Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – On May 15, 2013, at 9:30 a.m. Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn will participate in a roundtable discussion with tribal, state and other federal government representatives to discuss the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). The discussion will help lead to a greater understanding of ICWA's purpose and implementation. This discussion is part of the Great Plains ICWA summit: Bring Our Children Home and Keep Our Families Strong that will take place May 15-17, 2013, at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Rapid City, S.D.

"The Great Plains Indian Child Welfare Summit is a venue to continue to address the critical issues of the well-being and safety of American Indian and Alaska Native children and their families," Washburn said. "I look forward to sitting down with tribal leaders and our public and private partners to exchange ideas on how to better implement the Indian Child Welfare Act and protect Indian country's children."

The Summit's attendees will include: the Honorable James Abourezk, former U.S. Senator during the development of ICWA; United States Attorney for the District of North Dakota, Timothy Q. Purdon; and senior leadership from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of the Solicitor.

Other participants will include representatives of the U.S. Department of the Interior; U.S. Department of Justice; Casey Family Programs, The Annie E. Casey Foundation; tribal and state judges; Washington State Office of Indian Policy; and the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Tribes, Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families. Representatives from tribes in the States of South Dakota, Washington, Oklahoma and Minnesota will also participate. Also invited to speak are representatives from the National Indian Child Welfare Association and the Minneapolis American Indian Center in Minnesota which administers an internet-based Indian child welfare case management system known as "QUICWA."

The Great Plains Indian Child Welfare Summit is sponsored by the Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association in conjunction with officials and ICWA directors of the 16 federally recognized tribes in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Great Plains Region States of North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska. The three-day Summit will assist in the development of proactive strategies to foster collaboration among stakeholders, identify areas for communities to improve implementation of ICWA's intent to protect the best interests of Indian children, and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and families.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs BIA, which is headed by a director who is responsible for managing day-to-day operations through four offices – Indian Services, Justice Services, Trust Services and Field Operations. Through 12 regional offices and 85 agencies, the BIA administers or funds tribally-based infrastructure, law enforcement, social services (including child welfare), tribal governance, natural and energy resources and trust management programs for the nation's federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages.

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