Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Patricia S. Keyes, a regional representative for the Department of Transportation since 1981, has been appointed as field operations officer by Interior Assistant Secretary Ross Swimmer to serve on his staff as a coordinator and liaison with several of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) 12 area offices. She will also be responsible for relations with public and governmental organizations within those areas.

"I am pleased to have a person with Keyes' abilities and background join my staff," Swimmer said. "She will be an important link between the tribes, the field offices and the central office of BIA." Swimmer became acquainted with Keyes during his work as co-chairman of the President's Commission on Indian Reservation Economies in 1984. She served as a Department of Transportation liaison to the Commission and provided information on road building on reservations and potential job markets that could be created.

Swimmer said that during his long tenure with the Cherokee Tribe in Oklahoma he sensed an inability to get tribal projects from the agency office to the area office and on to the central office of BIA. "I see Keyes as being that link or liaison that can work with tribes and field offices to see that tribal projects and priorities are developed and communicated to the correct offices, at both the area level and in the central office.

"I believe that with Keyes' past experience in working as a liaison person, she can effectively be the link that can make our system work better for all concerned," he added.

Keyes, a native of Ohio, represented the Secretary of Transportation in federal regions VII and VIII, a total of ten states in the central plains and Rocky Mountains with headquarters in Kansas City. She functioned as a liaison with other federal agencies, state and local governments, the private sector and individual citizens.

She also was chairman of the Federal Regional Council in Kansas City 1981-83. Prior to her work with the Transportation Department, Keyes worked for six years with the Republican National Committee in Missouri. Swimmer said that in the near future he will appoint a second field operations officer to work with those tribes not covered within Keyes' jurisdictional area.