

## 1999 News Releases

- 02/01** EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND RESTORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT
- 04/07** NEW FINAL REGULATION ON INDIAN GAMING TO BE PUBLISHED
- 04/08** INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO STREAMLINE POLICIES FOR TAKING LAND INTO TRUST FOR INDIANS
- 05/10** INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO HOLD PANEL DISCUSSION ON INDIAN RUST LAND AMENDMENT
- 05/24** RECONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL DETERMINATION AND ORDER DIRECTING CONSIDERATION OF GOLDEN HILL PAUGUSSETT PETITION UNDER ALL SEVEN MANDATORY CRITERIA
- 06/01** THREE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES JOIN FORCES TO COMBAT PROBLEMS AMONG NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH
- 06/23** BABBITT AND GOVER TO "POWER-UP" THE TRUST ASSETS ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TAAMS) IN BILLINGS, MT FRIDAY JUNE 25TH
- 06/24** BIA PROVIDES GROUND COORDINATION TO FIGHT THE FIRE AT THE FORT APACHE RESERVATION
- 06/25** BIA RESPONDS TO PINE RIDGE TORNADO DISASTER
- 06/25** TAAMS WORKS!!!
- 07/02** RIVERSIDE INDIAN SCHOOL ATHLETES COMPETE IN WORLD SPECIAL OLYMPICS
- 08/09** SPONSORS WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP FOR ALASKA NATIVES
- 08/09** CABLETRON INC. MAKES DONATION TO HELP INDIAN SCHOOLS TO CONNECT TO THE INTERNET
- 08/12** GOVER TO KEYNOTE NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN TOURISM CONFERENCE
- 09/08** BABBITT, GOVER TO DISCUSS BIA MANAGEMENT REPORT BUDGETARY CONCERNS AND TRIBAL PRIORITY FUNDS TO BE HIGHLIGHTED AT THURSDAY BRIEFING
- 09/23** BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES NET DAY 1999
- 10/28** TAAMS WINS GOVERNMENT COMPUTER NEWS AWARD

- 10/29** BIA POLICE: MORE THAN LAW ENFORCEMENT
- 10/29** FEDERAL WORKGROUP SEEKS TRIBAL DUMP CLEAN UP PROJECT PROPOSALS
- 11/05** BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS ELEVATES ACCOUNTING DIVISION
- 11/29** LAST SURVIVING COMANCHE CODE TALKER TO RECEIVE HONOR FROM DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
February 1, 1999**

**Rex Hackler  
(202) 208-6087**

### **EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND RESTORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Education for American Indian children, safety for Indian reservation residents, the restoration of the environment and a continuation of the remarkable comeback of an American icon lead the way in President Clinton's Fiscal Year 2000 budget request for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The FY 2000 budget request for the BIA is 1.9 billion dollars; an increase of \$155.6 million above the 1999 enacted level. "This budget represents the wishes of the Tribal leaders across America for the needs of their people, and is a positive step toward preserving and protecting the needs of the 7th generation of the American Indian people since the reservation system began," stated Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover. "These steps are necessary and we are very pleased with this year's budget. This is an important step, but we are still a very long way from bringing the quality of reservation life up to the level most of America now enjoys."

The federal government holds direct responsibility for the education of students in two school systems: the Department of Defense school system for the children of military personnel stationed overseas, and the BIA school system for children on American Indian reservations. Over the years, the schools in Indian country have been neglected. This budget requests major new funding to repair and replace schools in Indian country.

A study by the Inspector General's office determined that Indian schools were in significantly worse shape than even inner city schools. The backlog of repairs necessary to BIA schools is growing and now exceeds \$740 million. Although the Bureau of Indian Affairs was recently awarded a "Hammer award for reducing by 50 percent the time it takes to plan, design, and construct new schools on Indian reservations by the National Performance Review, a massive amount of funding will be required to fix the problems that years of neglect created. Throughout Indian country, children are learning in schools that present serious health and safety threats. Many schools have leaking roofs, peeling paint, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate heating and cooling systems or are conducted in trailers too old and unsafe to sustain continued use in a school environment. The Bureau of Indian Affairs funds 185 schools in Indian country, and the most of these schools are more than thirty years old. The design life for a modern school building is twenty-five years. "Indian children are getting a 21st century education in what might as well be 19th century buildings" said Gover, "Our children deserve safe and decent learning environments. This budget is a step toward correcting the terrible situation where our children may be learning on a state of the art computer in a building where the roof is falling in." The school construction and repair request includes \$75.9 million to replace Seba Delkai School on the Navajo reservation in Arizona and Fond Du Lac Ojibway school in Minnesota and complete urgently needed repair work at existing facilities.

The budget also proposes a School Modernization initiative that would provide \$400 million in bond issuance authority for tribal governments over two years. Tribal governments could use this authority to issue zero interest bonds to investors who would receive tax credits for the life of the bond in lieu of interest. "In traveling

throughout Indian country, the most common request I hear from Tribal leaders is the need for new schools on their reservations. Up until now, it has not been possible to even consider building new schools, because the money has simply not been there in our yearly appropriations. The School Construction initiative will allow Tribes to move quickly to get schools financed and built, providing a safe, quality learning environment for their children," said Gover.

Inside the schools, the proposed budget for the BIA increases the budget for school operations \$27.5 million over 1999 to a total investment of \$503.6 million. The United States has a special historic responsibility for the education of Indian children, as was reaffirmed by the President's Executive Order 13096 on American Indian and Alaska Native Education. In this order, the Clinton Administration committed to improving the academic performance and reducing the dropout rate of Indian students. The order set forth six goals, including improved reading and mathematics, increased high school completion, improved science education, and expanded the use of educational technology. The increase in the School Operations budget will cover additional costs for teachers, transportation, and operations due to the growing student population in Indian country.

Fifty-three-thousand students are educated in the BIA school system, in some of the most remote and isolated reservations in the country. Assistant Secretary Gover credited this increase as a wise investment in the future. "This is a great investment in our 7th generation. These students will become the tribal leaders, artists, lawyers, doctors and scribes of the American Indian people. This generation will be the group who will defeat the many problems plaguing Indian country, and their safety and education is the highest priority of this Administration." Part of this increase will also be dedicated to linking every BIA school to the Internet through a partnership with industry giants and the Access Native America program. Internet teaching is especially important in Indian country, because there are very few opportunities for field trips to museums, libraries and other cultural attractions. "The best part of this job is working with our children and seeing the pride on their faces as they show us their schools and their accomplishments," said Gover. "To look into the eyes of these children is to see into the future of the American Indian people. We simply cannot do enough in the areas of education, child protection, and fighting alcohol and drug abuse among our children."

