

OST Today **

Tom Slonaker Sworn In as New Special Trustee

With his family by his side, Mr. Tom Slonaker was sworn into office as the Special Trustee for American Indians on June 27, 2000. Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt, administered the oath of office to the second Special Trustee to lead the office since Congress established it in 1994 to oversee and coordinate the management



Secretary Babbitt (left) administers the oath of office to Tom Slonaker. His son, Pete, is in the center holding the Bible as granddaughter Sarah watches.

of the trust fund reform efforts.

"I am confident that Mr. Slonaker is the strong leader this Department needs to direct and manage effectively the Indian trust reform efforts currently underway and planned for the future," remarked Secretary Babbitt. "The private sector experience Mr. Slonaker

brings to this position will greatly benefit the trust fund beneficiaries and the Department, and I look forward to his years

of service ahead."

For his part, Mr. Slonaker noted that receiving the oath of office from the Secretary of the Interior, who is himself the Trustee of the Indian assets administered by the Department, "is a great privilege and honor."

Mr. Slonaker thanked the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover, the staff of the Office of the Special Trustee and his family for their support in this new endeavor. Mr. Slonaker remarked "I look forward to working closely with the Secretary to meet the challenges ahead and for the chance to provide a significant management service both to the Indian trust fund beneficiaries and to the country."

New Process to Locate Whereabouts Unknown IIM Account Holders

OST has recently begun to successfully utilize a new resource to help locate addresses for Individual Indian Money (IIM) account holders for which no current address information exists. OST refers to these estimated 50,000 account holders as

"whereabouts unknown" and has been involved in an extensive effort to locate them.

In May, the Office of Trust Funds Management (OTFM) initiated a new, automated process to seek these account

holders. OTFM submitted IIM account holder names and social security numbers or last known addresses to Trans Union Credit Bureau to see if these information fields (Continued page 3, see "Locating IIM Account Holders")

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Office of the
Special Trustee
for American
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Special points of interest:

- ** SEE BACK COVER FOR STATUS OF "NAME OUR NEWSLETTER" CONTEST
- THE THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT TO THE COURT WAS PUBLISHED AUGUST 31, 2000. READ IT ON OUR WEB SITE: WWW.OST.DOI.GOV

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Legislative Update:

Congress Ready to Adjourn; Field Hearing in North Dakota; Fractionation Legislation Pending



With just a few weeks left in this current Congressional legislative session, appropriations bills are taking center stage. Because this is an election year, predictions that the Congress will adjourn in early October mean that the consideration of annual appropriations bills highlight the agenda.

The budget request for the Office of the Special Trustee is a component of the Department of the Interior Appropriations legislation, which passed the House of Representatives on June 16, 2000 and the U.S. Senate on July 18, 2000. The legislation includes the Administration's request of \$95.1 million for OST and for the continued funding for the implementation of the trust management reform activities of OST, BIA and the other DOI Bureaus and Offices. Members of the House and Senate are in the process of resolving any funding differences between the two versions of the bill and final action is expected in the near future.

Special Trustee Tom Slonaker recently provided testimony at a Senate Indian Affairs field hearing in North Dakota. Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND) held a hearing on September 1, 2000, to discuss Individual Indian Monies

Account Issues at the Standing Rock Agency. Also testifying before the committee were Cora Jones, Regional Director of the Great Plains Regional Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and The Honorable Mr. Charles Murphy, Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Council. The hearing focused on ways to improve the provision of high quality services to the trust beneficiaries, or clients, served by OST and BIA.

In his testimony, Mr. Slonaker stressed the important objectives of the OST trust operation: to protect and preserve the assets of the trust clients; to provide accurate record keeping; and, to provide good and timely services to trust clients. Mr. Slonaker's full testimony can be found on our web site at www.ost.doi.gov.

Senate Bill S. 1586, entitled "The Indian Land Consolidation Act Amendments of 2000," was approved by the Senate on July 26, 2000 and is awaiting House action. This bill establishes a framework to reduce the administrative and financial complications arising from the fractionation of Indian land ownership. New processes would be put in place to reduce fractionated land ownership in the future, and to allow the sale or lease of current fractionated lands upon approval of a set percentage of land owners.

Note from the Special Trustee

Since being confirmed as the Special Trustee by the U.S. Senate in late May 2000, I have had the opportunity to review the progress of trust reform within the Department of the Interior. The "blueprint" for such reform has been the High Level Implementation Plan (HLIP) which outlines future progress and milestones on ten remaining subprojects covering such tasks as implementing new accounting systems, reducing the probate backlog and performing data cleanup. I also have reviewed the progress on the four projects to correct the "breaches of trust" declared by the Court in the Cobell case.

I am pleased that many of these subprojects are progressing quite satisfactorily. And, as you know, one subproject, to implement the new Trust Funds Accounting System (TFAS), was successfully completed last spring.

Some subprojects appear to face significant management challenges, for which the OST staff is and will continue to provide support and assistance. To further assist the trust improvement efforts underway, I am considering actions to increase our management and reporting capability.

I must tell you that I have enjoyed the strong support in this effort from Secretary Babbitt (who is the Trustee), Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, and Sharon Blackwell, Deputy Commissioner for Indian Affairs.



Get "Linked" to OST



OST would like to add links from our home page on the internet (www.ost.doi.gov) to other appropriate federal and tribal web sites. Does your Tribe have a site on the Internet? Link up with us—it's easy!

OST's web site has a button (Links/Photos/FAQs) where other helpful tribal and Federal web sites are listed. These links help visitors to our web site find information about other tribal governments and Federal links more easily. To add your tribal government web site or to suggest another helpful link for inclusion on our home page, just contact us.

