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COMMISSIONER HALLETT INITIATES PLAN TO BENEFIT MINORITY AND INDIAN BUSINESSES

A plan to generate more business opportunities for minority owned and particular, Indian owned firms, was announced today by Commissioner of Indian Affairs William E. Hallett.

"The Minority Business Enterprise Plan will mean increased business opportunities and encourage development of minority and Indian owned businesses, which is the heart of economic development," Hallett said

The plan establishes Minority Business Enterprise Coordinator staff positions in the Bureau of Indian Affairs Central Office, in the Administrative Services Center in Albuquerque, and in each of the 12 area offices.

It is intended to maximize contracting by the Bureau with minority and Indian owned businesses. All BIA contracting officials will be required to prepare an annual procurement plan listing project procurement needs prior to awarding contracts. After Minority Business Enterprise Coordinators review the plan, the Bureau will publish an analysis in public and/or tribal newspapers identifying procurement opportunities for minority firms.

The plan will also require contractors with BIA to subcontract with minority firms. Pre-bid conferences to acquaint potential contractors with Indian firms that have subcontracting capabilities will then be arranged. In order to expand the pool of Indian owned firms, the Bureau will seek to

modify the definition of an Indian contractor - currently a 100 percent Indian owned business - to 51% Indian owned, the definition other Federal agencies use.

In addition, the Bureau will assist Indian owned businesses in procuring contracts from sources other than BIA. Indian firms will be encouraged to form regional or national associations and work with any such associations to promote procurement opportunities. BIA will solicit multi-agency support for these associations within the Federal government and seek to develop interagency cooperation beneficial to Indian businesses among agencies that have special programs for minorities.

The minority Business Enterprise Plan was developed in compliance with Executive Order No. 11625 requiring all Federal agencies to develop a minority business enterprise plan, and meets Interior Department regulations directing all Bureaus to establish staff position coordinators.

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