Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Acting Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Donald E. "Del" Laverdure today announced that the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Justice Services (OJS) has issued a handbook on best practices for reducing crime in Indian Country. The publication, "Crime Reduction Best Practices Handbook: Making Indian Communities Safe 2012," was developed by the OJS based on the successful deployment of its strategy to meet the Department's goal of reducing violent crime on four reservations.

"Reducing violent crime in tribal communities is among Secretary Salazar's most important commitments to Indian Country, and Indian Affairs vigorously supports this effort," Laverdure said. "The BIA Office of Justice Services' 'Crime-Reduction Best Practices Handbook: Making Indian Communities Safe 2012' is a valuable new resource for tribal leaders, their police departments and their law enforcement partners, containing ideas and techniques they can use right away to fight crime and improve public safety in their communities."

Through his Safe Indian Communities initiative, Secretary Salazar in 2010 established as a DOI High Priority Performance Goal (HPPG) initiative the reduction of violent crime by at least five percent over 24 months on four reservations that were experiencing high rates of violent crime: the Rocky Boy's Reservation in Montana, the Mescalero Reservation in New Mexico, the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, and the Standing Rock Reservation in North and South Dakota. The effort resulted in a 35 percent decrease in violent crime across the four sites.

The performance goal was achieved by implementing a comprehensive strategy involving community policing, tactical deployment and critical interagency and intergovernmental partnerships. The handbook is a compendium of best practices from that strategy intended to guide law enforcement entities operating throughout Indian Country. It includes strategies that worked and those that didn't, and the information it offers ranges from general approaches to details necessary to implement specific crime-reduction plans.

In addition to information about lessons learned and remaining challenges to reducing crime, the handbook also includes demographic profiles of the four targeted reservations; a glossary of acronyms; findings from the HPPG initiative on various issues affecting crime incidence; and an appendix with useful guides, templates, crime statistics, and a listing of OJS contacts.

The OJS's approach to crime-reduction combines elements of short-term enforcement actions with longer term prevention, and considers having strong working relationships with tribes, community service providers, other law enforcement entities, and the at-large community as instrumental to building an ongoing service capacity in Indian Country that can address and correct conditions that contribute to crime.

The BIA-OJS Crime-Reduction Best Practices Handbook is posted on the Office of Justice Services webpage at www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/BIA/OJS/index.htm.

The BIA Office of Justice Services' mission is to enhance public safety and protect property in Indian

Country by funding or providing law enforcement, corrections and tribal court services to the nation's federally recognized tribes. It also coordinates emergency preparedness support on federal Indian lands by working cooperatively with other federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies throughout Indian Country. It also operates the Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M., which provides training and professional development to BIA and tribal law enforcement personnel.

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