Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: (301) 443-3593 Athena Elliott | Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
For Immediate Release: March 23, 2005
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The Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are coordinating a multi-agency federal response to a tragic shooting that occurred Monday on the reservation of the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota. Ten people were killed and 7 others were injured. The Directors of the BIA and IHS today expressed their agencies' joint commitment to assisting the tribe in the wake of the tragedy.

"On behalf of all Bureau of Indian Affairs employees, I want to express our deepest condolences to the Red Lake Tribe and to the families of the victims over their tragic loss," Bureau of Indian Affairs Director W. Patrick Ragsdale said. "The BIA is providing active service to the Red Lake community to help them begin the process of recovering and healing."

"This is an incredible tragedy that is affecting the entire tribe," said IHS Director Charles W. Grim. "We are working with other Federal agencies to do all that we can to alleviate the suffering and lingering effects of this dreadful day. Our hearts and our prayers go out to all of them, especially the families of the victims."

The IHS Bemidji Area Chief Medical Officer and the IHS Bemidji Area Director are on-site today on the Red Lake Reservation assessing medical and other public health needs, as well as meeting with community and family members of the victims of the shooting to offer support and condolences. The IHS is coordinating with medical providers and law enforcement staff in the community and will mobilize staff as appropriate to meet health needs. Also, the IHS is collaborating with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the National Institute of Mental Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention disaster response psychological unit, for immediate and long-term support. The Health Resources and Services Administration will provide emergency funds to the Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians to help deal with the aftermath of the tragedy, and the IHS and BIA are also working jointly to determine needs for information alerts and other intervention processes to address and prevent future violence.

A number of BIA personnel are already providing support to on the-ground federal and local agencies in Red Lake. The BIA's Office of Law Enforcement Services has sent personnel to the site to assist the FBI, which has primary responsibility for investigating the incident. They include uniformed police officers, special agents, supervisory special agents, telecommunications officers and law enforcement officers trained in providing peer support counseling to local police and community members. A BIA mobile community substation also has been sent to Red Lake with dispatchers to provide an array of telecommunications services and carry out other specialized law enforcement functions.

In addition, the Bureau's Office of Tribal Services has sent social workers from its Midwest Regional Office, in Ft. Snelling, Minn., to Red Lake to provide support to community members. They also will work with the Red Lake tribal government in obtaining long-term resources to help the tribe deal with any lingering effects produced by the tragedy.

The Director of the BIA oversees the day-to-day activities of the 180-year-old Interior Department

agency, which provides services to 1.8 million American Indians and Alaska Natives from the 562 federally recognized tribes. The Director administers all laws governing non-education portions of Indian Affairs, provides leadership and direction for BIA employees and oversees and monitors the work of the BIA regional offices, agencies and field offices. The Director also shares authority and responsibility for the management of the tribal and individual Indian trust funds with the Special Trustee for American Indians, and oversees the Bureau's Land Consolidation Center, the agency's nationwide program to consolidate fractionated interests in Indian lands.

The IHS, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, provides a comprehensive health service delivery system for approximately 1.8 million of the nation's estimated 3 .2 million American Indians and Alaska Natives who are members of 562 federally recognized tribes.
