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Interior Under Secretary Frank Bracken will open the first in a series of regional conferences with Indian tribal leaders designed to increase economic development on Indian reservations. The first conference, scheduled March 1-2 in Scottsdale, Arizona, will include tribal representatives from Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada and Colorado and business and industry leaders from the private sector. Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Eddie F. Brown said the purpose of the meetings would be to highlight successful Indian economic development efforts and, through consultation with tribal chairmen, to define the role for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the development of Indian community economies. The conference will also present an overview of the roles of Federal and tribal governments in economic development and will offer information to tribal leaders on policy options for economic development.

"We are delighted that Under Secretary Bracken will keynote this conference," Brown said. "He has an important role in Indian Affairs within the Department, and has responsibility for seeing that other agencies within Interior are supportive of our programs and our goals." Brown said he has been impressed by the variety of approaches that tribes have used to develop their economies. "This diversity among tribes suggests that there is no single magical formula that will solve all the problems of unemployment and poverty on Indian lands," Brown said. "The key is to develop a partnership between tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs for both economic development issues and the approaches to resolve them."

The first regional conference will be held at the Safari Resort Hotel, 4611 Scottsdale Road in Scottsdale. Under Secretary Bracken will give the opening address at 9:30 a.m., March 1. The next economic development conference is tentatively scheduled for April 15-16, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.