Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that Indian Affairs offices and bureaus have hired nearly 600 American Indian and Alaska Native veterans in Fiscal Year 2015, exceeding the goal set last year to increase the number of Native American veterans employed by these agencies from nine percent of the workforce to 12.5 percent.

"Our intent to build a 21st century Indian Affairs workforce depends upon attracting and retaining experienced and motivated personnel, and we know that America's veterans are among the most capable, dedicated and well-trained individuals we need," Washburn said. "I am very proud that we have not only met, but exceeded our goal of hiring American Indian and Alaska Native vets. We will continue to provide those veterans with opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in our mission of serving Indian Country."

On June 14, 2014, Washburn announced the launch of a new initiative to hire more American Indian and Alaska Native veterans throughout Indian Affairs, which includes the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (OAS-IA), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The initiative targets veterans prior to their discharge from the U.S. Armed Forces and actively seeks members of the National Guard and reserves who are looking for careers that serve Indian Country.

Indian Affairs bureaus, regional offices and agencies provide a wide range of direct services to 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and thousands of Indian trust beneficiaries. Almost all Indian Affairs positions are filled with American Indians and Alaska Natives under a congressionally approved Indian Preference policy.

In total, Indian Affairs employees number approximately 7,940. They work throughout the United States not just with tribes, but also with state, local and other federal agencies in matters ranging from public safety, family and child welfare, and education to infrastructure maintenance, environmental protection, land and natural resources management, and other areas.

Two of those hired within the past year are decorated veterans William Wolf Tail, a member of the Blackfeet Tribe, who is a correctional officer with a BIA Office of Justice Services (OJS) facility in Browning, Mont., and Damar Dore, a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe-Pleasant Point in Maine, who joined the BIA as a supervisory information technology specialist in Aberdeen, S.D.

Despite his many accomplishments and experiences during his military career, Wolf Tail deems one event as holding particular significance for him: "My most fond moment would be graduating from the basic corrections officer training program at the BIA's Indian Police Academy." He is looking forward to continuing his professional growth with OJS.

"I took the position with the BIA to continue service by serving Native American communities," said Dore, who, like Wolf Tail, has many years of military experience. "I spent the first portion of my life protecting the freedoms that all Americans enjoy, and now it is time to use this knowledge to help protect indigenous freedoms. The oath we take as military members is to protect all from foreign and

domestic threats, and I intend on continuing to uphold my oath by providing solutions that have value to the agency and have a positive return on investment."

For more information about Indian Affairs' Hire American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans Initiative, visit www.bia.gov/Jobs/Veterans/ or call Nancy Nelson, Human Resources Specialist, Indian Affairs Office of Human Capital Management, at 202-208-6175.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs assists and supports the Secretary of the Interior in fulfilling the United States' trust responsibility to the federally recognized tribes and individual Indian trust beneficiaries. The Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) over sees human resources management, policy and operations for the OAS-IA, BIA and BIE. OHCM reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs – Management within the OAS-IA.