Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: October 20, 2011
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today congratulated four Bureau of Indian Affairs employees who have received one of the U.S. Attorney General's highest awards for their work investigating the death of an American Indian teenager on the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming last year.

The BIA Office of Justice Services employees, together with 11 U.S. Department of Justice employees and a Seminole tribal police officer, were honored at a departmental ceremony held October 19, 2011, at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

"I am very pleased to offer my congratulations to Assistant Special Agent-in-Charge William LeCompte, Wind River Agency Chief of Police Joseph Brooks, School Resource Officer Matthew Lee and Information Security Specialist Albert Rice on the occasion of their receiving the U.S. Attorney General's Award for Exceptional Service in Indian Country for their exceptional work as members of the investigative team that solved such a tragic case," Echo Hawk said. "As a former state attorney general, I recognize their determination to bring justice to anyone who has suffered from violent crime. That they succeeded in doing so for this young victim is an important achievement that all Indian Affairs employees can be proud of."

LeCompte is with the OJS's District V law enforcement office in Billings, Mont.; Brooks and Lee are with the bureau's Wind River Agency in Fort Washakie, Wyo.; and Rice with the OJS office in Albuquerque, N.M.

The DOJ and BIA investigative team members were honored for their law enforcement investigative collaboration on the Wind River reservation. The team worked the case from the moment the victim's body was found in April 2010 to the naming of two suspects. The team's work lead to the successful prosecution of the pair – one pled guilty and the other was convicted, both in January 2011.

Another team member and award recipient is Police Officer Holly M. Ramsey, a member of the Seminole Tribe of Florida police department who had been assigned to assist with patrol duties on the Wind River reservation under DOI's Safe Indian Communities and High Priority Performance (HPPG) initiatives. The reservation was one of four targeted under the HPPG initiative in 2010 to reduce violent crime in Indian Country.

"I want to offer my congratulations as well to Seminole Tribe Police Officer Holly Ramsey and to the investigation team members from the Justice Department who also were honored yesterday," Echo Hawk added. "In addition, I want to thank the Seminole Tribe and its police department for assigning Officer Ramsey to the Wind River reservation in support of our efforts to reduce violent crime in Indian Country."

The team has already received a National Native American Law Enforcement Association Strength Award, which is given for outstanding investigation of a major criminal case in cooperation with multiple law enforcement agencies. The award was handed out at the Association's 2011 annual

conference held late last month.

Ensuring the safety of tribal communities is at the heart of the BIA's law enforcement mission, and fully supports the Secretary's commitment to the protection of Indian Country. The OJS is responsible for managing the BIA's law enforcement, detention/corrections and tribal justice programs, either directly in tribal communities or by funding tribally administered programs through contracts and grants, for the nation's federally recognized tribes.

For Immediate Release: October 20, 2011

