Media Contact: Carl Shaw (202) 343-4576
For Immediate Release: March 27, 1986
Print PDF

Ross Swimmer, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Department of Interior, announced today a realignment of his office and the headquarters structure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

A Secretarial Order signed March 18, creates four deputies for Swimmer -- each with specific areas of responsibility in (1) Tribal Services; (2) Education; (3) Trust and Economic Development; and (4) Operations. The order establishes a direct chain of command from the new deputies to the Assistant Secretary by abolishing two former deputy positions.

Swimmer said the changes were made to strengthen the headquarters management of the Bureau by giving the program directors immediate access to the Assistant Secretary and giving new emphasis to their roles in the development of critical policy guidance." He added that the BIA's top field officers, the 12 area directors, would report directly to the Assistant Secretary.

Swimmer's new deputies and their areas of responsibility are:

-- Hazel Elbert. Tribal Services, all functions, programs, and activities assigned to the Office of Indian Services except those assigned to the Division of Financial Assistance (BIA's loan and business development programs) which is transferred to the new office of Trust and Economic Development.

-- Henrietta Whiteman. Education, all functions, programs, and activities assigned to the Office of Indian Education Programs.

-- Frank Ryan. Trust and Economic Development, all functions, programs, and activities assigned to the Office of Trust Responsibilities and those of the Division of Financial Assistance assigned to the Office of Indian Services.

-- Ronald L. Esquerra, Operations, acting principal Deputy in the management of activities, responsibilities, and functions which extend across each directorate and is responsible for all functions, programs, and activities assigned to the Offices of Administration. Data Systems, and facilities Management. He has been serving as the acting deputy assistant secretary.

The appointments of Elbert, Whiteman, and Ryan as program directors for the Bureau were announced in January by Swimmer, who took office in December, 1985. Swimmer said the Bureau's offices of Public Affairs (public information), Congressional and Legislative Affairs. and Equal Opportunity would report directly to him.