Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

More Than 3,200 pounds of Illegal Narcotics Seized, Estimated Value of $9.8 million

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WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt highlighted the efforts made by the Department of the Interior (DOI) Opioid Reduction Task Force over the past year, resulting in the seizure of more than 3,200 pounds of illegal narcotics with an estimated value of $9.8 million dollars.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services (BIA-OJS) is the primary lead for the DOI Opioid Reduction Task Force with operational support being provided by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Park Police, Customs and Border Protection, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

"Last year, BIA-OJS officers successfully stopped thousands of pounds of deadly narcotics from reaching our tribal communities," **said Secretary Bernhardt.** "I applaud the multi-department effort that has led to these drug seizures as it supports the Trump Administration's commitment to protecting its citizens and getting these drugs off the streets. Through collaboration with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners, we are best able to effectively and efficiently address the drug issues facing our communities. It's an all hands on deck approach, and it's making a difference."

Other tribal, state and local agencies participated in the task force efforts to disrupt illegal narcotics from being distributed to Indian Country. In FY 18, BIA-OJS successfully led 15 DOI Opioid Reduction Task Force operations in seven states, resulting in 372 arrests. States where operations were led included Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Nevada, and Washington.

"I commend the progress made in FY 2018 by the BIA-OJS through its leadership of the DOI Opioid Reduction Task Force and its stand-alone interdiction operations," **said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Tahsuda.** "BIA-OJS law enforcement officers and officers across the Department of the Interior answer the call every day to promote public safety and end the scourge of drugs in tribal communities. I thank the BIA-OJS Officers for their daily actions to save lives, promote public awareness and confront dangers."

BIA-OJS Director Addington was selected last year to head the development of the DOI Opioid Reduction Task Force, a coordinated intra-agency and interagency effort established to support President Donald J. Trump's national call to end the opioid crisis.

"I am proud of the extraordinary men and women within our Division of Drug Enforcement for stepping up to strategically combat the increasing opioid and other illegal narcotic epidemic affecting Tribal communities across the nation," **said BIA-OJS Director Addington.** "It has been a great honor to lead the development of the Task Force and the BIA-OJS effort to support the White House Initiative on Ending America's Opioid Crisis."

BIA-OJS Division of Drug Enforcement provides complex narcotic investigations, as well as gang and human trafficking investigations that focus on the disruption of drug distribution networks and criminal enterprise directly related to Indian Country and those impacting Indian communities.

The full report, highlighting the task force's efforts can be view **here**.