Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: TERRY W. VAN HORN / Email: terry.vanhorn@usdoj.gov / Phone: (701) 297-7400
For Immediate Release: October 1, 2018
Print PDF

FARGO – A number of concerns have recently been raised about public safety and criminal investigations on the Fort Berthold Reservation. In response to these concerns, Christopher Myers, the U.S. Attorney for the District of North Dakota, and Charles Addington, the Director of the Office of Justice Services at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, met in Fargo earlier this month to discuss law enforcement resources and jurisdictional issues on the Fort Berthold Reservation. As a result of this meeting, the BIA is taking steps to enhance investigative resources and will soon increase its staffing levels from one to two investigators.

Both the BIA and Department of Justice are committed to doing their part to improve public safety and conduct effective criminal investigations on the Fort Berthold Reservation. This includes helping to drive down the high rate of violence against women and children and assisting in the active and ongoing investigation into a suspicious death case. However, the BIA and DOJ also recognize the necessary and vital role that tribal law enforcement must play in this process. To that end, the BIA is in communication with tribal law enforcement about how to improve the effectiveness of investigations on the Fort Berthold Reservation. In addition, DOJ is working with the FBI and the Department of the Interior to ensure the prompt provision of investigative resources for serious crimes such as domestic and sexual violence against women and children prevalent on North Dakota reservations.

The Departments of Justice and Interior are working together to deliver training to improve the quality of investigations and coordination among law enforcement agencies and jurisdictions in Indian Country. To provide quality training techniques to law enforcement responsible for conducting criminal investigations in Indian Country, the BIA and FBI have teamed up and developed a nine-day Indian Country Criminal Investigator Training Program. The training program is highly interactive and filled with hands-on labs specific to conducting criminal investigations in Indian Country. In addition, the Department of Justice is identifying training resources that can be brought to the field to improve the capacity of tribal and federal law enforcement to address the situation.

####