

Safe Indian Communities



The abuse of methamphetamine is quickly becoming an epidemic in much of America. It is a poison that is infiltrating many of our communities and touching all our families.

*Jefferson Keel, First Vice President
National Congress of American Indians
April 5, 2006*

The spread of methamphetamine has reached crisis levels in Indian communities and threatens, according to tribal leaders, the future of an entire generation of young Native Americans. Recognizing this crisis, the budget provides an increase of \$16.0 million to fund the Safe Indian Communities initiative. This initiative will increase law enforcement presence and training on tribal lands to combat the production and distribution of methamphetamine by organized crime and drug cartels. This Federal investment also recognizes the significant increase in violent offenders being incarcerated in Indian detention facilities and provides funds to increase staffing levels and training for detention centers.



COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

The Federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over criminal offenses committed on Indian lands, except where ceded by law, and shares law enforcement responsibility with federally recognized Tribes. It is the Federal government's responsibility to en-

Indian Country is under attack from meth..., testified San Carlos Apache Chairwoman Kathleen Kitcheyan during a congressional hearing in April 2006. Organized crime has identified Indian reservations as a haven for the transportation and distribution of methamphetamine. Crime in Indian Country was already a serious problem. The violent crime rate in Indian Country is twice the national average. Methamphetamine is dramatically compounding this problem. It is undermining safety and health in Indian Country.

sure the safety and security of all those who live in, work in, or visit Indian Country. Yet, the Nation's Indian reservations report staggering homicide rates, high levels of juvenile crime and gang activity, child abuse, substance abuse, and a myriad of other problems. The rise in methamphetamine use has compounded these problems. In a 2006 survey of Bureau of Indian Affairs Indian Country law enforcement agencies, 60 percent of respondents reported increased methamphetamine arrests over the past year and 64 percent reported methamphetamine use has climbed. Data are currently only available for specific reservations, but indications suggest that methamphetamine is becoming a chronic problem across Indian Country.

At the San Carlos Apache reservation in Arizona, the violent crime rate is ten times the national average. At the Spirit Lake Sioux reservation in North Dakota, the heavy use of methamphetamine contributed to a violent crime rate in 2004 that was 20 times the national average.

AMERICAN INDIANS AND CRIME

- The rate of violent crime against American Indians is twice the national average, 101 per 1,000 as compared to 41 per 1,000 annually.
- 1 out of 10 American Indians, 12 and older, become victims of violent crime annually.
- Nationally, 1 in 4 cases of violent crime investigated by the U.S. Attorneys are from Indian Country.
- 75 percent of Federal investigations of Indian Country suspects are for violent crimes.
- Only 46 percent of violent crimes against American Indians are reported to police.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics American Indians and Crime Report, December 2004.

Between 2000 and 2005, the number of methamphetamine contacts in Indian Health Service facilities increased by almost 250 percent. In some areas on the Navajo Nation, methamphetamine arrests now outnumber alcohol-related arrests. In 2005, 63 of 256 babies born on one reservation had methamphetamine in their systems. At San Carlos Apache reservation, an estimated 25 percent of babies born are methamphetamine addicted.

Tribal leaders have identified methamphetamine as the single most critical issue facing Indian communities. Tribal leaders use terms like “out of control” and “epidemic” when describing their Tribes’ experiences with methamphetamine. On some reservations, leaders are suggesting that an entire generation of young people may soon be lost to this one drug. Jefferson Keel, First Vice President of the

National Congress of American Indians, noted in 2006 congressional testimony that, “Many of our communities in Indian Country are at risk of being completely depleted in tackling this problem.”

In response to the growing methamphetamine problem, the Department of the Interior proposes to invest \$16.0 million in 2008 in a Safe Indian Communities Initiative that will:

- Increase law enforcement staffing and invest in better equipment and training.
- Continue investments to improve operation of Indian Country detention facilities.



LAW ENFORCEMENT STAFFING

The methamphetamine invasion on reservations takes advantage of the limited law enforcement presence in Indian Country. Department of Justice data indicate that staffing levels in Indian Country are significantly below other rural law enforcement programs. A Justice study found that Indian Country has 1.3 officers for every 1,000 inhabitants as compared to 2.9 officers in non-Indian jurisdictions. As an example, on the Black Feet Reservation, two police officers may cover as much as 2,400 square miles during one shift, including seven communities and two U.S. ports of entry. A 2006 analysis of the staffing in Indian Country identified a need for an

Meth is easy to make. It is highly addictive. It is ruining too many lives across our country... Our Nation is committed to protecting our citizens and our young people from the scourge of methamphetamine.

President George W. Bush, March 9, 2006



additional 1,854 law enforcement officers when using a 3.3 to 1,000 ratio of officers to population, the optimal rate for rural areas.

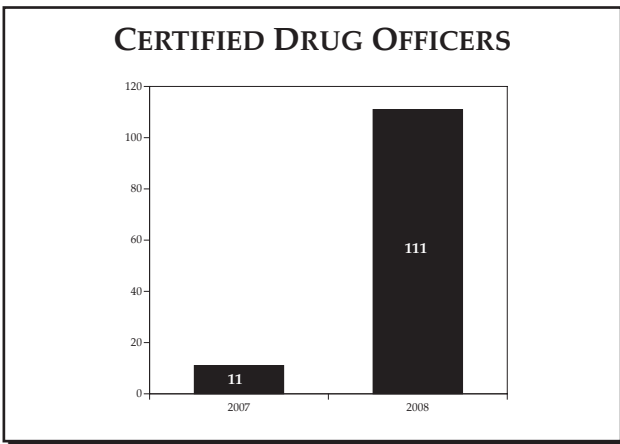
Within the \$16.0 million Safe Indian Communities Initiative, BIA proposes \$11.0 million to put an additional 51 law enforcement agents on the ground in targeted communities in Indian Country and invest in additional training for the current force to more effectively combat the problem. The BIA will expand use of a mobile meth lab to train tribal

police and others about methamphetamine labs, environmental and personal safety hazards, and interdiction and investigation strategies. Funding will target communities based on a needs analysis that looks at the violent crime rate, service population, and current staffing levels.

