Training Fulfills Key Requirement of Tribal Law and Order Act, Makes Tribal Police Eligible to Enforce Federal Laws

Media Contact: DOJ (202) 514-2007 DOI (202) 219-4150 TTY (866) 544-5309
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CATOOSA, Okla. – The Justice and Interior Departments today completed the first in a series of national level training courses, "Criminal Jurisdiction in Indian Country" (CJIC) to strengthen the ability of tribal and local law enforcement to participate in the investigation and enforcement of federal crimes in Indian country, fulfilling a key training requirement under the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (TLOA).

Thirty-five class participants representing seven tribes from the surrounding region and one county sheriff's office took part in the three-day CJIC training, which began on Monday. Topics included training in federal Indian law criminal jurisdiction, how to best serve sexual assault and domestic violence victims, as well as the investigation and enforcement of drug and firearm offenses.

The course, taught by the Justice Department's National Indian Country Training Coordinator with Assistant U.S. Attorneys, fulfills one of the requirements for participating officers to receive a Special Law Enforcement Commission (SLEC) from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"The special law enforcement commission gives tribal police the ability to investigate and make arrests in federal cases," said Leslie A. Hagen, National Indian Country Training Coordinator for the Justice Department's Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys. "This authority, and the protections that go along with it, helps build the capacity of tribal law enforcement to keep their communities safe and strengthens federal and tribal partnerships for public safety."

"TLOA paves the road for more tribal and federal collaboration to address federal crimes in Indian Country," said Darren Cruzan, Deputy Director of the BIA's Office of Justice Services. "Pivotal trainings like the SLEC demonstrate this administration's commitment to strengthening the capabilities and partnerships of tribal and local law enforcement to fight crime across jurisdictional lines."

An SLEC allows those officers to enforce federal criminal statutes and federal hunting and fishing regulations in Indian Country. With the passage of the TLOA, primary responsibility for delivery of CJIC training shifted to the Department of Justice. Over the last several years, U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country have begun to host regionally-based CJIC training in addition to the sessions hosted by BIA at its training academy. While the SLEC is still issued by BIA, Section 213 of TLOA states that tribal liaison duties shall include providing technical assistance and training regarding evidence gathering techniques and strategies to address victim and witness protection and conducting training sessions and seminars to certify special law enforcement commissions to tribal justice officials and other individuals and entities responsible for responding to Indian country crimes.

The BIA and Justice Department officials have been working together over the past year to create a new

U.S. Attorney Office-led CJIC training curriculum. The National Indian Country Training Coordinator together with tribal liaisons and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kerry Jacobson of the District of Wyoming, John Tuchi of the District of Arizona, Glynette Carson-McNabb of the District of New Mexico, and Sarah Collins, of the District of South Dakota, developed the CJIC curriculum and are also assisting with the training sessions.

Participants in this week's training include: The Cherokee Nation Marshal Service, Quapaw Tribal Marshal Service, Comanche Nation Police Department, Wyandotte Nation Police Department, Eastern Shawnee Police Department, the Osage Nation Police Department, the Chickasaw Lighthorse Police Department, and the Delaware County Sheriff's Office. In addition to this week's training hosted by the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, future training is scheduled for April 4-6 at the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians in California. For more information on the national CJIC training program, contact Mark Decoteau, Deputy Chief of Training at the Indian Police Academy, Mark.Decoteau@bia.gov

This week's training was also completed with the support and/or participation of the U.S. Attorney's Offices in the Eastern, Western and Northern Districts of Oklahoma.

"We're proud to host this first national training mandated by the Tribal Law and Order Act," said Thomas Scott Woodward, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Oklahoma. "It is another excellent example of how the Departments of Justice and Interior are working more closely than ever with each other and with tribal governments to close jurisdictional gaps and strengthen the law enforcement partnerships that make communities safer."

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