

Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Outline of Empowerment Agenda

Economic and Energy Development

- **Buy-Indian Act Regulations:** The Department has consulted with tribal leaders on draft regulations for the Buy-Indian Act and is preparing to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking this year. The Buy-Indian Act promotes the federal procurement of goods and services from American Indian- and Alaska Native-owned businesses, thereby supporting economic development in Indian Country. These will be the Department’s first regulations to implement this Act uniformly across the country.
- **Indian Loan Guaranty Program:** The Department has helped attract more than \$208 million of private capital investments for Indian and tribally-owned businesses since 2009 through the issuance of federal guarantees on private loans.
- **Renewable Energy:** The Department has provided financial support for a number of tribal renewable energy projects, including a state-of-the-art power plant soon to be opened by the Oneida Nation in Wisconsin that uses municipal solid waste to generate power that will provide employment opportunities in their community.
- **Indian Energy Royalties:** The Department has processed more than \$851 million in Indian energy royalties on behalf of tribes and individual Indian landowners since the start of 2009, including royalties from renewable energy projects.

Tribal Self-Determination

- **Self-Determination:** The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) distributed over \$718 million to Indian tribes and tribal organizations in direct program funds through self-determination contracts in the last fiscal year. In addition, the Bureau distributed \$166,000,000 for contract support costs to tribes and tribal organizations to facilitate the tribal management of those contracts.
- **Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) Program:** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act authorized \$310 million for Indian Reservation Roads projects. The BIA approved more than 500 projects, including 399 pursuant to self-determination and commercial contracts, and obligated almost 100 percent of its funds by the Act’s deadline.
- **Indian Reservation Roads Program Reform:** The Department’s regulations establish the formula for the distribution of funding under this program. In consultation with tribal leaders, the Assistant Secretary directed changes to the implementation of those regulations, to ensure that funding was distributed in a more equitable fashion for the construction and maintenance of tribal roads, as intended under the program.

Tribal Homelands Restoration

- **Fee-to-Trust:** The Secretary of the Interior has made fee-to-trust a priority to further tribal self-determination and sovereignty, economic development opportunities, housing and the preservation and protection of cultural sites. The Department has improved the fee-to-trust process by making it more consistent and transparent, and by processing more fee-to-trust applications.
- **Leasing Reform:** The Department's regulations governing leasing on Indian lands have been in place for 50 years. The Assistant Secretary has undertaken a complete reform of Indian lands leasing regulations in a manner that promotes tribal self-determination, housing, and economic and renewable energy development to support modern tribal economies. The Department has completed its first period of tribal consultation on draft new regulations and will issue a notice of proposed rulemaking this summer.

Safe Communities

- **Targeted Crime Reduction:** The BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) has developed and implemented an intelligence-based crime reduction strategy on four large high-crime reservations with the goal to reduce crime by at least five percent within 24 months. Through shared efforts with these tribal nations, an 11 percent combined reduction at all four locations in the second quarter of 2011 has been achieved.
- **2010 Tribal Law and Order Act Implementation:** In consultation with tribal leaders, Indian Affairs has developed and published special law enforcement commission standards and long-term detention standards under the Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA). It is in the process of developing a long-term plan for adult and juvenile detention, and is finalizing an agreement with the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Justice under the Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Act. The OJS is also providing technical assistance to tribal courts on the TLOA's enhanced sentencing provision and conduct training on the Act for tribal judges, prosecutors and court clerks.

Health

- ***Let's Move! In Indian Country* (LMIC):** The Department launched the LMIC Initiative with the Menominee Indian Tribe in Keshena, Wis., on May 25, 2011. This initiative, which is an extension of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* national campaign, is a partnership between federal agencies, communities, nonprofits, corporate partners and tribes to end the epidemic of childhood obesity in Indian Country within a generation.
- **Suicide Prevention:** The BIA, in partnership with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), held 10 tribal suicide prevention listening sessions across Indian Country to seek input from tribal leaders on how the agencies can effectively work with them to prevent suicides in their communities. Using this input, the agencies will hold a suicide prevention summit in Scottsdale, Ariz., on August 1-4, 2011, and plan on holding an Alaska Native suicide prevention summit later this year.

Education

- **New Collective Bargaining Agreement:** The Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which oversees 183 schools in 23 states and operates two post secondary institutions, has reached a new collective bargaining agreement with its bargaining unit that will allow the BIE to receive funding directly from the U.S. Department of Education for the first time. This agreement will make school administrators and staff more accountable for student performance and promote data-driven decision-making.
- **Native Language Preservation:** The Department is finalizing an agreement with the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) in HHS and with the Education Department to reinforce and encourage the preservation of native languages through the BIE whenever possible.

Indian Gaming

- **Indian Gaming Policy:** The Assistant Secretary has pursued a balanced, transparent and straightforward process on Indian gaming policy, including undertaking a thorough review of the issues, guidance and regulatory standards related to “off-reservation” gaming. Under this balanced policy the Assistant Secretary approved tribal gaming applications for the Navajo Nation, the Cherokee Nation and the Cowlitz Tribe of Indians. The Assistant Secretary also issued determinations on other tribal gaming applications that had been pending for several years.
- **Tribal-State Gaming Compacts:** The Assistant Secretary approved the tribal-state gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the state of Florida, bringing to an end an ongoing dispute between the tribe and the state that has lasted for nearly two decades. The Assistant Secretary worked closely with U.S. Department of Justice attorneys and the Solicitor General to present the United States’ views to the Supreme Court in the case of *Brown v. Rincon Band*, which addresses how tribes share gaming revenues with state governments under tribal-state gaming compacts.

Indian Affairs Leadership

- **Solidifying Bureau Leadership:** The Assistant Secretary has solidified key leadership positions throughout Indian Affairs by appointing new directors of the BIA and the BIE in 2010, in addition to filling nearly all of the 12 BIA regional director positions with permanent appointees. The Assistant Secretary also has appointed a permanent deputy assistant secretary for management and a chief financial officer to assist in the development and oversight of the Indian Affairs budget. He is in the process of hiring a new director for the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development.
- **Haskell Indian Nations University:** On June 3, 2011, Chris Redman was appointed president of Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kan.