The second major concern addressed by the FY 2000 budget is public safety on the reservations. While violent crime has decreased across most of America, Indian country has experienced a startling rise in violent crime on the reservation. A joint report between the Department of Justice and the Department of Interior showed Indian country law enforcement receives about one fourth the resources of most rural law enforcement agencies. This lack of resources has translated into a lack of police patrols, inferior radio systems, lack of jail space, and even the absence of 911 service on many reservations. While most Americans expect a response time in minutes when calling for help from the police, on many reservations, the response time is measured in hours and in some cases even days. Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover says this is simply unacceptable. "No community can prosper unless its people feel safe in their homes. For far too long, Indian people have not been afforded the same protection for their homes and their families as other Americans." In last year's budget, Congress provided \$20.0 million for BIA to begin addressing the law enforcement needs of Indian country. This year, the Administration is requesting another \$20 million increase for the continuation of this multi-year presidential initiative. "This year's request constitutes the second investment in our commitment to bringing Indian law enforcement up to par with the rest of America," Gover said, "Last year the BIA spent 90% of the additional funds to provide the Tribes in the greatest need with more cops on the reservation. But we still need more cars, a communications system that will actually work, and even more cops to guarantee the safety of our public safety officers, and the residents of the reservations." The program increase will be invested in the hiring of more criminal investigators and uniformed police officers, upgrading radio systems, and strengthening basic detention services.

An additional \$2.6 million increase has been slated for use to strengthen tribal court systems. Along with the increase in BIA funding for Indian country law enforcement and public safety comes a requested increase in the Department of Justice (DOJ) for law enforcement on reservations. The DOJ money would be distributed through a grant program to Tribes.

The BIA's most basic responsibility is the management of lands held in trust for Indian Tribes and Indian people. The BIA is responsible for accounting for the land, allowing for its use at its greatest possible value,

and distributing income to its owners. The BIA manages over 55 million acres of land (including 18 million acres of forest), 170,000 individual tracts of land, 100,000 active leases, 350,000 land owners and 2 million owner interests. By comparison, if you put all the trust land in one parcel, it would cover all of the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Connecticut. "The central responsibility of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is the management and protection of Indian trust assets. Sadly, the United States has failed historically to provide the funds needed. This has been the case for many decades. The Clinton administration and Secretary Babbitt are the first to attack this longstanding problem in a systematic and comprehensive manner. With Congress' help, we can establish a trust management system that will meet our trust responsibilities well into the next century," said Assistant Secretary Gover. The resources allocated in this budget are designed to close the books on Indian trust management problems as we enter the next century by completing the replacement of core trust management systems, including the complete computerization and cleanup of all trust records in the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS). The 2000 budget request includes \$100 million dollars for the Office of Special Trustee, which will provide \$65.3 million for continued implementation of the Trust Management Improvement Project. "The TAAMS project is the largest single modernization program ever attempted by the BIA, and we will be successful. The TAAMS program is our chance to demonstrate to the Tribes and Congress the management expertise of the BIA. When the necessary resources are provided for this extremely important responsibility to the Tribes and the American Indian people," said Gover, "It truly is a matter of trust."

The protection of the environment is a long-standing principle of the Tribes, who for centuries have believed deeply in the protection of the earth and appropriate use of resources. This principle is universally held among American Indian people who have long understood that harmony with the earth belongs to those who recognize themselves as part of the ecosystem, and not as the masters of it. In this year's budget, a \$3 million increase for environmental programs has been included in the BIA budget. Assistant Secretary Gover commented on the American Indian tradition of conservation and environmentalism, "For generations, the keepers of the hidden knowledge, available to all, but seen and sought out by only a few, have been American Indians. The heritage and mythology of America come from the first Americans, the Tribes, who have understood for centuries that the preservation and protection of the earth is for the benefit of all."

Also within the budget is a \$1 million appropriation for a "Bring Back the Bison" program within the BIA. American bison and the American Indian are symbiotically linked. The bison, due to a misguided Federal policy designed to subdue the Tribes at the end of the last century, were within a breath of being exterminated at the beginning of the century. Tribes of the Northern and Southern Plains, along with Tribes in the Northwest and Southwest, have begun a program to reestablish the bison on Indian lands. The program has been extremely successful, reestablishing not only the bison, but also the buffalo culture and Tribal spiritual practices, and creating of hundreds of jobs for Tribal members raising and caring for the buffalo. Gover, a descendent of the Pawnee and Comanche Tribes, articulated the meaning of this program to the American Indian people. "At the turn of the last century, there was little doubt that American Indians and the buffalo would be a thing of the past. But we have both survived. It is important to grow and maintain our bison, and along with the bison, the health and prosperity of the Tribes. This is important not just as a link to the past, but also as a gateway into the next millennium."

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**

and distributing income to its owners. The BIA manages over 55 million acres of land (including 18 million acres of forest), 170,000 individual tracts of land, 100,000 active leases, 350,000 land owners and 2 million owner interests. By comparison, if you put all the trust land in one parcel, it would cover all of the District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Connecticut. "The central responsibility of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is the management and protection of Indian trust assets. Sadly, the United States has failed historically to provide the funds needed. This has been the case for many decades. The Clinton administration and Secretary Babbitt are the first to attack this longstanding problem in a systematic and comprehensive manner. With Congress' help, we can establish a trust management system that will meet our trust responsibilities well into the next century," said Assistant Secretary Gover. The resources allocated in this budget are designed to close the books on Indian trust management problems as we enter the next century by completing the replacement of core trust management systems, including the complete computerization and cleanup of all trust records in the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS). The 2000 budget request includes \$100 million dollars for the Office of Special Trustee, which will provide \$65.3 million for continued implementation of the Trust Management Improvement Project. "The TAAMS project is the largest single modernization program ever attempted by the BIA, and we will be successful. The TAAMS program is our chance to demonstrate to the Tribes and Congress the management expertise of the BIA. When the necessary resources are provided for this extremely important responsibility to the Tribes and the American Indian people," said Gover, "It truly is a matter of trust."

The protection of the environment is a long-standing principle of the Tribes, who for centuries have believed deeply in the protection of the earth and appropriate use of resources. This principle is universally held among American Indian people who have long understood that harmony with the earth belongs to those who recognize themselves as part of the ecosystem, and not as the masters of it. In this year's budget, a \$3 million increase for environmental programs has been included in the BIA budget. Assistant Secretary Gover commented on the American Indian tradition of conservation and environmentalism, "For generations, the keepers of the hidden knowledge, available to all, but seen and sought out by only a few, have been American Indians. The heritage and mythology of America come from the first Americans, the Tribes, who have understood for centuries that the preservation and protection of the earth is for the benefit of all."

Also within the budget is a \$1 million appropriation for a "Bring Back the Bison" program within the BIA. American bison and the American Indian are symbiotically linked. The bison, due to a misguided Federal policy designed to subdue the Tribes at the end of the last century, were within a breath of being exterminated at the beginning of the century. Tribes of the Northern and Southern Plains, along with Tribes in the Northwest and Southwest, have begun a program to reestablish the bison on Indian lands. The program has been extremely successful, reestablishing not only the bison, but also the buffalo culture and Tribal spiritual practices, and creating of hundreds of jobs for Tribal members raising and caring for the buffalo. Gover, a descendent of the Pawnee and Comanche Tribes, articulated the meaning of this program to the American Indian people. "At the turn of the last century, there was little doubt that American Indians and the buffalo would be a thing of the past. But we have both survived. It is important to grow and maintain our bison, and along with the bison, the health and prosperity of the Tribes. This is important not just as a link to the past, but also as a gateway into the next millennium."

