Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: August 22, 2005
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – Bureau of Indian Affairs Director W. Patrick Ragsdale today announced that he has named Christopher B. Chaney as Deputy Bureau Director of the BIA's Office of Law Enforcement Services (OLES). Chaney, an enrolled member of the Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma, had previously served as Associate Solicitor for the Division of Indian Affairs in the U.S. Department of the Interior. The appointment became effective August 7.

"I am very pleased that Chris Chaney has joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs team," Ragsdale said. "His leadership, experience and deep commitment to Indian people will ensure the BIA delivers quality law enforcement services to the federally recognized tribes and their citizens."

Interior Secretary Gale Norton appointed Chaney in October 2003 to oversee the Interior Solicitor's Office Division of Indian Affairs. The division is responsible for legal matters related to the programs and activities of the BIA and provides legal assistance and counsel to the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs and the Special Trustee for American Indians.

Chaney obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Oklahoma in 1984 and a law degree from Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School in 1992. From 1992 to 1997, he had a private law practice in Farmington, N.M. During that time he worked primarily in the field of Indian law and served as the prosecuting attorney for the Jicarilla Apache Tribe and the Southern Ute Tribe, and as an administrative law judge for the Navajo Housing Authority. In 1997, he accepted a position with the U.S. Department of Justice as an Assistant United States Attorney in Salt Lake City, Utah. As a federal prosecutor he prosecuted violent crimes that occurred on the Navajo Nation reservation, the Ute Tribe's Uintah & Ouray reservation and other areas of Indian country within the state of Utah. He also served as the U.S. Attorney's Tribal Liaison to the eight tribes located in Utah. In 2000, Chaney accepted a work detail to the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys as Counsel to the Director's Office where he worked on Indian country legal issues on a national scale.

"I appreciate being given the opportunity to lead the Office of Law Enforcement Services," Chaney said. "I am looking forward to working with BIA and tribal law enforcement personnel, and supporting their efforts to ensure public safety throughout Indian country."

The OLES carries out its mission to improve law enforcement services and preserve public safety in Indian country through its six district offices and by supporting through funding and/or training over 170 tribally-operated police departments and directly operating 31 police departments across the country, funding 59 tribally-operated detention facilities and directly operating 22 detention facilities, coordinating homeland security support on federal Indian lands, and providing training and professional development through the Indian Police Academy in Artesia, N.M.