Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON - Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Carl J. Artman today announced that the Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) has selected 13 tribal energy and mineral development projects to receive $1.5 million in grants to provide their tribes with economic development opportunities in support of tribal self-determination and self-governance.

"The grants will allow these tribes to evaluate, develop and manage their energy and mineral resources to benefit their communities," Artman said. "They also significantly promote tribal self-determination, as intended by the Energy Policy Act of 2005, through capacity-building for tribal governments and tribal management of Indian energy resources."

Grant recipients include the Navajo Nation of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah; the Resighini Rancheria in California; the Blackfeet Tribe and Crow Tribe in Montana; Mescalero Apache Tribe and Jemez Pueblo in New Mexico; the Seneca Nation in New York; the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma; the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota; the Spokane Tribe, Makah Indian Tribe and Colville Confederated Tribes in Washington State; and the St. Croix Chippewa Tribe in Wisconsin.

The grants will fund projects promoting the development of tribal oil, gas and coal resources, the development of construction aggregate markets, and renewable energy projects such as using biomass from forest fire treatments and other sources, geothermal greenhouses, and solar and wind energy production.

Artman said he has listened closely to tribal leaders on what they say is needed to support tribal governments and their social, commercial and political development. High on the officials' list is the ability to utilize their tribes' energy and mineral resources to improve local economic conditions. He also noted that there has been greater tribal interest in IEED's Energy and Mineral Development Program this year, which received 53 proposals requesting a total $12.1 million to help tribes assess and develop their energy and mineral resources.

"Tribes are interested in putting their energy resources to work for them and to help reduce America's dependence on foreign imports," he said. "The greater interest they have shown in the Energy and Mineral Development Program attests to their desire for economic success through energy development. The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development is providing tribes with the technical assistance they need to achieve their economic goals."

Underdeveloped tribal lands are estimated to contain nearly five and a half billion barrels of oil, nearly 38 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 53 billion tons of coal, in addition to renewable resources-such as wind and biomass-and a significant amount of construction aggregate.

The Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development was established to provide high-level support for the Department's goal of serving tribal communities by providing access to energy resources and helping tribes stimulate job creation and economic development, and supporting the President's National Energy Policy by fostering the development of domestic energy resources to reduce the

nation's dependence on foreign energy sources.

For more information on the IEED Energy and Mineral Development Program, contact Stephen Manydeeds, Chief, Division of Energy and Minerals Resources Management, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, Lakewood, Colo., at (303) 969-5270.