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
April 7, 1999**

**Stephanie Hanna**

### **NEW FINAL REGULATION ON INDIAN GAMING TO BE PUBLISHED**

The Department of the Interior will publish final regulations to deal with Indian gaming compact negotiations between States and Tribes when Tribes have exhausted other federal judicial remedies. A final rule has been sent to the Federal Register for publication. The new regulation will only apply in cases where Tribes and States have been unable to voluntarily negotiate Class III gaming compacts and where States otherwise allow Class III gaming activities and when States assert immunity from lawsuits to resolve the dispute.

The final regulation is the result of an extensive public process that began with the publication of an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, published in the Federal Register in May, 1996, and a Proposed Rule in January, 1998.

"The vast majority of compacts negotiated between States and Tribes during the past 10 years have been negotiated voluntarily and in a spirit of good faith," Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover explained. "We do not believe that the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act envisioned giving States a veto power over Class III Indian gaming when other Class III gaming activities take place within their borders. The new regulation addresses only this narrow issue and seeks to level the playing field once again in these rare circumstances."

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988 (IGRA) mandated a process of judicially supervised mediation when States and Tribes were unable to negotiate a compact. However, since the Seminole Tribe of Florida v. Florida decision in the U.S. Supreme Court in April, 1996, Indian Tribes have been unable to request judicial mediation if States asserted sovereign immunity. The final regulation lays out a process for mediation under those narrow circumstances, seeking State involvement in developing any gaming procedures that might ensue. The final rule does not alter the qualifications necessary for land acquisition for off-reservation Indian gaming.

In addition, State law would continue to govern the 'scope of gaming' permitted in any procedures proposed by the Department to resolve Indian gaming compact disputes. This policy is consistent with the Department's position that IGRA does not authorize classes or forms of Indian gaming in any State where they are affirmatively prohibited.

More than 200 compacts between Tribes and States for Class III gaming have been successfully negotiated in good faith and implemented in 24 States since the passage of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act in 1988.

[View All News Releases](#)



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
April 8, 1999**

**Stephanie Hanna  
202-208-6416  
Nedra Darling**

### **INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO STREAMLINE POLICIES FOR TAKING LAND INTO TRUST FOR INDIANS**

The Department of the Interior is proposing to amend the federal regulations used in determining whether to take land into trust on behalf of Indians. The proposed amendments will be published in the Federal Register on Monday, April 12. Their publication will open up a 90-day period of public comment.

Historically, tribal ownership of lands set aside as Indian reservations was seriously eroded by the federal government's allotment policies in the late 19th Century. Recognizing that loss of tribal lands had resulted in serious degradation of the social welfare and economic opportunity for Indian people, Congress in 1934 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to take land in trust for the benefit of Indians. Since that time, however, only approximately eight percent of the lands lost through allotment have been re-acquired. The overwhelming majority of applications to take land in trust are for lands located within the boundaries of Indian reservations and involve small parcels of land, on average about 30 acres.

Federal regulations governing the process by which the Secretary of the Interior decides whether to take land into trust for Indians were first published in 1980 (25 C.F.R. Part 151). The Department now proposes to amend the Part 151 regulations to provide tribes and their non-Indian neighbors with a clearer understanding of how the Department reviews requests to take land into trust.

"In restructuring the regulations, we believe that the decision-making process will better reflect the present-day needs and concerns of Indian tribes and surrounding non-Indian communities," Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt said.

The proposed revisions underscore clear differences in policy regarding the need to re-acquire land in trust on reservations versus trust land off reservation.

- **On reservation:** The policy of the Department is to assist tribes in the re-acquisition of land within reservation boundaries. To accomplish this, the process by which land may be returned to trust status has been streamlined and there is a strong presumption established in favor of the applicant.
- **Off reservation:** The Department is committed to addressing the impact on non-Indian communities affected by proposed acquisitions of off-reservations lands. Jurisdictional, economic, zoning and other related concerns must be adequately resolved within an application to take off reservation land into trust under the new proposed regulations before the Department considered acting favorably on the request.

In addition, the proposed regulations clarify how the Department will address a number of more specialized issues related to taking land into trust. For example, the proposed amendments to Part 151 delineate the procedure by which the Department will process "mandatory acceptances of title." Mandatory acceptances of title are trust acquisitions where Congress, by explicit direction in statute, requires the Secretary to take lands into trust for Indians through the administrative process.

Finally, the proposed regulations address the unique difficulties encountered by tribes that do not have a reservation. New provisions are included that set out a process using Tribal Land Acquisition Areas approved by the Secretary to give tribes without reservations access to same policy benefits within the new regulations for on reservation trust acquisitions.

After the regulations are published, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover plans a series of regional meetings with tribes and other outreach opportunities during the public comment period. Information on his activities can be obtained through Nedra Darling in the Bureau of Indian Affairs at 202/219-4150.

Informational materials on the proposed regulations are available on the Department of the Interior's and the Bureau of Indian Affairs' web sites.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
May 10, 1999**

**Stephanie Har  
202-501-46  
Nedra Darl  
202-208-37**

### **INTERIOR DEPARTMENT TO HOLD PANEL DISCUSSION ON INDIAN TRUST LAND AMENDMENT**

The U.S. Department of the Interior will hold a public panel discussion to gather comments on the proposed amendment to the Federal Regulations governing the Department's decisions about whether to take land into trust on behalf of Indian tribes. The amendment of these regulations is an important step in providing tribes and their non-Indian neighbors with a clearer understanding of how the Department reviews requests to take land into trust.

The forum will provide an opportunity for affected and interested parties to discuss their views on the issue. The panel will include representatives from tribes, States, interested non-Indian groups, Congress and the Department. After prepared comments by the panel members, there will be an opportunity for questions from the audience.

**Who:** U.S. Department of the Interior

**What:** Panel Discussion on Amendment to Indian Trust Land Regulations

**When:** 1:30 - 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, May 12, 1999

**Where:** South Interior Building Auditorium, 1951 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
May 24, 1999**

**Rex Hackler  
202-208-6087**

### **RECONSIDERATION OF THE FINAL DETERMINATION AND ORDER DIRECTING CONSIDERATION OF GOLDEN HILL PAUGUSSETT PETITION UNDER ALL SEVEN MANDATORY CRITERIA**

The Deputy Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, Michael J. Anderson, on Monday will issue a new decision (technically described as a "reconsidered final determination," even though it is not a final determination) on the petition of the Golden Hill Paugussett for acknowledgment as an Indian tribe.

