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For San Carlos Agency, this was a fire year that just wouldn't end. Fire activity not only required extensive operations and logistical coordination to respond to the wildfires, it also demanded a well-organized and highly functioning finance section to accurately track costs.

The high fire occurrence resulted in the establishment of an ad hoc BIA finance section capable of tracking and accounting for the costs attributed to all severity resources that were supporting San Carlos Agency. The end result was the documentation and tracking of 156 incidents within four e-ISuite databases. Combined, these databased tracked a total estimated cost of $4,710,309.50. (Yes, down to the penny!)

The finance team was able to support the fire resources by providing a presence to teach, explain, and correct any issues pertaining to incident business or fire finance. This presence familiarized and taught firefighters, old and new, about several incident business timekeeping issues, specifically about hazard pay policy established by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The finance team was able to ensure that proper documentation was created and maintained to justify excessive shifts and work/rest mitigation, in field promotions, property damage and loss, and the processing of Administratively Determined (AD) batch payments through the Casual Payment Center. In total, the finance team left the local agency with nine document boxes full of all the finance records for all 156 incidents that were tracked.

The small but mighty finance section was led by Amanda Boatright, Rocky Mountain Region Fire Business Lead with Regina Hoffmann, Northwest Region Fire Business Lead; Julie White, Pacific Region Natural Resources Admin Officer; Lena Almeter, Northwest Region Fire Budget Analyst; and Robin White, BIA Branch of Wildland Fire Management Administrative Officer. Their specialty and unique experience makes them experts at understanding the nuances of BIA's incident business requirements.

The work of the ad hoc finance section had a significant contribution to San Carlos Agency this fire season. Their work and success led to the discussion of developing BIA's own Type 3 finance section capable of supporting any BIA region/agency or our Tribal and interagency partners. In the future, the section anticipates being able to provide training opportunities that will improve fire finance capabilities throughout Indian Country.

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