Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact:
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WASHINGTON – Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Michael S. Black today announced that the BIA's Office of Justice Services (OJS) has created a training program for tribal court judges, prosecutors, clerks and administrators in an effort to improve the administration of justice in Indian Country. The program was developed in collaboration with the University of New Mexico School of Law's Institute of Public Law (IPL) and Southwest Indian Law Clinic (SILC) and the American Indian Law Center, Inc. (AILC) in Albuquerque, N.M. The 2011 training, which is being held in four sessions over three months, started March 15 at the Bureau's National Indian Program Training Center in Albuquerque.

"I want to thank the University of New Mexico School of Law and the American Indian Law Center for helping us to develop this important training program," said Black. "With the advent of the Tribal Law and Order Act, we want to aid tribal court judges, court staff and prosecutors by offering them an opportunity to sharpen their skills and improve their knowledge in the administration of justice for the tribal communities they serve."

Training for new and experienced tribal judges was held March 15-18 and will be repeated on May 23-26. New judges who complete this course will be able to conduct complete criminal trials and will leave with a greater understanding of the Indian Civil Rights Act and the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. More experienced jurists will be able to refresh their knowledge through this part of the program. Judges from 23 tribes attended the first session.

Training for prosecutors to enhance their knowledge and skills of criminal law and procedure will be held March 28-30. And training for tribal court administrators and clerks will be held April 18-20 on topics such as record development, case management and budgeting.

The program was developed in consultation with an advisory board comprised of tribal court judges, prosecutors, clerks, practicing attorneys and others who provided their expertise and hands-on perspective on the unique issues facing tribal courts. Training curriculum and instruction are being provided by the IPL, SILC and the AILC with funding provided for two years by the OJS.

The training, which will be taught by UNM School of Law faculty along with experienced tribal judges, practitioners, clerks and administrators at the National Indian Program Training Center, is being offered at no cost to attendees. In addition, attorneys who successfully complete the training can receive CLE credits.

For additional information on the training program or to register for upcoming sessions visit the AILC website at http://www.ailc-inc.org/.

The BIA Office of Justice Services' mission is to enhance public safety and protect property in Indian Country by providing or funding law enforcement, corrections and tribal court services to the nation's 565 federally recognized tribes. It also coordinates homeland security support on federal Indian lands by working cooperatively with other federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies throughout Indian Country. It also operates the Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M., which provides

training and professional development for BIA and tribal law enforcement personnel.
