Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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(Washington, DC)--The U.S. Department of the Interiors Office of Indian Affairs headed by Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb will be hosting a National Indian Energy Summit "Indian Energy Resources, Helping to Fuel America's Needs" at the Adams Mark Hotel in Denver, Colorado on December 6 and 7, 2001. The intent of the Summit is provide a forum for tribes, federal agencies, and private companies to communicate energy initiatives currently unfolding as well as opportunities available in the future for tribes and Individual Indian mineral owners to participate in providing a solution to the vast energy needs of the United States of America.

In May 2001, the National Energy Policy Development Group submitted their report, titled National Energy Policy, and one of the President's priorities is to provide reliable, affordable environmentally sound energy sources. Part of the process is to assess the domestic energy resource potential for fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal, and coal bed methane) as well as renewable resources such as hydro, wind, solar, and geothermal power resources and facilitate new or increased production. Concurrent with development of energy resources is providing the infrastructure to process and carry energy to the end user as well. These infrastructures include such things as oil and gas refineries, pipelines, electrical power generation facilities, and electrical power transmission grids. This new focus on the nation's energy needs will provide new and unique opportunities for Indian tribes and Individual Indian mineral owners to participate in this effort.

At the present, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) manages approximately 56 million acres of land held in trust for individual Indians and tribes in the lower 48 states and Alaska. There are 1.81 million acres actively leased of, oil, gas, and coal in various phases of exploration and development. These resources generated $160 million in royalty revenue paid to individual Indian mineral owners and tribes in1999 alone. It is estimated that an additional 15 million acres of underdeveloped energy resources exist on individual Indian mineral owners and tribal lands.

Production of oil, gas and coal from Indian lands has made significant contributions to national supplies. The contribution from Indian lands to national onshore production from 1937 through 1997 was 13.77% for oil, 10.73% for gas and 13.36% for coal. From 1980 through 1999, the contribution of Indian production was 11.03% for oil, 10.80% for gas and 10.70% for coal. It is apparent that production of energy minerals from Indian lands remains significant at greater than 10% of total federal onshore production (MMS Minerals Revenue Reports). Production from Indian lands in 2000 was 9.3 million barrels of oil, 299 billion cubic feet of gas and 21.4 million short tons of coal.

The keynote Address will be delivered by Gale A. Norton, Secretary of the Interior. Andrew Lundquist, Chief of Staff to the Vice President of the United States will provide an Overview of the Energy Policy for the United States. Tribes that are presently involved with energy production will speak about their experiences. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Spring and Yakima Nation will speak about Tribes Hydro-power Project on or near Indian Lands. The Southern Ute Tribe will speak about the Southern Ute Tribe Project a successful Partnership. The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman, Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. The Honorable Ben Night Horse Campbell, Vice Chairman, Senate Committee and The Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural

Resources have been invited to the Summit. Panel discussions will include “What Can the Department of the Interior Do to Assist in Tribal Resource Development.” The panel will include representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Mineral Management Service, Bureau of Land Management, Office of Surface Mining, and Bureau of Reclamation. During the Second day, an open forum for tribal leaders: The Future of Energy Development in Indian Country will be held. A. David Lester, Director of the Council of Energy Resources Tribes will facilitate the panel.

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