



# NEWS RELEASE

Comptroller of the Currency  
Administrator of National Banks

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## **Comptroller Underscores National Bank Efforts to Meet the Financial Services Needs of Native Americans**

WASHINGTON -- Comptroller of the Currency John D. Hawke, Jr. today highlighted the accomplishments of national banks in overcoming many of the barriers that have historically limited Native Americans' access to credit and financial services in Indian country.

"There are tribes, banks, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies that individually, and in collaboration, are tackling the complex issue of access to financial products and services in Indian country," wrote Mr. Hawke in the lead article in OCC's fall 2001 community affairs newsletter. "Those institutions that are most successful in Indian country forge strong partnerships with tribes and together find creative solutions to lending challenges."

The Comptroller noted in the article that significant growth in Native American-owned businesses presents an opportunity for banks to serve this emerging market. The Census Bureau reported that receipts from Native American-owned businesses rose 179 percent, to \$22 billion from 1992 to 1997, compared with a 40 percent increase for all U.S. firms over the same period.

In other articles of this edition of *Community Developments*, Senior Vice President Steve Stallings and Vice President Rob Skjonsberg from Wells Fargo discuss commercial and retail banking successes achieved through tribal partnerships; Sherry Salway Black, Acting President, First Nations Development Institute writes about financial literacy initiatives with banks; and Frank Riolo, President of Borrego Springs Bank, N.A. describes operating a tribally-owned bank.

"In order to help banks learn more about how to increase business in Indian country, OCC has developed a Native American Banking Resource Directory, which is available on our Web site," said Anna Alvarez Boyd, Deputy Comptroller for Community Affairs. "With tribes located in 37 states, lending and investing in Indian country is a business opportunity for banks that should not be overlooked."

The newsletter and Native American Banking Resource Directory can be accessed by selecting "Community Affairs" on the OCC Internet home page, [www.occ.treas.gov](http://www.occ.treas.gov).

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The OCC charters, regulates and examines approximately 2,200 national banks and 56 federal branches of foreign banks in the U.S., accounting for more than 55 percent of the nation's banking assets. Its mission is to ensure a safe and sound and competitive national banking system that supports the citizens, communities and economy of the United States.