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Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152 | Adam McMullin at 202-422-8416
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PHOENIX - Tribal leaders, federal officials and leaders of national Native organizations came together this week at the National Native American Economic Policy Summit, agreeing upon 314 economic policy recommendations for Indian Country.

"We heard the Summit participants loud and clear," said Bob Middleton, Director of the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development. "They have given us a blueprint for economic revitalization in Indian Country. We will begin immediately to work with all Federal Agencies to implement that blueprint and remove barriers to job and business growth in tribal communities."

The Summit comes 30 years to the day since the American Indian Policy Review Commission made over 200 Indian Country policy recommendations to Congress. This week's Summit included key players from different parties, robust ideas and an even greater commitment from a more comprehensive group of tribal partners, private partners and federal partners to ensure the successful implementation of the week's work.

"These are our visions for a vibrant, healthy Native economy," said Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). "The more than 500 participants at this Summit came here with sound goals for improved Indian Country economies and now we have the first steps to improve economic development that will empower sovereignty for Native Nations."

Some of the overarching themes that came out of the recommendations are to improve community planning and to strengthen tribal government to prepare for business development. Specific issues included support for increased tribal opportunities in government contracting, removing impediments to tax exempt bond financing, and improving the processes for managing and developing the over 60 million acres of Indian trust land and natural resources.

Middleton, speaking for the U.S. Department of the Interior committed to financial training for young people on business skills by starting a program at six pilot locations at Indian high schools which will give young people examples of what can be done in the arena of entrepreneurship.

Johnson said NCAI will take a number of steps to move the recommendation themes forward including encouraging the passage of NCAI, tribal and regional intertribal organization resolutions in support of particular policy recommendations; taking Summit recommendations to NCAI's 2007 Mid-Year Session for further discussion and refinement; and exploring opportunities to promote strong tribal government institutions including constitutional reform, leadership development and citizen engagement.