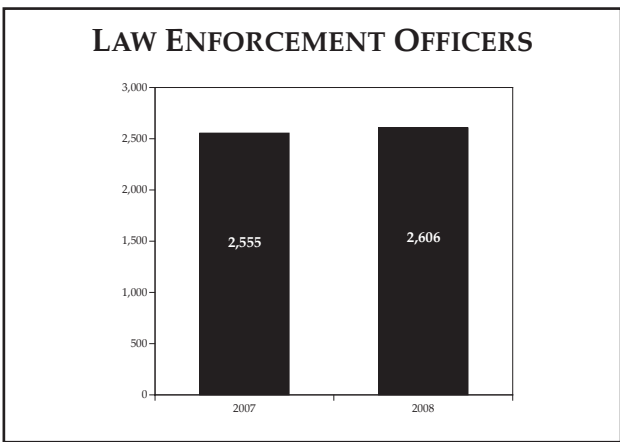
More officers on the ground and a better-trained force will yield positive results for Indian communities. The funding will allow an additional 100 officers for a total of 111 officers who will be certified for drug enforcement and can be deployed to combat drugs and violent crime in Indian Country. This will increase the number of certified BIA officers from three percent of the current force to 31 percent in 2008. The funding will also be used to develop specialized drug enforcement officer training, which will give officers the tools to detect drug trafficking, disrupt the activities and organization of crime groups, seize illegal substances, and follow through with prosecution.

DETENTION CENTERS

The BIA, working with Tribes, is responsible for the operation and maintenance of 78 detention centers. This responsibility requires adequate staff to manage violent offenders and protect other inmates and



the public. The 2008 budget includes an increase of \$5.0 million for detention centers. Funding will allow BIA to train and equip detention center staff with skills necessary to provide specialized services for detainees with behavioral problems, substance abuse issues, or other specialized needs. Funding will also allow BIA to address staffing needs at newly constructed detention facilities and continue to implement the 25 recommendations in the Inspector General's report on material weaknesses in the detention services program. A 2004 report by the Interior Department's Inspector General found serious safety, security, and maintenance deficiencies that posed hazards to inmates, staff, and the public at numerous detention centers throughout Indian Country.

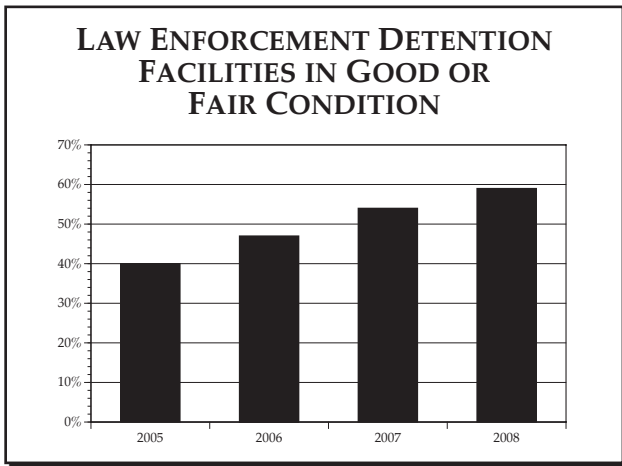


With this additional funding, BIA will improve the management of the detention program and increase the percent of detention centers properly staffed to National Institute of Corrections safety standards,

POSITIVE RESULTS

Through this Initiative, Interior anticipates a decrease in methamphetamine-related violent crime in targeted communities. The Department will deter violent crime by increasing law enforcement actions and will also reduce the number of dangerous incidents at detention facilities.

This initiative will also advance the goals of the President's 2006 National Synthetic Drug Control Strategy. The Synthetics Strategy, a companion to the President's National Drug Control Strategy, will foster international coordination and dramatically reduce the flow of methamphetamine into the United States. The strategy calls for a 15 percent reduction in methamphetamine use and a 25 percent reduction in domestic methamphetamine labs over the next three years, building on progress already made at Federal, State, and local levels.



thereby helping to reduce serious incidents in detention centers that have included suicides, attempted suicides, and escapes. The BIA Correction Division staff has worked with the NIC to apply staffing models that best suit the needs of Indian Country detention facilities. Using the NIC models, a staffing analysis was conducted to calculate the standard staffing requirement for each facility, taking care to differentiate the size of the facility according to NIC models. As part of the Initiative, funding for staffing at newly built detention centers will be the first use of the funds identified for detention centers. The remaining funding will be distributed to existing detention centers based on the results of the application of the NIC model.

The additional funding in the 2008 budget request will allow BIA to:

- Reduce dangerous incidents at BIA detention centers by ten percent by 2012.
- Increase the percent of BIA/tribal law enforcement agencies that are on par with recommended national staffing levels from 38 percent in 2007 to 40 percent in 2012.