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INDIAN OWNED AND OPERATED MOTELS PROPOSED IN UPCOMING TALKS WITH MOTEL CHAIN

Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett said today he is scheduled to discuss soon with H. H. Mobley, executive vice president of Quality Courts Motels, Inc., of Daytona Beach, Fla., details of a program which could place swank tourist motel facilities on Indian reservations.

The talks will be an outgrowth of intensive investigations by the industrial development department of the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, and in keeping with the recent appeal to Congress by the Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Bennett for imaginative, new approaches to the use of Indian land and resources.

A meeting is planned for August 9, in Washington, D.C.

Although the idea is still in the discussion stage, as proposed by Quality Courts Motels, a nationwide franchise operation, Indian tribes would be helped to plan, finance, construct and staff a series of motels across Indian country, each with its own distinctive architecture, reflecting the various tribal heritages.

"The fact that the motels would be Indian owned and operated, and on or near reservation land, will make them a 'plus' tourist attraction," Mobley said. "In addition, they can act as an outlet for tribal arts and crafts, and where possible, for use of other features of the reservation area, such as fishing, boating, swimming and hunting."

But it would be the tribes, themselves, which would negotiate with Quality. Bennett pointed out that the heart of current Bureau policy is to give the Indians a chance to move ahead on their own.

The financing of each project would vary with the tribe. Costs of motel construction, nationally, vary from $6,500 to $7,500 per unit, exclusive of land and furnishings, and as Quality's minimum requirements call for at least 40 rooms, some tribes would have to look about for private loan sources or Federal agency loans. Some tribes may draw on their own treasury. A bill now before Congress would give the tribes access to an increased revolving loan fund and other means of raising capital.

Mobley said locations will be analyzed for economic feasibility prior to final site determination. Quality Motels would then work with the tribes on design, financing, construction and staff training.

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