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Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Eddie F. Brown will keynote the third in a series of regional economic development conferences with Indian tribal leaders May 14-15 in Oklahoma City. The meeting is being held in conjunction with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce's third annual Indian economic development conference on May 14.

The conference will include tribal representatives from Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas. The purpose of the meeting will be to highlight successful Indian economic development efforts and, through consultation with tribal chairmen, define the role for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the development of Indian community economies.

The conference also will present an overview of the roles of federal, state and tribal governments in economic development and will offer information to tribal leaders on policy options for economic development. "We are pleased that Governor Henry Bellman has asked us and Indian tribal leaders of Oklahoma to participate in their annual conference and work together to attempt to find ways of creating more economic development on Indian lands," Brown said. "The diversity of economic development projects among tribes suggests that there is no single magical formula that will solve all the problems of unemployment and poverty on Indian lands," he added. "The key is to develop a partnership between tribes and the Bureau for both economic development issues and the Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today announced the signing of a five-party agreement for the management of Lake Roosevelt.

The 150 mile long lake was created by Grand Coulee Dam and has become a major recreational and irrigation water resource in eastern Washington State. The five signatories, all of whom manage land along the lake or are involved in operation of the dam and irrigation works, are: the Spokane and Colville Indian Tribes, and the Interior Department’s National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Reclamation

Attending the Agreement ceremony were Jude Stensgar, Chairman for the Colville Business Council; Joe Flett, Chairman for the Spokane Tribe; John Sayre, Interior Assistant Secretary - Water and Science; Dr. Eddie Brown, Interior Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs; and Dennis Underwood, Commissioner of Reclamation.

"The Lake Roosevelt Cooperative Management Agreement continues the Department's policy of working to resolve differences and facilitating cooperation in the management of our public resources," Lujan said. "The Interior Department will continue to take a course of negotiation rather than litigation in resolving Indian water related issues."

The agreement allows the five parties to coordinate the management of Lake Roosevelt and to plan and develop facilities and activities on the lake and its freeboard lands. In addition, the agreement provides for involving and receiving comments from interested state, local and county governmental entities and private individuals and organizations.

Issues to be addressed by the five parties in subsequent months for coordinating the management of Lake Roosevelt's resources will include cross deputizing of tribal, state, county and Federal law enforcement officers and providing consistent rules and regulations for the public visitors.