



Ross Swimmer visits Rosebud and Pine Ridge during first snowfall

By Archie B. Beauvais
Times Correspondent

ROSEBUD - Ross Swimmer, Director of the Office of Special Trustee in Washington, DC toured Kyle with Bat Poirier of Muddy Creek Oil of Pine Ridge and then traveled to the Rosebud and checked into the Rosebud Casino Quality Inn on Tuesday night. His itinerary was delayed by the early snow storm which dumped up to 3-4 inches of new snow on the Rosebud. He was accompanied by Jim James, Regional Director of the OST fiduciary office of Albuquerque, N.M.

He was scheduled to drive

to Rapid City to attend a meeting sponsored by Office of Special Trustee's Rapid City office and the Dakota Plains Legal Services at the Journey Museum on Wednesday evening.

Swimmer addressed the Rosebud Sioux tribal council on Wednesday morning during an informal meeting with council members present. No quorum had been assembled and it was most likely



Ross Swimmer

due to the poor road conditions. He was accompanied to RST council chambers by Jim James, Jim Cordry, Rosebud's OST fiduciary trust officer, BIA superintendent, Cleve Her Many Horse, and Ed Holland, a member of the OST board of advisors.

Swimmer explained the services as offered by the Office of Special Trustee to tribes, the BIA and individual account holders. He said, "Indians never had a trust officer. All banks have a trust officer. In the past, you went to the BIA. That's not the way to run a trust in a business that has 277,000 account holders, and \$3 billion in assets....The trust

office is here to find heirs, to work with the BIA, and to make sure accounts are correct. He is the go-to guy. We have a call center. Ninety percent of the time we can answer your questions."

He went on to explain that OST now has the technology and software that is available to tribes and the BIA. They can easily pull up records that contain the heirs, probate information and ownership and anything else that affect an account.

RST council representatives Robert Moore, Marian Young-One Star, and Fern Bordeaux-Boltz asked

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Swimmer questions about the Tribal Land Enterprise program, land appraisals and about Bear Butte. Former RST President, Webster Two Hawk, also had a question about dividends and he had submitted the question in writing to Swimmer.

Swimmer said, "We are waiting for a list of the 'needs' so we can provide money and technical assistance. We are happy to support TLE. It needs a new director....TLE is a good program. The Senate Affairs Committee on Indian Affairs staffers are looking at TLE as a model program."

Antelope council representative, Robert Moore, spoke to Swimmer and asked a favor. He noted that the sacred Bear Butte is protected by a bill from the state of South Dakota, but that the Governor allowed the bill to be gutted in favor of a micro-brewery. Moore noted that the new Secretary of the Interior was there riding a Harley in Sturgis and asked that Swimmer take a message back to Washington, DC that Bear Butte is sacred to Lakota people. Swimmer replied, "I read about Bear Butte. I assume the tribe memorialized it with a resolution. I would be happy to take that back to Washington. In deference to the Secretary, he was there. It was his first outreach. Can make it compatible, the encroachment."

