



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL TRUSTEE FOR AMERICAN INDIANS

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The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) Has Hired Experienced Staff throughout Indian Country to Serve Indian Trust Beneficiaries

For the first time in the history of the Indian Trust, the Department of the Interior has staff members specifically designated to serving as direct informational contacts for tribal and individual Indian beneficiaries. In the past, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) employees were required to juggle a variety of trust needs for beneficiaries—including leasing issues, payment tracking, and probate matters to name a few. The new OST trust staff has the responsibility to serve and respond to tribal and individual beneficiaries, allowing BIA and OST field staff more time for their programmatic responsibilities.

- **OST has hired six Regional Trust Administrators with extensive trust, banking, and legal experience to assist the Special Trustee with oversight for fiduciary management of the Indian Trust assets.**
- **By the end of 2005, over 50 skilled Fiduciary Trust Officers will be stationed at offices throughout Indian Country to serve as the first points of contact for trust beneficiaries.**
- **In partnership, OST, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and BIA have hired professional Indian Land Surveyors to work with tribes to address a long list of land survey needs.**

Indian Trust beneficiaries may obtain additional information about new staff in their region by calling the Trust Beneficiary Call Center, toll-free at (888) 678-6836 ext. 0.

The new field employee positions are part of a number of efforts underway at OST to reform services for tribal and individual Trust beneficiaries. Other recent reforms include the Trust Beneficiary Call Center toll-free information center, the availability of direct deposit for account holders, upgraded nationwide information technology systems, and the establishment of a funds receivable system. OST has also established a “lockbox” procedure for trust collections. All of these efforts fall under the umbrella of the Fiduciary Trust Model adopted by the Department of the Interior in 2004. For a copy of the model visit OST’s website at www.doi.gov/ost.

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