Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Interior Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Neal A. McCaleb today announced the appointment of Wayne R. Smith, 52, as the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. Mr. Smith is of American Indian heritage, Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux – his mother was born and lived on the Tribe's reservation in Fort Thompson, S.D., until her graduation from high school. "I welcome Wayne to my team," McCaleb said. "His extensive Indian gaming, administrative, legal and policy experience will be invaluable as we work to shape Indian Affairs in the 21st century. He will be my Chief of Staff and responsible for the operation of the office, as well as be in charge of gaming, acknowledgment and land-into-trust." "I look forward to this new challenge," said Smith. "I want to thank the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary for their support and confidence as I tackle this exciting opportunity. I am especially pleased and honored to be charged with all gaming-related matters." Prior to his appointment, Smith served as Chief Counsel to the California Assembly Republican Caucus. From 1991 to 1999, Smith was the Chief of Staff for the California Attorney General, where he supervised the day-to-day operations of the California Department of Justice with over 5,000 employees, including over 1,000 lawyers and 600 police officers, and a $600 million dollar budget. As the Deputy Assistant Secretary, Smith is a political appointee and the second in command of the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. The Assistant Secretary oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a 176-year-old federal agency with approximately 10,000 employees nationwide that provides services to, carries out its federal trust responsibilities for, and promotes the self-determination of the 558 federally recognized tribal governments and approximately 1.4 million American Indians and Alaska Natives. Under his purview are a 185-school system, one of only two federally administered school systems in the country; 29 tribally controlled colleges; law enforcement and detention programs and facilities; social service, firefighting, tribal economic development and Indian child welfare programs; trust resource management programs, including management of tribal and individual Indian trust assets; and the federal acknowledgement process.