



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson said today that many of the recommendations made in a recently released report on the troubled conditions on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation were being implemented.

The report was prepared by a special commission appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. It dealt with problems in law enforcement and judicial services, tribal government, trust management functions, and provision of services to outlying areas of the reservation.

Thompson said that he would be meeting with tribal officials, BIA area and agency staffs and other involved governmental agencies to plan future actions on the reservation. Steps already taken, Thompson said, included:

The addition of 26 new positions to the law enforcement staff;

Appointment of a new special officer in charge of police operations;

Acquisition of needed new police vehicles and uniforms;

Upgrading of law enforcement positions and initiation of concentrated training programs;

Provision of \$65,000 to assist the tribal court to catch up on a backlog of cases;

Administration Communication with the tribe and the Law Enforcement Assistance concerning the construction of a new detention and court facilities; Provision of \$20,000 through the Bureau's Office of Trust Responsibilities to initiate a new land records system for the reservation; Provision of \$10,000 to the tribe to plan improved communications on the reservation, and Scheduling of more than 75 miles of paved road construction for the present fiscal year. Thompson said that he considered the choice of a new Superintendent for Pine Ridge, the second largest reservation in the country, of major importance.

He added that he supports the Commission recommendation that a new position of Deputy Superintendent be established at the Pine Ridge Agency. "The Deputy might assume major responsibility for the internal administration of programs and thus free the Superintendent to work more closely with the tribal council and people throughout the reservation."

Thompson said that a greater proportion of the law enforcement staff would be deployed in the outlying areas and that efforts would be made to provide detention and court facilities at Kyle to serve some of these areas.

The reservation has been beset with extraordinary problems, including frequent eruptions of violence, since the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973. Most recently two FBI agents and one Indian were shot to death in late June.
