Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Commissioner of Indian Affairs William E. Hallett today announced the appointment of Marilyn Youngbird as his personal representative for the Southwest Region, which includes the Albuquerque, Phoenix, and Navajo Area Offices.

Hallett said that "filling these key regional representative positions with very able, knowledgeable people like Youngbird will improve tribal access to my office and promote effective and efficient delivery of resources and services to the Indian people."

Youngbird, an enrolled member of the ·Three Affiliated Tribes of North Dakota, attended the State School of Science in Wahpeton, North Dakota, and Colorado College in Colorado Springs. She worked in a number of Bureau of Indian Affairs offices from 1962 until 1975, including the office of Water Rights Protection, the office of Forestry, and the office of Indian Services, where she trained tribes and Indian organizations to use the Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

During the past four years, Youngbird was the Executive Director of the Commission on Indian Affairs for the State of Colorado, where she served as a personal representative to Governor Richard Lamm on Indian affairs. She also served on five Colorado State Advisory Boards.

Hallett recently established four regional representative staff positions, serving the South, the Southwest, the Midwest, and the Northwest, to improve BIA follow-up to tribal requests.

Each representative has two primary responsibilities, Hallett said.

First, when a tribe voices concern, the representative determines the central issues and presents several options for meeting the tribe's need.

Second, the representative prepares an action plan to implement the option chosen.

The regional representative is a primary point of contact between the Commissioner and the tribes of th4 Region. Representatives are also responsible for maintaining communication and relations with the tribe.