Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: September 14, 2001
Print PDF

(WASHINGTON) – Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Neal A. McCaleb today praised Indian Country's outstanding generosity as our nation rebounds from this week's tragic terrorist attack.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the friends and families of innocent people lost or injured by this act of enormous horror," McCaleb said. "An attack on America is an attack on Indian Country. I am gratified, but hardly surprised, that so many tribes have quickly offered support to the victims and their loved ones.

" Many tribes have donated time, personnel and monetary help to the recovery effort. For example, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation in Mayetta, Kan., the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Indians, both of California, donated funds to the rescue endeavor.

Also, the Mashantucket Pequots of Conn. turned two high-speed ferries into recovery vessels that rescued panicked people who leaped from a Manhattan pier to escape incoming rubble and ferried firefighters, police officers and doctors from Long Island to Manhattan's tragic scene. In another example, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of La. organized a community-wide blood drive.

Also, when the attacks took place, the Bureau of Indian Affairs immediately reassigned 25 criminal investigators and chiefs of police who were attending training classes at the Marine Corps base in Quantico, Va. The officers are providing security assistance at the Interior Department headquarters and federal locations outside the city. They will continue to provide essential security support for Interior employees and the public for the foreseeable future.

"I am deeply proud of all of our employees who conducted themselves in a calm and professional manner under extremely stressful circumstances, and I am grateful for their courage and dedication to duty in the face of danger," McCaleb said.

The BIA's central office in Washington, D.C., reopened for business Wednesday after being temporarily evacuated. The BIA, an agency with almost 10,000 employees nationwide, 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.

-BIA-