To add a tribal government link, just send an email to our webmaster giving us permission to link your site to ours and the address of your link. To suggest a link, just send a note

with the address and we'll take it from there. With your participation and suggestions, our site will be a great resource including many different tribal and federal web pages.

Recently, we added links to the U.S. House and Senate Committees with jurisdiction over Indian trust fund matters. The Senate Indian Affairs Committee and the House Resources Committee web sites contain information on Indian trust fund issues that are pending before the U.S. Congress. Check it out!

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★ Look at our new ★
★ web site often— ★
★ we are frequently ★
★ adding new ★
★ information! ★
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A Discussion on Trust and Records at OTLSR July 14, 2000

Some 35 OST employees attended a mid-level management briefing at the DOI University Training Center in Albuquerque, NM, on July 14, 2000. This briefing centered around a discussion on trust and records.

Richard Fitzgerald, Trust Policy Officer from the Washington, DC, OST Office, and Ken Rossman, Director of the Office of Trust Litigation Support and Records (OTLSR), Albuquerque, NM, provided staff with an informative discussion that focused on the history and mission of OST, as well as the general legal and historical characteristics and fiduciary responsibilities inherent in a general trust relationship between a trustee and a beneficiary. Additionally,

Secretarial Order No. 3215, the Secretary's recently adopted trust principles which provide his directives to the Departmental agencies responsible for implementing trust management reforms was a topic of the briefing.

In the afternoon session, the definition



Photo: Richard Fitzgerald discusses the responsibilities of a Trustee.

of trust records and trust record keeping requirements were also linked to the Secretary's trust principles. In a presentation and discussion aimed primarily at the Indian Affairs Records Management specialists in attendance, the role and responsibility of every BIA and OST employee in managing records was emphasized. Good record keeping and longer-term records management are essential components in providing the necessary documentation for past, present, and future actions in administering the Indian trust.

The Court-appointed Special Master also attended the July 14 session and reported to the court that "OST is to be commended for developing a thorough and informative program."

Locating IIM Account Holders Effort Meeting with Success

Continued from Cover

matched address information currently contained within Trans Union's extensive database.

Each month credit grantors across the country provide over 1.2 billion updates to keep this database as accurate and current as possible. (OTFM is working with Trans Union to secure current addresses for these individuals and is not obtaining any credit information.)

To date, OTFM has provided 6,657 names or other fields of information from the Western, Pacific, Alaska, Navajo and Southwest Regions to

Trans Union. The company matched 3,727 account names from its database – a 56% match. OTFM is now processing and validating these results by contacting the account holders at the addresses identified by Trans Union and verifying their identity.

This initiative is proving to be the most successful and cost effective effort to date to locate these account holders.

After the names of all the IIM account holders whose whereabouts are unknown have been processed through the Trans Union database to determine

the existence of matches, OTFM will continue its ongoing efforts to identify current addresses for the account holders who still have not been located. In the future, OST anticipates working with similar automated databases to determine additional address matches.

Additionally, OST is developing an interactive search capability on its web site for the list of IIM account holders whose whereabouts is unknown. This new function will make the list easier to search and will provide additional information. View the list on the OST home page at www.ost.doi.gov.

Special Trustee to Blackfeet Staff: Keep up the Great Work!

On August 11, 2000, Special Trustee Tom Slonaker had the occasion to visit the Blackfeet Agency Office located in Browning, Montana. The Special Trustee was in town for a meeting with OST Advisory Board Chair Elouise Cobell, and spent an afternoon touring the agency office and meeting many members of the BIA and OST Office staff.

The visit allowed the Special Trustee to meet with a number of the BIA employ-

ees, and to hear first hand the issues, concerns and challenges this agency office faces on a daily basis. The visit also provided the Special Trustee with the opportunity to introduce himself to members of the OTFM field operations staff manning the Blackfeet Office and to spend some time getting to know them.

The visit to Browning coincided with Heart Butte Indian Days, where Tom Slonaker had the opportunity to meet

Blackfeet Chairman Earl Old Person and to enjoy the dancing.



Blackfeet Agency OST staff include (left to right) Jodi Wagner, Lois Carlson, Tom Slonaker, Marie Gussmann, and Mary Salway.

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Hat's Off to These Trust Employees!



Cecilia Curley, Faye Ward, Rae Padilla, Deanna Lucero and Shelly Lee from the Albuquerque Office of Trust Funds Management staff won a Third Place Ribbon at the New Mexico State Fair for the Governor's Cookie Jar Contest!



Cheryl Jodoin from the OST Washington, DC office completed all requirements and graduated from the Women's Executive Leadership Program in August 2000!

⇒ Let us know about the professional and personal accomplishments of DOI and tribal trust employees and we'll spread the word in this section of future newsletters. We would like to recognize the outstanding contributions of trust employees to their workplaces and communities.

Name our Newsletter Generates Winning Entries



Last quarter, the first edition of this new quarterly newsletter made its debut. We are delighted that the newsletter was met with a very supportive and positive response by you, the readers.

The contest to suggest a name for the newsletter generated so many clever, witty and thoughtful responses that the OST newsletter staff cannot select a winning entry alone. We need your help.

The newsletter staff did undertake the challenging task of narrowing the list from many excellent suggestions to the following 5 finalists. Although the sponsors of the entries are not listed, we know who you are. Please vote for your favorite newsletter title and see the result in the next issue!

And the 5 finalists are:

Trust Matters
Rolling Hoop
The Lookout
Trust in the News
and
Winds of Stewardship

*Use the contact information
on the right to vote for your
favorite Newsletter title
today!*

To vote, please write, fax or email us at:

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Attention: Newsletter

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