



Interactive Economic Policy Dialogue Highlight of Summit

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PHOENIX – Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Carl Artman delivered the keynote address at the National Native American Economic Policy Summit, calling on tribal leaders to share ideas on economic development and follow the example of tribes who have become local or regional business leaders.

“We are exploring the reinvigoration of tribal governments nation building, and how one tribe’s success can spark the success of others,” said Artman. “Successful tribes must continue to expand their outreach to tribes that strive for success.”

Artman noted that many tribes in attendance at the Summit have had tremendous economic success through business endeavors and they are excellent examples to follow.

“We are our own best mentors,” he said. “While many American businesses are exporting their jobs and best practices to places around the world, we have the opportunity to export jobs and best practices to other parts of Indian Country.”

The second day of the Summit included innovative sessions providing for interactive economic policy dialogue. Roundtable sessions gave participants the opportunity to share ideas and network to develop sound economic policy recommendations.

“This conference has been good because it has allowed those of us from a state government perspective not only give our input but also receive policy suggestions that we can implement using the federal perspective as an example,” said Major Robinson, Economic Development Specialist for the office of the Governor of Montana. “There is a give and a take. Having these conversations is extremely important in boosting economies.”

Melanie Benjamin, Chief Executive with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe said she appreciated economic policy information coming from presenters with a high level of experience.

“These sessions provided me with information that my tribe can use to really diversify its economy,” said Benjamin. “It will take hard work and education, but we have to do it. I’ve been on the phone to my Commissioners, sharing with them the ideas I have heard here.”

The roundtable sessions were centered around the Summit’s three core tracks: Capital & Finance, Business Development and Infrastructure.

“This session really gives us a chance to focus on vision,” said Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians. “Talking about our vision for vibrant, healthy Native economies-rather than focusing on familiar and longstanding problems is a radical, positive shift for Indian Country.”

The Summit will conclude Thursday, May 17, 2007 with a press conference at 12:30 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time, that will lay out the policy recommendations agreed upon during the Summit. The press conference will feature Bob Middleton, Director of the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development; and Jacqueline Johnson, Executive Director of NCAI.

Press may participate in the conference by teleconference. Call in number: 1-866-287-5993 Passcode: 596941#
