Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov // Nedra Darling (AS-IA) 202-219-4152
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WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke praised today's announcement by the Department of Justice on the progress being made in coordinated federal, state, tribal and local efforts that are reducing the incidence of violent crime across the Nation.

"I am very happy to see that the Indian Country Federal Law Enforcement Coordination Group has been an integral part of this effort and is focusing on violent crime on Tribal reservations," Secretary Zinke said. "The Federal Government provides significant public safety resources to Indian Country, with numerous departments and agencies delivering and supporting law enforcement services.

"Law enforcement in Indian Country is especially complex, and it is heart-breaking that crimes against Native American women and girls occur at exponentially higher rates than non-Native populations. It's a subject that I have been especially passionate about since my time representing Montana in the U.S. House of Representatives. With many unique challenges that include sovereignty, jurisdiction, cross deputation, geographically disbursed areas, and cultural awareness among other items. I congratulate the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services, which has co-led the Indian Country Federal Law Enforcement Coordination Group with the Department of Justice Office of Tribal Justice. Under my leadership the Bureau and Department will remain committed to the health and safety of all of Indian Country."

The Indian Country Federal Law Enforcement Coordination Group, an assembly of sworn federal law enforcement officers and other stakeholders who have responsibilities in Indian Country, was created in response to suggestions by federal law enforcement officials who sought to enhance coordination and provide improved federal law enforcement services to Tribal communities.

"For the past two years, we have leveraged tribal, federal, state and local criminal justice partnerships to make a sustained effort to increase the number of reporting agencies using the FBI's Uniform Crime Report," said Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Michael S. Black. "This tool allows us to make more accurate comparisons of Indian Country crime to other non-Indian country communities."

The Group enhances communication and fosters the free exchange of ideas and information between sworn federal law enforcement officers, agents, and other stakeholders who are based in Washington, D.C. and have oversight and/or operational responsibilities in Indian Country. Through better coordination, the goal of this group is to provide improved federal law enforcement services and support to Indian Country, ultimately helping to make Tribal communities safer.

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