



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: January 17, 2008

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WASHINGTON - Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Carl J. Artman this week invited leaders from the 562 federally recognized tribes to attend a national meeting in Washington, D.C., on January 30, 2008, on the Indian Affairs Modernization Initiative. The one-day event will take place at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Horizon Room, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST).

“Your expressions of frustration with the current delivery of Indian Affairs services illustrate the necessity for a review of the Indian Affairs structure and business processes,” Artman said in his January 14 letter to tribal leaders. “As we have stated since the start of this dialogue, the modernization effort must be Tribally driven to ensure that any revisions are directly responsive to tribal concerns.”

Assistant Secretary Artman launched the initiative last September with a series of dialogue meetings around the country to discuss with the tribes how his office, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) should prepare for projected staff retirements and rising operational costs and seek ways in which to use future technology to improve efficiency in their business processes.

The January 30 meeting will provide tribal leaders with another opportunity to discuss with Indian Affairs officials improvements in a number of Indian Affairs areas. In addition to topics such as improving staff retention and recruitment, business processes and utilizing technology, other areas of discussion will include the tribal self-governance initiative, resolving fractionated land ownership issues, and tribal self-sufficiency and economic development.

A projected goal of the meeting will be to establish an advisory group comprised of tribal representatives to help the Department identify and focus on specific areas of Indian Affairs operations to be improved under the modernization initiative.

“These sessions will provide Tribes an opportunity to engage in proactive dialogue to determine the future of Indian Affairs,” said Artman in his letter. “I am confident a joint Indian Affairs/Tribal effort will result in a progressive, efficient Indian Affairs organization that will improve the delivery of services to Indian people, strengthen Tribal government and promote Tribal sovereignty.”

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