The reconsideration decision concludes that the earlier decision of Assistant Secretary Deer in 1996 rejecting the petition needs to be reconsidered.

The earlier decision was reached under what is called an "expedited review process" called for in the regulations, which is a procedural way of reaching a quicker decision on a petition when it is clear (after an initial investigation) that petition does not meet one of three specified criteria. (Overall, a petition must meet seven criteria in order to be granted; but only three can be examined under the expedited review.) Anderson's decision also cites the fact that new historical information that could affect the petition had been identified during this reconsideration, and warranted full evaluation.

The effect of Anderson's decision is that the Golden Hill petition will now be evaluated under all seven criteria. The decision does not reach the merits of whether the petitioner is an Indian tribe or even whether its members are descendants of the Golden Hill Paugussett which once inhabited the area around Stratfield (modern Bridgeport), Connecticut.

Golden Hill filed its petition for acknowledgment in April 1993. Several months earlier, in September 1992, Golden Hill had sued the State of Connecticut, the Federal government and various land owners claiming it was entitled to certain lands in the state. In January 1993 the court held that

Golden Hill had no standing because it was not a federally recognized Indian tribe. Golden Hill appealed (as well as filing the petition for acknowledgment), and in October 1994 the federal court of appeals remanded the case to the district court but directed it give the Department some time to consider the petition.

Following the Assistant Secretary's September 1996 decision rejecting the petition under the "expedited review process," Golden Hill appealed to the Interior Board of Indian Appeals (IBIA). In June 1998, IBIA generally affirmed the decision, but referred five issues back to the Secretary for further consideration. The Secretary of the Interior sent the matter back to the Assistant Secretary's office. (Assistant Secretary Gover recused himself from this matter because he had represented Golden Hill in private law practice.) Anderson's decision found

that four of the five issues submitted did not require reconsideration.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
June 1, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-219-4150**

### **THREE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES JOIN FORCES TO COMBAT PROBLEMS AMONG NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH**

Denver, CO - The Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Service and the Administration for Native Americans are joining forces to hold the first national conference for Native American youth, parents and organizations serving Native American youth. The Youth First: The Future of Indian America Conference will be held on June 2, 3, and 4, 1999 in Denver, Colorado.

The purpose of The Youth First: The Future of Indian America Conference is to begin planning for a variety of Indian youth oriented activities and initiatives to be implemented by federal and private partners. The conference is being held in conjunction with the Native American Youth Weekend, an event which has been in existence for 14 years and annually draws 600-800 young people that participate in a All-West Native American Basketball Classic. The majority of events associated with the conference will occur at the University of Colorado-Auraria Campus, who is also a co-sponsor of the conference.

The conference will focus on four themes: wellness, youth leadership, culture and education with specific workshops intended for the youth, adults, and organizations that deal with Indian youth. Each workshop will provide a Native American professional to lead the sessions as they attempt to equip our Native youth with the tools to cope with the pressures that come from school, home, friends and society.

Keynotes speakers will include Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Governor Mary Thomas, Gila River Indian Community, Olympic Gold Medalist Billy Mills, Actor Rodney Grant of film and television fame. Scotty Graham and Eric Bienemy from the NFL Players Association will so provide words of inspirations to the youth.

The Youth First: The Future of Indian America Conference will also feature social activities in the evenings for the youth, such as a pow-wow or dance, group meals, and other athletic and art related activities that will promote youth interaction and development of interpersonal skills.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
June 23, 1999**

**Rex Hackler  
406-247-7943**

### **BABBITT AND GOVER TO "POWER-UP" THE TRUST ASSETS ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (TAAMS) IN BILLINGS, MT FRIDAY JUNE 25TH**

Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, and Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover will unveil the Trust Assets Account Management System this Friday in Billings, Montana at the Billings BIA Area Office.

TAAMS is a major component in fixing the Indian Trust Funds System. The Billings Area will serve as the pilot of this project which is scheduled for completion early in 2001.

Reports covering the Indian Trust Funds issue and the Cobell case, should be especially interested in this event because TAAMS plays a large role in the current effort by the Department of the Interior to finally fix the broken Indian Trust Funds management system which was created by the Dawes Act of 1887.

In addition to the TAAMS program in the morning, Assistant Secretary Gover will also be traveling to the Crow reservation where we will witness the Real Bird re-enactment of Little Big Horn and tour the Little Big Horn battlefield. This Friday will be the 123rd anniversary of Crazy Horse's victory over Custer.

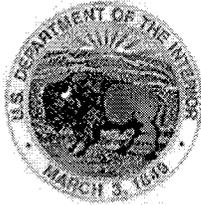
The morning events will take place at the Billings Federal Building-Courthouse. A Motor coach will be available for transportation to the Crow reservation.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
June 24, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
(202) 208-3710**

### **BIA PROVIDES GROUND COORDINATION TO FIGHT THE FIRE AT THE FORT APACHE RESERVATION**

When the fire started on June 11 at the Over the Rainbow housing subdivision located on the Fort Apache Reservation in central-eastern Arizona, the initial response to it was performed by the Fort Apache Bureau of Indian Affairs Fire Department. But the fire grew quickly and in minutes was beyond the capacity of local resources. The Bureau of Indian Affairs coordinated the effort to get other resources from the state of Arizona and the U.S. Fish and Game Department to combat the fire that was quickly threatening surrounding property. The fire, which was started by an unknown person that police continue to seek for questioning, burned for five days. By the time the fire was under control it had burned over 4,470 acres of desert foothills and forested mountains, causing the shutdown of electrical service to the reservation for a couple of days.

No fatalities were reported, but 17 homes and 13 out buildings were destroyed. The fire caused anxious feelings when the blaze spread to within a few hundred feet of the local Indian Health Service Hospital. 100 homes had to be evacuated with patients and residents being housed at the local high school dormitories. Also 240 families were displaced from their smoke and heat damaged homes.

The Fort Apache Tribal Council passed a resolution declaring the site a disaster area, opening the door for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist in the recovery effort. FEMA is onsite, working with Bureau and Tribal officials to assess the damage, thought to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, in personal property losses. The American Red Cross and other non-governmental agencies are also helping to provide food, shelter and clothing for those who need it. The problem is that FEMA assistance covers only the cost of dealing with the immediate needs of the individuals, there are other costs associated with the fire that will not be covered. The tribe with meager means, will have to try and make up the difference.

