Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Aurene M. Martin today announced that the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI), a Bureau of Indian Affairs-operated institution of higher learning in Albuquerque, N.M., will receive $531,000 to aid in the development of American Indian small business under an agreement with the Small Business Administration (SBA). SIPI is a two-year institution that provides general education, business, science and technical instruction at the associate degree and certificate levels for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

“Entrepreneurship is a cornerstone of tribal economic self-determination,” Martin said. “With this agreement, SIPI will play an important role in nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit that is so vital to building strong reservation economies.”

Under the agreement, SIPI will develop and implement a small business development training program targeting American Indian entrepreneurs located in the nation’s most disadvantaged tribal areas. It will tailor existing SBA training and materials for use in Indian Country and develop new curricula on starting and growing a small business.

In addition, SIPI will hold training sessions on reservations around the country and increase outreach to remote sectors where Indian people live and work. Training curricula will be available online, as well as through compact disk and correspondence courses, with topics such as starting and managing a small business, writing a business plan, identifying start-up costs, marketing, procurement, wages and benefits, tax and accounting basics and tribal business law.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department’s trust responsibilities to individual and tribal trust beneficiaries, as well as promoting the self-determination and economic well-being of the nation’s 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which is responsible for providing education and social services to approximately 1.4 million individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the federally recognized tribes.