrective process that will benefit citizens, taxpayers and most importantly—the American Indian trust beneficiaries.
2. The future of Trust Reform is in our hands. We are all being watched and judged on how well we do our jobs, how well we cooperate and how well we handle this monumental responsibility. We are accountable to our American Indian trust beneficiaries and must be committed to success in Trust Reform.
3. The overall success of Trust Reform will require the successful implementation and completion of each subproject. Each of us must be cognizant of the fact that the subprojects are inter-related and necessary elements of the total Trust Reform process. Hence, each of us must be committed to the success of every subproject with the awareness that the failure of any subproject is a failure for us all.
4. Trust Reform requires cooperation and advocacy among all subproject managers. While subproject managers may have professional disagreements, or take different positions on issues, each of us must maintain a respectful and cooperative spirit in order to achieve Trust Reform success. We pledge our cooperation and advocacy for each other and, when necessary, agree to strive for consensus on issues in which we disagree.
5. We will adopt a policy of open communication with the stakeholders. Factual and comprehensive communication with stakeholders must be considered a critical element for the success of Trust Reform.
6. We recognize, along with our beneficiaries, that Trust Reform is an historic task. Therefore, we pledge that our responsibility to the American Indian trust beneficiaries will never be compromised by our internal views.

October 2, 2001
Albuquerque, New Mexico