At the peak of the fire, the flames shot over 400 feet into the air and there were close to 800 people assigned to fight the fire of which 366 were Bureau of Indian Affairs employees and crews. The Bureau also supplied air tankers, helicopters, bulldozers and other logistical and communications equipment at various stages of the incident. The Bureau of Indian Affairs continues to assist the Fort Apache Tribal Government in their its to help their tribal members with putting their lives back together.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
June 25, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-208-3710**

### **BIA RESPONDS TO PINE RIDGE TORNADO DISASTER**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Aberdeen, SD Area Office responded to the devastation caused by two tornadoes on June 4, 1999, that destroyed houses and other buildings on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Immediately after the disaster, BIA allocated Welfare Assistance and Emergency Assistance Funds to the Pine Ridge Agency to address the immediate need for food, shelter, and clothing, and assisted in the coordination of other emergency relief efforts. Mel Lone Hill, a former tribal vice president, praised the BIA personnel who worked many hours to bring relief to reservation. "All these people have done a heck of a job out there since day one." Hardest hit were the communities of Oglala and Igloo, where residents were treated to high winds and large hail that tore through the communities in southwestern South Dakota causing over \$1 million dollars in damage. Over 150 residences are being temporarily housed at the old Pine Ridge High School dormitories while others crowd into already overcrowded homes of relatives. The BIA has so far allocated over \$1 million dollars to assist in the relief and rebuilding efforts. But that may not be enough to rebuild the lives of the residents of Pine Ridge.

"Even in the best of times, there is a critical shortage of housing units available on the Pine Ridge Reservation, but losing over 160 homes can make an already unbearable situation much worse. Several families may have lived in the house, are now seeking other places to live where rental units are practically non-existent," said Robert Ecoffey, BIA superintendent, Pine Ridge Agency. Despite the extensive property damage, only one person was killed because of the tornado. Over 255 residents reported injuries and were treated at a makeshift hospital set up and manned by the Indian Health Service. "I want to commend the Agency Superintendent and his staff for the outstanding job of responding to the needs of the people," said Cora Jones, Aberdeen Area director. "I am also very happy with the support the Assistant Secretary Gover and Deputy Commissioner Manuel have shown in trying to help with this unfortunate situation."

In a major decision toward recovery, President Clinton declared the Pine Ridge Reservation a disaster area, opening the door for local residents to get emergency assistance from the federal government. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration is on site assisting local residents with funds for shelter, food, and clothing. The problem is, emergency relief is only available as a way to help the individuals get through the ordeal. The residents still have to confront the problem of what to do because many do not have private insurance to fully replace the housing unit they occupied. FEMA plans to move camper-type trailer onto sites to help relieve the problem of the housing shortage.

To assist in solving the housing shortage caused by the tornadoes, BIA moved to purchase 22 houses from the state of South Dakota that will pay for the relocation costs. But this is not going to solve the housing shortage problem for the people of the Pine Ridge Reservation, who face the challenge of rebuilding their lives. "The Aberdeen, SD Area Office has been authorized to purchase the 22 housing units that are built by state prisoners, the money has been allocated to get them going as soon as possible," said Cora Jones. "Can we

afford more. I don't know, we'll have to wait and see what the other government agencies are going to provide in the effort to get these people back on their feet." Jones said. The houses, which were built by prisoners at the state penitentiary, are presently being moved to Pine Ridge, where they will be placed on concrete slabs or foundations.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
June 25, 1999**

**Rex Hackler  
406-247-7943**

### **TAAMS WORKS!!!**

Today in Billings, Montana the Bureau of Indian Affairs unveiled the Trust Assets Accounting Management System. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt hit the switch that officially started the pilot project of TAAMS. The program designed by the Trust management employees of the BIA and implemented by Applied Terra Vision, Artesia Systems Group, worked perfectly.

Secretary Babbitt, clearly impressed by the new Trust management tool, remarked, "This is the first step toward a trust management system that works for the Tribes and for the individuals across the Indian country." Babbitt praised the employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs as the creative force behind the system design. "I knew the people of the BIA would come through and they did. I knew they could do it."

The TAAMS system will enable the Bureau of Indian Affairs to keep accurate Indian land records, distribute trust income to individuals, send notices to individuals regarding the leasing of their land, automatically record accounts receivable, certified title status reports, and a myriad of other functions.

Assistant Secretary Kevin Gover said, "This system is state of the art, and it has been designed by those who know exactly what the Trust Management System needs to do for Tribes and individuals." Gover gave credit to the Congressional appropriators for funding the system to Secretary Babbitt for his leadership, but mostly to the employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. "These people worked the long hours, and they have proven that given the resources, they can fix this system. The American Indian employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs are the true heroes of the day."

David Orr, President of Artesia System Group, the contractor for the system echoed that sentiment. "Our company implemented the system designed by the BIA employees. They are the experts on what this system should be, and they are the people who are making this system work. I have never seen a group of people more committed to making a project work that the people of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they have been a joy and an inspiration."

Gover went on to say, "Nobody want the Trust Fund Management system fixed more that the American Indians who make up the BIA. They know this system affects their tribes, their communities, and their families."

The TAAMS system will now undergo a 60-day series of tests and the testing of the application in every possible situation. Dom Nessi, the TAAMS project manager for the BIA stated, "We are now going to put this system through its paces. This system looks very good now, but our people are certain we can make it even better in the next two months. We are on the way to having the best land management system in the Nation." Because the TAAMS system is a modified Commercial Off the Shelf software system (COTS) changes and

adaptations can be made quickly and easily. During the testing and data cleanup period in the Billings Area Office, if changes are necessary, they will be made to make the system work even better.

"This is a huge step toward creating the first working Trust Management System for Tribal and Individual accounts", stated Assistant Secretary Kevin Gover, "We did not break this system, but we are going to fix it. This is a case of Indians solving an Indian problem created by neglect."

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
July 2, 1999**

**Sharon Hunter  
405-247-9370**

### **RIVERSIDE INDIAN SCHOOL ATHLETES COMPETE IN WORLD SPECIAL OLYMPICS**

Ten athletes from the Riverside Indian School, Anadarko, OK were chosen to participate in the 1999 World Summer Games, a sport festival organized by Special Olympics International taking place June 25, thru July 4, 1999. Riverside Indian School is a Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding facility open nationally to American Indian children. These athletes, plus two coaches, qualified by competing in the Special Olympics Oklahoma 1997 Winter Sports Festival where they won the senior boys' level 3-basketball division. A lottery was conducted between the six states that make-up the Special Olympic Region Six for specific athletic events, with Oklahoma drawing the senior boys' basketball competition. Preparation for these athletes began in July 1998. Riverside Indian School's special education department initiated a special program with assistance from Special Olympics of Oklahoma. Some of the components of this program included the establishment of an adaptive physical education, period collaboration with residential staff programs, and coordination with Special Olympics organizations in Amarillo, Texas and Kansas City, Missouri for additional competition.

Riverside's athletes are designated as Team USA-Oklahoma. They are one of seven senior boys' basketball teams from the United States. Other teams competing are from the states of California, Montana, North Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia. Thirty-one nations from Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America are represented and will compete for gold, silver, and bronze medals. Riverside's athletes were part of a forty-three member group of athletes from Oklahoma that departed from Tulsa on June 25 as travelers in a special airlift program coordinated by Special Olympics flying on donated time by owners of private jet transportation. They are staying in Chapel Hill, NC and compete at sites in Durham, NC and Chapel Hill, including the Dean Smith Center on the University of North Carolina campus. Opening ceremonies began on the evening of June 26 in Raleigh, NC and the games will conclude on July 4.

