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OCC Study Finds Education Critical For Banks To  
Effectively Serve Native American Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) today released a report, *Providing Financial Services to Native Americans in Indian Country*, concluding that education -- for bankers, tribes and tribal members -- is an important step to building business relationships and meeting the financial needs of Native American communities.

The report is the result of a study conducted by the OCC's Native American Working Group, which was established in 1994 to review how some national banks have effectively offered financial products and services to Native Americans living in Indian country.

"Banks have made significant progress in recent years in delivering products and services to Indian Country, but I believe more can and should be done," said Comptroller Eugene A. Ludwig. "The OCC is committed to increasing the availability of credit and other financial services to Native Americans."

The working group selected a sample of banks based on asset size and the nature, level and geographic distribution of financial services provided. Members of the working group, accompanied by examiners and/or field managers responsible for the banks' supervision, visited each bank and looked at:

- what financial services are currently provided
- what financial service delivery methods have been successful and why
- what financial delivery methods have been unsuccessful and why
- what financial services the banks would like to provide and were considering offering.

*Providing Financial Services to Native Americans in Indian Country* is the first phase of the OCC's initiative to address the issues related to expanding access to banking services for Native Americans. On Thursday, July 24, bankers, tribal government officials, trade association representatives, federal agency officials, consultants and attorneys will convene at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C. to focus on these issues. Invited speakers include Comptroller Ludwig, Attorney General Janet Reno, and Sen. Daniel Inouye, ranking minority member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee.

The OCC is sending copies of the report to all national banks and examiners for their information. For further information on the conference, or to print or download a copy of the report, please visit the OCC's website at <http://www.occ.treas.gov>.

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The OCC charters, regulates and supervises approximately 2,800 national banks

and 66 federal branches and agencies of foreign banks in the U.S.,  
accounting  
for more than half the nation's banking assets. Its mission is to  
ensure a  
safe, sound and competitive national banking system that supports the  
citizens,  
communities and economy of the United States.