Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Larry Echo Hawk, 60, was sworn into office today as the Interior Department's 11th Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. Echo Hawk is an enrolled member of the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma whose nomination was confirmed by the United States Senate on May 19, 2009. Secretary Salazar conducted the official swearing in ceremony.

"I am very pleased to welcome Larry Echo Hawk to the Interior Department," Salazar said. "I will rely on his steady leadership as we move forward to protect tribal communities, advance Indian education, carry out our trust responsibilities, support sustainable tribal economies, and address Indian Country's infrastructure needs under the Recovery Act."

A public swearing-in ceremony at the Department's headquarters in Washington, D.C., will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

"I want to thank President Obama and Secretary Salazar for this opportunity to be a part of their efforts to bring positive change to Indian Country," Echo Hawk said. "I also want to thank the Congress and tribal leaders for their confidence and support. To the Indian Affairs employees, I want to express my appreciation for their dedication to serving the American Indian and Alaska Native people. We will continue to honor the federal trust responsibility, to support tribal self-determination and to make a positive difference in the tribal communities we serve."

Echo Hawk comes to Interior from Brigham Young University in Utah, where he is a professor of law at BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School. His law career of over 35 years includes experience in the areas of legal aid services, federal Indian law, private practice, and public service as a tribal attorney, county prosecutor and, following his election in 1990, attorney general for the state of Idaho. In the 1980s, he served two consecutive terms in the Idaho House of Representatives.

Echo Hawk also has served with organizations that focus on American Indian and youth issues. He is a past member of the American Indian Services National Advisory Board and Board of Trustees, the Indian Alcoholism Counseling and Recovery Housing Program and the American Indian Community Resource Center Board, and was appointed by President Clinton to the federal Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Echo Hawk received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1970 from BYU, where he was an outstanding football athlete, and his Juris Doctor degree in 1973 from the University of Utah.

A former U.S. Marine, Echo Hawk is the first American Indian in U.S. history to be elected as a state attorney general.

The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs has responsibility for helping the Secretary of the Interior to fulfill his trust responsibilities to tribal and individual trust beneficiaries and promoting self-determination and self-governance for the nation's 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes. The Assistant Secretary oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which administers one of two federal school systems.

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