Riverside's athletes are of Acoma Pueblo, Apache, Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Maricopa, Omaha, Sac and Fox, and Santo Domingo Pueblo descent.

#### **Team members names are:**

Ben Autaubo Anadarko, Oklahoma

Carlos Chalepah Carnegie, Oklahoma

Paul Chama Santo Domingo, New Mexico

Brent Cozad Anadarko, Oklahoma

Vinton Sage Concho, Oklahoma

Anthony Sheridan Oklahoma City, Oklahoman

Noah Victorino Acoma, New Mexico

Steven Wakole Powhatan, Kansas

Terrance Yazzie Laveen, Arizona

**Coaches:**

Terry Ware Anadarko, Oklahoma

Marlin Autaubo Anadarko, Oklahoma

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
August 9, 1999**

**Nedra Darling**

### **SPONSORS WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP FOR ALASKA NATIVES**

EIELSON AIR FORCE BASE, Alaska -- Nine Alaska Natives are taking part in a U.S. government-sponsored resource training class here Aug. 9-28 designed to improve the natural resource management and quality of life for people in some Alaska villages.

The three-week class covers the environmental, legal, administrative and cultural aspects of water resource management.

The class is sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Mo Baloch, an engineer and water rights specialist for the BIA, worked on the pilot program in 1992, and is still involved.

"I called the deputy civil engineer (Gary Willems) at Eielson. Gary was very receptive to the idea of hosting the program," Baloch said. "We're proud to find Air Force people sensitive to Alaskan natives and other civilians."

Two classes are held each year - one in the southwestern United States and one in the northwest. This is the first year Eielson has been host.

Debbie Eppler, 354th Services Squadron marketing and publicity, is Eielson's special project officer for the training class. She said her unit is providing lodging, meals and support during the class. Officials from the Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Army Corps of Engineers and Fish and Wildlife Service are teaching the classes.

"The people presenting this class are committed to it," said Eppler. "One gentleman even came here at his personal expense." Classes cover waterway flow rates, water sampling, the wetland protection program and more than a dozen other topics. Some airmen have volunteered time to teach English, math and computer skills in the evenings.

Students accepted into the program have been nominated by their tribal government, and are required to have a high school or graduate equivalent diploma, Baloch explained.

Following the program, students will receive a voucher for full-time employment for one year as an entry-level water resources technician trainee in their home tribal government. Many students have gone on, Baloch said, to become directors of water resources in their villages, operate water quality laboratories - even get



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
August 9, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-208-3710**

### **CABLETRON INC. MAKES DONATION TO HELP INDIAN SCHOOLS TO CONNECT TO THE INTERNET**

Schools funded by the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs will receive a donation of \$100,000 worth of computer hardware from Global Commercialization Foundation, a non-profit organization. The hardware will include routers, hubs, servers and other equipment needed to connect the schools to the Internet.

Global Commercialization Foundation was formed to develop financial and commercial infrastructure for American Indians using technology transfer, education and commercialization for sustainable growth in the global marketplace. Cabletron Systems of Herndon, VA, had donated the equipment to Global Commercialization Foundation. Cabletron is a \$1.5 billion company that specializes in networking solutions.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Indian Education Programs operates and funds 185 elementary and secondary schools for Native American children. These schools are located in 23 states, on 63 reservations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will use the donated equipment to finish the wiring and connecting its 185 schools to the Internet. The donation will assist 84 of its most isolated and remote schools to reach the Internet.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs began its efforts to connect its schools in 1997 as part of a "reinvention laboratory" which aims to connect Bureau-funded schools in the most remote areas of the United States. The schools are located in areas where fewer than 48 percent of the communities have access to telephones according to a recent Department of Commerce report.

The donation will enable the Office of Indian Education Programs to meet President Clinton's challenge to connect every Bureau of Indian Affairs' school to the Internet by the Year 2000.

For more information, contact William Mehojah at 202-208-6175.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**

bachelor's degrees in related fields. In all, more than 300 people have been trained through the program.

Students involved in the current class are from the Alaska villages Newtok, Hughes, Douglas, Ugashik, Quinhagak, Kwigillingok, Unalaska, Hooper Bay and Venetik.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
August 12, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
(202) 208-3710**

### **GOVER TO KEYNOTE NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN TOURISM CONFERENCE**

Department of Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover will be the keynote speaker at the 1999 American Indian Tourism Conference, "Preserving our Past Sharing Our Future" on Friday, August 20, 1999 in Albuquerque, NM.

"Tourism is the largest industry in the world, and tribes need to gain ownership of tourism in Indian Country", said Gover. "Tribes understand the tourist's hunger for authentic travel experiences, factual knowledge about American Indian cultures and a more complete understanding of our collective heritage. American Indian people are the greatest asset in the development of tourism in Indian country. We have a new world/old world experience to offer tourists globally; our rich tradition in hospitality, our history and our values along with our inspiration and respect for our elders and ancestors".

Gover will address the importance of cooperation between tribal nations, local, state and federal governments along with the private sector to make it possible for successful tribal economic development. Tribes throughout the United States and Canada will be on hand to participate in this exciting event. Invitees include many Federal and State Government Agencies as well as private industry ready to partner with the Tribes.

**Who:** Mr. Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, Department of Interior

**What:** Keynote Address

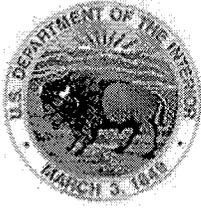
**Where:** 1999 American Indian Tourism Conference

"Preserving Our Past, Sharing Our Future"

Albuquerque Convention Center - East Complex

**When:** 9:00a.m., Friday, August 19, 1999

[View All News Releases](#)



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
September 8, 1999**

**Stephine Hanna  
202/208-6416  
Rex Hackler  
202/208-6087**

### **BABBITT, GOVER TO DISCUSS BIA MANAGEMENT REPORT BUDGETARY CONCERNS AND TRIBAL PRIORITY FUNDS TO BE HIGHLIGHTED AT THURSDAY BRIEFING**

Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kevin Gover will hold a media briefing on Thursday, September 9. Their briefing will focus on a new report documenting the management of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other issues affecting the BIA budget.

The briefing will be held in Room 7000 of the Main Interior Building, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC, it begins at 4:00 p.m. EST.

A phone bridge for use by out-of-town media will be available by prior arrangement with the BIA Office of Public Affairs at 202/219-4150 or either of the media contacts listed above.

"BIA is too often unfairly portrayed as a bloated bureaucracy, and in today's BIA that simply isn't true," Babbitt said. "This new report points out that a procession of Congressional budget cuts have inflicted serious damage to BIA's administrative structure. Clearly, it's a case of cutting the fat way into the bone. Now more funding is needed to create efficient management that can be responsive to the tribes."

