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Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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(WASHINGTON)- Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton today praised President Bush's intention to nominate David Anderson to serve as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. The announcement is subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate, once the official nomination is made by the President.

"David Anderson's innovative leadership and dedication to constant improvement will serve him well as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs," Norton said. "His inspiring vision, proven management expertise and compassion for Indian issues will help us in our efforts to improve the quality of services we provide to Indian Country."

Anderson, a member of the Chippewa and Choctaw tribes and an enrolled member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Lake Superior Band of Ojibwa, is a nationally-recognized business entrepreneur, expert in revitalizing failing companies, and founder and chairman of Famous Dave's of America, Inc. - one of the nation's fastest growing chains of family restaurants.

Anderson also is known for his dedication to the American Indian community, having donated more than $6 million to Indian advancement programs. In 1999 the Anderson Family established the Youth Skills Foundation with a $1.4 million gift to help disadvantaged American Indian children. Proceeds from Anderson's award-winning BBQ cookbook are donated to the foundation. In 2001, Anderson also founded the Life Skills Center for Leadership, offering life-changing programs for at-risk Indian youth and young adults. .

Television personality Oprah Winfrey was so impressed that her Angel Network awarded a $25,000 grant to the LifeSkills Center in 2002.

During his business career, Anderson founded three publicly traded companies on Wall Street, created more than 18,000 new jobs, and reorganized a number of failing businesses in Indian Country, enabling them to become financially successful operations.

In 1982, Anderson, as chief executive officer for the Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa tribal enterprises, built a team that successfully turned reservation businesses into profitable and stable operations. Under his leadership, gross revenues increased from $3.9 million to $8 million. This achievement was recognized by President Reagan's Commission on Indian Reservation Economics.

Anderson has been appointed to numerous state and national commissions, including the American Indian Education Foundation (2003); Presidential Advisory Council for Tribal Colleges and Universities (2001); National Task Force on Reservation Gambling (1983); Council on Minority Business

Development for the State of Wisconsin (1983); Wisconsin Council on Tourism (1983) and Harvard University's Native American Program.

Having weathered the changing fortunes of an entrepreneurial career, Anderson also uses his life experiences as a public speaker to help others. Sharing his optimism and inspiration with youth groups and community organizations, he has said, "No matter how tough things may seem today, if you hold fast to your dreams and work hard, tomorrow's rewards will always come."

His numerous honors include being named a Bush Leadership Fellow (1985); recognized as Minnesota and Dakota's Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst and Young, NASDAQ, and USA Today; named Restaurateur of the Year by Minneapolis-St. Paul Magazine (1998); and chosen an Olympic Torch Carrier of the 2002 Winter Olympics by his community.

Anderson received a master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1986. He lives in Edina, Minnesota, with his wife.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of the 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, an agency with 10,500 employees nationwide, which is responsible for providing services to approximately 1 A million individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the federally recognized tribes.

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