Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Thanks to a newly developed process that streamlines the planning, design, and construction of Indian schools, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) will be able to complete new schools in half the time or less. This means that the current seven to eight years that it has taken to build or renovate a school 'will now require only three years or less.

"We are extremely pleased to announce this major benefit to tribes and Indian students," said Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Ada E. Deer. "The Clinton Administration is committed to improving Indian education programs and this fast-track delivery of new Indian schools is a major step toward this goal. We now call on Congress to fulfill its responsibilities by funding the more than $600- million in unmet Indian school construction and repair needs. With a rapidly rising enrollment of Indian students, we have a critical responsibility to ensure that Indian students have decent learning environments to help them succeed in the 21st Century."

Approximately four new school construction pilot projects will be selected in October by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Tribes and schools boards will then be able to decide if they want their proposed schools to be a part of the new expedited program. These pilot school projects will be selected from the 14 currently funded proposed school construction projects. As a part of the Clinton Administration's Reinventing Government program, the new school planning, design, and construction process was developed by a Reinvention Laboratory Team composed of BIA and Department of the Interior employees.

Members of a recently appointed team to implement the new process are:

- Anthony E. Howard, Contracting and Grants Administration, BIA
- Dr. Kenneth Ross, Office of Indian Education Programs, BIA
- Norman Suazo, Facilities Management and Construction Center, BIA
- Stanley Thurber, Office of the Secretary, DOI
- Nolando Neswood, Employees Union (NFFE)·Representative

Copies of a report describing the new process have been distributed to the leaders of tribes that have BIA-funded schools, school principals, and BIA line officers. For further information and report copies, contact Norman Suazo, Division of Program Planning and Implementation, BIA/Facilities Management & Construction Center, P.O. Box 1248, Albuquerque, N.M. 87103.