Secretary Babbitt and Assistant Secretary Gover will also be discussing newly released figures on Tribal Priority Allocation funding.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
September 23, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-208-3710**

### **BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES NET DAY 1999**

Santa Clara Day School in the Pueblo of Santa Clara, New Mexico, will play host as the featured site in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Net Day 1999. Santa Clara Day School and 18 other BIA-funded schools from eastern Maine to Washingtons Olympic Peninsula will celebrate their accomplishments, as well as their connection to each other through the Internet, as part of the Four Directions Project.

The Four Directions Project was one of the first funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Technology Innovation Challenge Grants. The project was first funded in October 1995. Nineteen BIA-funded schools are included in the project. The schools and the grant administrators from the Department of Education at the Laguna Pueblo have been working with partners from the University of Texas, the University of New Mexico, the University of Kansas, and Haskell Indian Nations University, to integrate Native American culture and technology into classroom instruction.

On Net Day 1999, planned for September 25, Santa Clara will demonstrate how state of the art technology has transformed their school. During the day, visitors will see students and teachers use technology in their classrooms, collaborate with other students across the nation, and access resources around the world. The school principal, Frank Nordstrom, will show how he uses technology to improve communication with his teachers and parents through e-mail. The school librarian will demonstrate how to conduct online research using the Athena Library System. Kindergarten and second grade teachers will demonstrate how both teachers and students make powerful presentations of their work using Microsofts PowerPoint software program. Another teacher, Arlene Romero, will show how students can use Quick Time Video Recording (QTVR) to communicate information about their local communities to others over the Internet.

Similar community sharing will simultaneously be conducted at each of the other eighteen Four Directions sites. At 11:00 a.m., Acting Director, Office of Indian Education Programs, Joe Christie, and Tribal Leaders from across the country will join an online chat to talk with students and answer questions from the other sites. Community feasts at each of the sites will follow the chats.

Net Day 1999 will be the Bureau of Indian Affairs second celebration. The first celebration, in May 1998, celebrated the cabling and Internet connection of 28 schools in a 100-day period. The final Net Day Event will be conducted at the Havasupai School at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. That event, planned for the year 2000, will be a celebration of the completion of the Office of Indian Education Programs= Access Native America project to connect all 187 of its schools.



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
October 28, 1999**

**Rex Hackler  
202-208-6087**

### **TAAMS WINS GOVERNMENT COMPUTER NEWS AWARD**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs received a prestigious Government Information Technology Agency Award from Government Computer News for the development of the Trust Assets Accounting Management System, or TAAMS. Government Computer News, a trade magazine for the Information Technology industry dealing with the United States Government issues awards annually for excellence in information resources management to federal agency organizations in the application of information technology to improve service delivery.

TAAMS has been at the center of a major overhaul of the Indian Trust System begun during the administration of Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.

I am extremely pleased the BIA has been recognized for excellence for the development and deployment of TAAMS," stated Secretary Babbitt. The Indian employees of the BIA want this trust system fixed, and this is an example of Indians fixing an Indian problem created by decades of neglect. I have always had faith in the abilities of the American Indian employees, and if they are given the resources to fix the trust system, it will be fixed.

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover was also pleased with the recognition the award represents for the hard work done by the BIA employees. There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the efforts at Trust reform, including the development of the TAAMS. This award from Government Computer News shows our employees that their work is being recognized as excellent from an independent source. I want to thank our appropriators in both the Senate and House and the Secretary for pushing through the funding to fix this problem. It took 112 years to break this system, and it is not easy or cheap to fix it, but given the resources, our people are showing they will get the job done.

The TAAMS development team went away from the traditional process of developing a government computing system. Instead of creating a system from the ground up, the strategy involved choosing a commercial off the shelf system, and then making the specific modifications necessary to meet the needs of the tribes and the 300,000 Individual Indian Money accountholders. With the help of the contractor, Applied Terravision, and the trust management employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a system has been created that will move the trust system into the 21st century. The pilot for the system is now operating in the BIA Rocky Mountain Region. The TAAMS system will be deployed to 220 sites over the next 18 months. BIA manages 170,000 individual tracts of land comprising 56 million acres. Management includes overseeing 100,000 leases for timber, coal, oil, gas, gravel, grazing and agricultural uses.

We are literally taking this system into the 21st century, said Gover. The TAAMS system can be a system that all of Indian country can be proud of for a long time, and the credit should go to the hardworking employees of the BIA for moving heaven and earth to fix a problem that has been ignored for over a century. These

employees are doing a great job at an incredibly difficult task.

Other agencies recognized with awards from Government Computing News included the Department of Defense, NASA, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the State Department, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
October 29, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-219-4150**

### **BIA POLICE: MORE THAN LAW ENFORCEMENT**

For Halloween, beyond increasing their presence on the streets during that holiday, law enforcement officers from the Crow Agency, Northern Cheyenne Agency, Wind River Agency and Spokane Agency went into schools to talk with children from kindergarten to sixth grade about safety when trick-or-treating. They distributed Halloween bags filled with candy, pencils, pens, rulers and crayons to each student. The officers at the Crow Agency and Northern Cheyenne Reservation sponsored a Spook House for the children of the community. "This is something new that the BIA Law Enforcement is doing, we haven't had this kind of involvement in the community in the past, we're trying more preventive measures," said Police Sargent Ben Snyder of the Wind River Police Department. "We're trying to get into more community involvement so that the public will view us as their friend, not their enemy," said Snyder. "The activities allows us to get into the community and find out things we normally don't find out." This involvement has led to the citizens in Wind River, Wyo. starting their own community watch program, with the assistance of the Police Department, to eliminate drugs and violence on their reservation.

Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement officers jobs may be dealing with lawbreakers, but their hearts deal with all the citizens of the communities they serve. Better policing doesn't always involve arresting someone, sometimes it means trying to build trust with the citizens of that community. In an effort to build a bridge, the BIA Police in District V, who uphold law and order for tribal nations in Montana, Wyoming and western Washington are already seeing the results of their actions. "Personal satisfaction comes from knowing you are helping someone in your community," said Snyder. "To see a smile on a kids face or an elder person is payback enough."

Because this is the beginning of the holiday season, other plans involve sponsoring bake sales and raffles, with the proceeds going toward providing holiday baskets for the elderly and needy of the community. Officers will be donating their time to go into schools and elders homes to serve holiday meals. BIA law enforcement personnel also are providing rifle safety courses, recording personal belongings for identification in case of theft, and working with tribal courts to update Tribal Codes for traffic safety.

The District V of the BIA Law Enforcement includes Crow Agency, Crow, Mont., Northern Cheyenne Reservation, Lame Deer, Mont., the Wind River Reservation, Wind River, Wyo., and Spokane Agency, Spokane, Wash.

