Training Series Launched with more than 75 Tribal and Federal Participants

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WASHINGTON – The Justice and Interior Departments this week launched a new training seminar for tribal and federal law enforcement on investigating and prosecuting sexual assault cases on tribal lands. More than 75 participants from throughout the United States participated in the three day training course, which began on Monday, August 20, 2012. They included tribal and federal law enforcement officers, prosecutors and victim specialists from 23 tribal nations and 23 states. Topics included law enforcement response, children as victims and witnesses, forensic examinations with adult victims and developing a coordinated community response to sexual assault.

The course, held at the National Advocacy Center in Columbia, S.C., was taught by the Justice Department's National Indian Country Training Coordinator and other nationally recognized subject matter experts including Joanne Archambault; FBI Forensic Interviewer Stephanie Knapp; Jennifer Peirce-Week, Past President of the International Association of Forensic Nurses; and Dr. Barbara Knox, Medical Director of the University of Wisconsin Child Protection Program at the American Family Children's Hospital.

"It will take committed federal and tribal partnerships and a coordinated response to address the high rates of sexual violence in Indian Country today," said Leslie A. Hagen, National Indian Country Training Coordinator for the Justice Department's Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys. "This new training series will help build capacity for tribal and federal law enforcement first responders as well as the tribal and federal prosecutors who can help achieve justice for victims of sexual crimes, and who must also take into careful consideration the needs of victims in native communities."

"The training program we are launching jointly with the Department of Justice to address the high rates of sexual assault on tribal lands builds on our efforts to reduce violent crime in Indian Country," said Darren Cruzan, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services. "I want to thank our federal and tribal partners for working with us to develop this comprehensive training program. It is an important part of OJS's mission to improve public safety in tribal communities, and underscores our commitment to achieving justice for violent crime victims."

For more information on the national Indian Country training program, contact Leslie A. Hagen at Leslie.Hagen3@usdoj.gov.

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