Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Washington – Jerry Gidner, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), announced today the Second National Conference on Child Protection & Child Welfare in Indian Country will be held August 19-22, 2008, in Billings, Mont. The Conference is sponsored by the BIA and will be held in conjunction with the Interdepartmental Tribal Justice, Safety and Wellness Session #7 hosted by the Department of Justice in partnership with the Departments of the Interior, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and the Small Business Administration, along with the Indian Health Services and Substance Abuse and Mental Heath Services Administration Behavioral Health Conference 2008.

"This is the first year that all these agencies, working together on very important issues in Indian Country, have joined to sponsor this important conference," said Gidner, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs. "We are anticipating approximately 1,000 participants from tribal, urban, state and federal employees, educators, law enforcement, tribal court personnel, social service providers, counselors, psychologists, and social workers."

The opening ceremony will be held at 8:00 a.m. on August 20, 2008, at the Holiday Grand Hotel, Convention Center. The week long conference is full of workshops featuring presentations on best practices, advocacy for children and lectures from the most preeminent professionals in Indian Country. Some of the workshops and lectures will be: Developing a Culturally Based Tribal Welfare System; Suicide Prevention in Indian Country; Developing Child Advocacy Centers; Risk Assessment of Children in Meth Homes; The Impact of Trauma on American Indian Children and Wisconsin Tribal State Collaboration on Modifying State Laws to Address the Indian Child Welfare Act. The Conference will culminate on Friday with the making of a video: "Pathways to Hope: Healing Child Sexual Abuse," that will be followed by a panel discussion featuring Survivors of Sexual Abuse.

A couple of cultural events will be held: Thursday, August 21, 2008, at 12:00 p.m. "The Pink Shawl Event," in honor of Breast Cancer Survivors, that evening at 6:00 p.m. "Our Way of Life," music and dancing of the Apsaalooke Nation.

For more information, or if your organization is interested in sponsoring any of the events, please contact Jade Snell or Lisa Geda at the In-Care Network, 406-259-9616, or by e-mail jsnell@180com.net: or lgeda@180.com.net. Additional information and registration material can be downloaded at www.incarenetwork.com for the BIA conference. For the IHS/SAMSHA conference, the website is: www.bhconference.com, and for the OJP/DOJ conference, www.circlesolutions.com.