[View All News Releases](#)



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
October 29, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-208-3710  
Jerry Gidner  
202-208-5696**

### **FEDERAL WORKGROUP SEEKS TRIBAL DUMP CLEAN UP PROJECT PROPOSALS**

In an effort to close solid waste dumps located on tribal lands and help tribes develop alternative solid waste management options, the National Tribal Solid Waste Interagency Workgroup is seeking proposals from tribes for solid waste projects. The workgroup, representing 8 federal agencies, provides funding for tribes to assist with solid waste management and closing open dumps. There are over 1,100 open dumps on Tribal lands in the United States. The deadline for submitting a pre-proposal is November 19, 1999, with the final proposal due February 25, 2000. "The pre-proposal stage is so that the workgroup can determine if the project is feasible, and assist the tribes to develop final proposals, which will then be considered for funding," said Jerry Gidner, Chief, Division of Environmental and Cultural Resources Management for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. A copy of the solicitation letter providing information needed to submit a proposal can be downloaded from the Environmental Protection Agency's Web Site at [www.epa.gov/tribalmsw/finance.htm#fy2000](http://www.epa.gov/tribalmsw/finance.htm#fy2000). During FY 1999 \$1.6 million was awarded to 11 tribes and it is hoped that a similar amount will be available to fund projects in Fiscal Year 2000.

The effort to clean up or close the open dumps is well behind the schedule required to meet the federal government's deadline for compliance. "What to do with these open dumps is one of the biggest environmental issues in Indian country today. Its huge," said Gidner. According to a study by the Indian Health Service, it will take over \$120 million dollars to assist the tribes in cleaning up or finding alternative waste disposal sites. "Last year the various federal agencies contributed probably less than \$5 million dollars to the effort," Gidner said. "Given the modest amounts of funding that Federal agencies can contribute to this effort, we want to make the money go as far as possible, and avoid duplicating efforts. This workgroup provides a consolidated federal forum to coordinate funding to tribes for solid waste projects."

The National Tribal Solid Waste Interagency Workgroup was established in 1998 after Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt wrote to Carol Browner of the EPA asking for help in developing and implementing a federal plan to help tribes bring their waste disposal sites into compliance with the federal regulations. The interagency workgroup consists of representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Service, Department of Agriculture, Federal Aviation Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Agriculture and Defense.

For more information please contact: Melanie Barger Garvey, EPA, 202-564-2579; Steve Aoyama, HIS, 301-443-1046.



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
November 5, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-208-3710**

### **BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS ELEVATES ACCOUNTING DIVISION**

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Kevin Gover announced today that he is transferring the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Accounting Management from BIA's regional office in Albuquerque to a new Policy, Management and Budget Office in Washington, D.C. The new office will assist him in more effectively allocating BIA's resources.

The move was recommended by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in a study of BIA management and administration commissioned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. NAPA urged Gover to elevate BIA's accounting function as part of an expansion of high-level staff support the Assistant Secretary needs to plan, organize, coordinate, control and direct the Bureau's many activities and programs.

Gover said in explaining the decision, "It is absolutely imperative that we establish a top-notch, top-level accounting function to establish credibility with the executive branch, Congress and the Indian people we serve."

In the latest of a long series of poor annual report cards, the Interior Department's Inspector General faulted the Bureau for failure to obtain a clean audit, to record or account for loan costs properly, to collect debts on time, and to pay bills on time during Fiscal Year 1998. Further, there were material weaknesses in property management accounts, control over automated information management systems, and control over financial integrity reviews.

NAPA noted the complexity of BIA's mission, combined with the extremely limited staff oversight and coordination of line management, as key factors in the steady erosion of BIA's administrative capabilities.

Gover is asking all employees of the Division of Accounting Management to accept equivalent positions in Washington, D.C. "I know it's not easy to pull up stakes here and move to Washington - I went through that three years ago. But that's where I need your help."

Those employees who choose to relocate will be given full relocation benefits, and will be requested to report to the new office by February 13, 2000. Those who do not, will receive assistance in finding alternative employment, either within or outside the federal government. Approximately 65 BIA employees will be affected by the action. BIA employs an additional 320 people in Albuquerque who will not be affected.

[View All News Releases](#)



# NEWS

## U.S. Department of the Interior

### Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs

**For Immediate Release:  
November 29, 1999**

**Nedra Darling  
202-208-3710**

### **LAST SURVIVING COMANCHE CODE TALKER TO RECEIVE HONOR FROM DEPARTMENTS OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR**

Charles Chibitty of Tulsa Oklahoma, the last surviving member of the Comanche Code Talkers, will receive the Citizen's Award for Exceptional Service from the Department of the Interior in a ceremony that will take place in the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon on November 30, 1999. The Ceremony is to honor his role as a Comanche Code Talker during World War II where he and his fellow Comanche Indians were instrumental in saving many lives during the Normandy Invasion. Like the Choctaws in World War I and the Navajos in the Pacific Theater, the Comanche Code Talkers used their native language to prevent the enemy from intercepting radio messages involving troop movements being transmitted by Allied forces.

"Indian Country is proud of men like Charles Chibitty and the other veterans who served in the armed forces during World War II. Like many before and after them, American Indians have contributed significantly to the effort of defending this country's interests during times of war," said Kevin Gover, Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs. "It is truly a great thing that we honor him and the memory of his fellow Comanche Code Talkers with this distinguished award."

Mr. Chibitty was born near Medicine Park, Oklahoma on November 20, 1921. He attended Haskell Indian School in Lawrence, Kansas. Enlisting in the United States Army in 1941, he joined sixteen other Comanches to make up part of the 4th Infantry Division, 4th Signal Corp, known as the Code Talkers. While in the Army, Mr. Chibitty was a champion boxer and was described by military newspapers as packing dynamite in both hands. For his efforts, Corporal Chibitty earned the World War II Victory Medal, the ETO (5 bronze Star) Victory Medal, the European/African/Middle East Campaign Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal.

On November 3, 1989, the French Government awarded Mr. Chibitty the Chepalier de I-ordure National dus-Merit Medal which was presented to him by Premier Messmer, Prime Minister of France under President Charles DeGulle. In 1992, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney presented Mr. Chibitty a Certificate of Appreciation to recognize him for his service to the United States of America stating. "In a very real sense, thousands of service members and this country owe their lives to you and your fellow Code Talkers." Mr. Chibitty has also been honored in the past by the Governor of Oklahoma with a Special Proclamation recognizing his tremendous contribution to the state of Oklahoma and United States.

Mr. Chibitty is also known throughout Indian Country for his championship dancing in the fancy, straight and traditional categories and is a 32nd degree Mason, Shriner and a member of the Elks Lodge in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The award ceremony will take place at the Pentagon in the Hall of Heroes, located on the second floor "A" Ring

between the sixth and seventh corridors on November 30,1999 starting at 10:00 AM. Coverage of the ceremony is open to the media. Reporters interested in attending should contact Susan Hansen, DOD Public Affairs, at 703-693-6858.

[View All News Releases](#)

[Department of the Interior Website](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

**U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC, USA**