Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: December 18, 2008
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WASHINGTON – A graduation ceremony for members comprising the inaugural class of a federally supported pilot project to train American Indians in the commercial building trade will be held December 19, 2008, near the city of Chicago. The event is the result of an agreement between the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) and United Association (UA), the 326,000-member journeymen and apprentice plumbers and pipe fitters union in North America, to offer unemployed and underemployed American Indians from economically challenged tribal communities in the U.S. the chance to acquire new job skills that can lead to job opportunities back home or elsewhere.

The graduates, representing tribes from across the country, have spent the past 16 weeks in intensive in-class instruction and hands-on training. IEED funding has enabled them to spend the required time away from their homes and families. The ceremony, which will be followed immediately by a luncheon, will take place starting at 11:00 a.m. (Central Time) at the Pipe Fitters Training Center, Local 597, 10850 West 187th Street in Mokena, Ill.

The Secretary of the Interior created the IEED to encourage economic development in Indian Country. Its mission is to foster strong Indian communities by creating jobs, Indian-owned businesses, and a trained workforce, and by developing Indian energy and mineral resources, and increasing access to capital.

WHO:	Dr. Robert W. Middleton, Director, Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, U.S. Department of the Interior John Leen, Director of Training, United Association (UA)
WHAT:	Graduation ceremony for members of the inaugural class of the IEED-UA American Indian plumbers and pipe fitters training program with a luncheon to follow for graduates and guests.
WHEN:	Friday, December 19, 2008, starting at 11:00 a.m. (Central Time).
WHERE:	Pipe Fitters Training Center, Local 597, 10850 West 187th Street in Mokena, Ill.

CREDENTIALS: This invitation is extended to working media representatives, who are required to display sanctioned media credentials for admittance to the event.

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