



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced today the creation of a pilot training program for Indian policemen. Training will take place at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Roswell Employment Training Center, operated by the Thiokol Chemical Corp., at Roswell, N.M.

"This program will improve the basic skills of policemen serving Indian areas and thereby increase protection given Indian citizens. It also will help improve efficiency in the wide range of public service activities traditionally performed by police officers," Hickel said.

The first class of 40 will begin the nine-week training program March 2, he said. Trainees will be men with at least six months experience as tribal or Bureau of Indian Affairs policemen who have potential for development as career officers. Thiokol, which has corporate offices in Bristol, Pa., will conduct the program under a \$40,000 Bureau of Indian Affairs contract.

"Indian communities deserve and need basic protection under our laws," Hickel said, "and well trained policemen are essential to that job. Further, the policeman is the most visible symbol of government at the local level. How well he performs his job determines in many respects how much trust and confidence a citizen has in his government.

Hickel noted that Thiokol has gained valuable experience in Indian adult education in the operation of the Employment Training Center at Roswell and "this combination of private and Government initiative is an efficient and effective way to meet these pressing needs."

At present there are 550 members of the Indian Police Service, which consists of Bureau and tribal enforcement officers serving 280,000 Indian people on 83 reservations. On some reservations law enforcement is a state responsibility.

"The scattered populations and rugged terrain on many reservations make it imperative that we have the best trained men using the most modern equipment and techniques, if we are to get the job done properly," Hickel said.

Additional classes may be scheduled after a review of the results of the first session, he said. The new program is the first of its kind to be tried on a nationwide basis by BIA.
