Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, DC – In a signing ceremony held at the U.S. Department of the Interior, Carl J. Artman, Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs, signed an interagency agreement with the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide funding to develop the American Indian/Alaska Native Business Opportunity and Workforce Development (ABOWD) Center for highway construction.

Along with the Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs these officials signed the April 19th agreement: Frederick D. Isler, Associate Administrator, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation; John Navarro, President, Council for Tribal Employment Rights (CTER); Carol Clay Levi, Citizen Potawatomi Nation of Oklahoma, who will serve as the Director of ABOWD; and Margret Zeintek, Co-Chairwoman for the Public Law 102-477 Tribal Workgroup.

The $800,000 award from the Federal Highway Administration is for one year with a second year contingent upon the first year's success, totaling $1.6 million for the project. The objectives of the project are:

1. Enhance the growth and development of at least 10 under-utilized American Indian/Alaska Native Disadvantaged Businesses involved in highway construction;
2. Increase the participation of underutilized American Indian/Alaska Native firms on highway construction projects;
3. Develop the workforce of American Indian/Alaska Native firms and prime contractors enrolled in the ABOWD Center implemented by the Citizen Potawatomi Nation; and
4. Enroll 50 American Indians/Alaska Natives in on-the-job training programs and placement in highway construction positions.

The funds will pass through the Division of WorkForce Development program, in the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED), to the Citizen Potawatomi Nation for administration of the project. The Council for Tribal Employment Rights (CTER) is a national non-profit organization, which includes the membership of 300 American Indian and Alaska Native tribes, will provide training and technical assistance to ensure success of this project.

For more information contact: DOT, FHA: Ms. Teresa Banks, Office of Civil Rights: (404) 562-3592 or DOI, IEED: Ms. Jody LeCompte-Garrison, Division of WorkForce Development (202) 219-0740.