Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Tina Kreisher (202) 208-6416 | Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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WASHINGTON—Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs David W. Anderson today announced he has named W. Patrick Ragsdale to be Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs(BIA) effective Feb. 13, 2005.

Ragsdale, who is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, has been serving for the last year as Director, Trust Review and Audit in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians.

“Mr. Ragsdale comes to this position with a wealth of experience in Indian Affairs,” said Anderson. “He has done everything from teaching in Indian schools to holding the position of Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs between the Reagan and Bush administrations. I have every confidence in his management abilities and his dedication to meet the needs of Indian people.”

Ragsdale began his career at BIA in 1967 as a teacher. From 1969 to 1972 he was on military furlough serving as an officer with the US Marine Corps. During his BIA tenure he has served in many capacities including: Deputy to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Acting Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Area Director - Anadarko, Assistant Area Director (Trust Responsibilities) - Phoenix, and Superintendent of the Unita and Ouray Agency.

He retired in 1993, joined the Cherokee Nation and became Executive Director of the Nation in 1999. He returned to Federal service in February last year to become the Director, Trust Review and Audit in Albuquerque.

“I look forward to rejoining the large group of family and colleagues in the Indian Bureau after being absent for more than 10 years. I have great appreciation for Mr. Anderson’s efforts to energize leadership in Indian Country and am grateful to him for giving me this opportunity.”

Ragsdale has a bachelors degree in history from the University of Central Oklahoma and has graduate hours at both the University of Oklahoma and the University of Arizona.

He was born and attended high school in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and has two adult daughters and two grandchildren.

Ragsdale will replace Brian Pogue as BIA Director. Pogue left the directorship to take the position of Regional Director--Anadarko.

The Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs directly oversees the day-to-day activities of the agency that provides services to individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the 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 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.