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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today announced the appointment of Philip N. Hogen, former U.S. Attorney in South Dakota, as Director of the Department's new Office of American Indian Trust.

"I am pleased that Phil Hogen has agreed to fill this important post that was created to expand the oversight of the trust responsibility this Department has for American Indians and Alaska Natives," Lujan said. "He brings a wealth of experience in protecting the rights of people in his previous jobs and I feel certain he will do the same in this new position."

Hogen, an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, will be the first person to head the post announced last year by President Bush in his American Indian Policy statement. The President said: "An Office of American Indian Trust will be established in the Department of the Interior and given the responsibility of overseeing the trust responsibility of the Department and of insuring that no Departmental action will be taken that will adversely affect or destroy those physical assets that the Federal Government holds in trust for the (Indian) tribes."

The new appointee has served as U.S. Attorney for the District of South Dakota since 1981. He was Jackson County States Attorney in Kadoka, S.D., from 1975 to 1981. He also worked on the staff of former U.S. Representative James Abdnor. Previous to that he was in private law practice. Hogen, 47, is a graduate of Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D., and holds a juris doctorate from the University of South Dakota School of Law. He is married to the former Marty Teupel of Lead, S.D. They have two children.