Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: NewsMedia@bia.gov
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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney announced the appointment of two leadership posts within the Bureau of Indian Affairs: Johnna Blackhair, a member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe in Montana, will serve as Deputy Bureau Director for Trust Services at the Bureau of Indian Affairs's headquarters in Washington, D.C., and Patricia Mattingly, of Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo in New Mexico and the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota, will serve as Regional Director of the Bureau's Southwest Regional Office in Albuquerque, N.M. The appointments were effective September 15 and 30, 2019, respectively.

"I am very excited to announce the appointment of two experienced managers to my senior BIA leadership team: Johnna Blackhair as Deputy Bureau Director of Trust Services, and Patricia Mattingly as Regional Director of the BIA's Southwest Regional Office," said Assistant Secretary Sweeney. "They bring deep experience to these high-level management posts, and will provide valuable assistance to me as we increase flexibility in the BIA's operations and regulations to support tribal self-determination and economic self-sufficiency."

The Department of Interior is committed to providing consistent and focused leadership in all of Indian Affairs, as well as to actively collaborate with the Department's senior managers. Among the top priorities is to fill leadership positions with highly qualified managers who will provide continuity and expertise in trust management in accordance with its mission.

"I am extremely pleased that Johnna Blackhair and Patricia Mattingly have joined the BIA's central office and field leadership corps," said BIA Director Darryl LaCounte. "Their combined years of experience from working at the agency and regional office levels will prove invaluable as we work to make the BIA more responsive to Indian Country's needs and priorities."

Ms. Blackhair has 28 years of federal service starting in September 1991 with the BIA's Uintah and Ouray Agency in Fort Duchene, UT. From April 2010, she gained extensive experience in the management of land titles and records, real estate services, probate, agriculture, and cadastral surveys, coordinating with the Bureau of Land Management as the Regional Realty Officer in the Southwest Regional Office. She has held a number of BIA field leadership positions including Mescalero Agency Superintendent (2011-2012); Uintah and Ouray Agency Superintendent (2012-2013); Eastern Regional Office Deputy Regional Director (2013-2014); and Eastern Regional Office Regional Director (2014-2015). Prior to her recent appointment, Ms. Blackhair had served as BIA Trust Services's acting Associate Deputy Bureau Director since January 2018, and as acting Deputy Bureau Director since April 2018.

"I deeply appreciate the confidence placed in me to lead BIA Trust Services, whose mission is a basic component of the Federal trust responsibility to the tribes and allottees with trust lands and resources," Deputy Bureau Director for Trust Services Johnna Blackhair said. "I am very grateful to the Assistant Secretary and Director LaCounte for this new opportunity to serve Indian Country. I will do my utmost to see that we in OTS carry out our mission to the best of our ability."

The BIA Office of Trust Services is primarily located in Washington, D.C. and Albuquerque, N.M., and assists tribal governments and allottees in managing, protecting and developing their trust lands and natural resources, which total 56 million surface acres and 60 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. Trust Services programs aid landowners in the stewardship of their resources not only to protect their cultural, spiritual and traditional uses, but in optimizing those which tribal governments depend on through the revenues and jobs they generate.

Patricia Mattingly began her federal career with the Department in 2003 in Albuquerque, N.M., as an Attorney Advisor in the Solicitor's Office. She joined the BIA's Southwest Regional Office as Regional Legal Administrative Specialist, then later moved to the BIA's Western Regional Office in Phoenix, A.Z., as Associate Director of the Division of Probate and Estate Services. She eventually returned to the Southwest Regional Office as a Tribal Government Officer, and where she was later promoted to the post of Deputy Regional Director for Indian Services. Ms. Mattingly holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of New Mexico, and a Juris Doctorate from the UNM School of Law.

"I thank the Assistant Secretary and Director LaCounte for this opportunity to lead the Southwest Regional Office," Regional Director Patricia Mattingly said. "I am committed to improving the level of regional office responsiveness to the needs of the tribal nations we serve, while also supporting their self-determination and economic development goals."

The BIA Southwest Regional Office is located in Albuquerque, N.M., and oversees nine agencies serving the 25 federally recognized tribes in Colorado and New Mexico and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso, Texas.

As the oldest bureau in the U.S. Department of the Interior, established in 1824, the BIA is within the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs, along with the Bureau of Indian Education. The BIA provides services (directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts) to approximately 1.9 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. With just under 5,000 employees, the BIA carries out its core mission for 573 federally recognized American Indian tribes and Alaska Natives in the U.S. through four offices:

- Office of Indian Services: operates BIA's general assistance, disaster relief, Indian child welfare, tribal government, Indian Self-Determination, and reservation roads programs;
- Office of Justice Services: operates or funds law enforcement, tribal courts, and detention facilities on Federal Indian lands;
- Office of Trust Services: works directly with tribes and individual American Indians and Alaska Natives in the management of their trust lands, assets, and resources;and Office of Field Operations: oversees 12 regional offices and 83 agencies which carry out the BIA mission at the tribal level.

Visit BIA.gov for more information.

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Johna Blackhair
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Deputy Bureau Director,
Trust Services



Patricia Mattingly
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Regional Director,
Southwest Region