George Skibine to Serve as Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

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WASHINGTON - Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Carl J. Artman today announced the departure of Michael D. Olsen, currently the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, who is going to work for the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management in the Department of the Interior where he will assume the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management. Artman also announced that effective Monday, April 2, 2007, George T. Skibine, who currently serves as Director of the Office of Indian Gaming Management and as acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Economic Development - Indian Affairs, will become acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary.

"I want to thank Mike Olsen for his steady leadership as the Department has sought to improve the administration of Indian programs and for his leadership on natural resources, gaming, Federal acknowledgment, and in elevating the Department's profile on economic issues for Indian Country," Artman said. "We wish him well in his new position."

Olsen has been the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary since June 11, 2006, after having served for 18 months as the acting PDAS. He joined the Department in May 2003 as Counselor to the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs where he served as an advisor to the Assistant Secretary and other senior departmental officials on Indian affairs, natural resources and land issues, and legislative matters. Olsen had worked previously for the House Committee on Resources (now the Committee on Natural Resources) and for the Washington, D.C., law firms of Kelley Drye & Warren LLP and Keller and Heckman LLP. He is a graduate of Brigham Young University and BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School.

"George Skibine is an able executive with long experience in Indian Affairs and I am pleased that he will provide needed continuity while the search is undertaken for a permanent Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary," Artman said.

Skibine, an enrolled member of the Osage Tribe of Oklahoma, has directed the Indian Gaming Management Office since 1995 and has served as the acting Deputy Assistant Secretary since 2004. His experience at the Interior Department includes having served as an attorney and later as Deputy Associate Solicitor for the Division of Indian Affairs within the Office of the Solicitor after having spent several years at the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Skibine holds an economics degree from the University of Chicago and a law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs serves as the first assistant and principal advisor to the Assistant Secretary on policies regarding the administration of Office of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) programs.