Event to be Held May 1-3 on White Earth Reservation in Minnesota

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WASHINGTON – Interior Associate Deputy Secretary James E. Cason today announced that the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) will sponsor the conference "Accessing Capital: Lending Opportunities in Indian Country" to be held May 1-3, 2006, on the White Earth Band of Chippewa Indians reservation in Minnesota. The conference will take place at the tribe's Shooting Star Casino Hotel and Event Center in Mahnomen, Minn.

"This conference is the first of its kind in the Midwest," said Cason. "It will educate regional lenders about how IEED's Capital Investment Program can help them finance Native American businesses and create new jobs in Indian country."

Hosted by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and the American Indian Economic Development Fund of St. Paul, Minn., the conference will feature nationally renowned financial experts and tribal entrepreneurs who will explore the opportunities that IEED's Capital Investment Program, also known as the Loan Guaranty and Insurance Program, provides to tribal businesses and entrepreneurs in obtaining credit and investment capital. The conference will be attended by tribal business leaders, lending institutions and investment brokers in the region.

The keynote speaker for the event will be Gerald P. Carmen, former ambassador to the U.N. Mission in Geneva and vice chairman of the Trade and Development Board. Ambassador Carmen was formerly the president and chief executive officer of the Federal Asset Disposition Association (the predecessor to the Resolution Trust Corporation) and has been a board member of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston. From 1981 through 1984, he served as head of the General Services Administration.

Other conference speakers include Pam Nesius, Senior Vice President of Commercial Lending, Native American Bank of Denver; Lance Morgan, President and CEO, Ho-Chunk Corporation, Winnebago, Neb.; Jim Ladner, President, Laducer & Associates, Mandan, N.D.; Patty Pourier, CEO, Muddy Creek Oil & Gas, Inc., Pine Ridge, S.D.; Dick Levine, Executive Vice President, Palm Desert National Bank, Palm Springs, Calif.; Sue Woodrow, Managing Project Director, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, Helena, Mont., branch; Stephanie Caputo, Community Development Expert, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency; and Bill Largent, National Director, Office Native American Programs, Small Business Administration (SBA).

The conference also will feature presentations by the American Indian Economic Development Fund; Department of Agriculture; Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, Department of the Treasury; SBA; and Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development was established to provide high-level support

for the Department’s goal of serving communities by providing access to energy resources and by stimulating job creation and economic development. The Office assists economic development on Indian lands by identifying economic opportunities, assisting development of workforce capacity, providing low cost loans for business development and facilitating partnerships between tribes and the Federal or private sector. The Office also supports the President’s National Energy Policy by fostering development of domestic energy resources to reduce this country’s dependence on foreign energy sources.

For additional conference information, contact Mike Luger, Economic Development Specialist, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, U.S. Department of the Interior, at (202) 219-0005.

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