Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary Gale Norton:
"*Convinced Indian Country is Better Off Because You Served*"
Associate Deputy Secretary Jim Cason
to Temporarily Assume Responsibilities of Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs

(WASHINGTON) - Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Dave Anderson today announced his decision to resign, effective February 12, 2005.

In a letter to Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Assistant Secretary Anderson said that, "I have concluded that I can have the greatest impact to improve the future of Indian Country, not by managing the day-to-day operations of BIA programs, but by focusing my time on developing private sector economic opportunities for Indian entrepreneurs."

In response, Secretary Norton wrote, "It is with both understanding and regret that I received your letter today informing me of your decision to resign as Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, effective February 12, 2005."

"On behalf of President Bush, I thank you for your service, and I am convinced that Indian Country is better off because you served. You can take justifiable pride in your efforts to improve Indian education, law enforcement, and trust services. You have also been a terrific role model to young people in Indian Country. I have received many reports from people who have been encouraged by your message of hope, self-reliance, and belief in the personal worth and dignity of each Native American."

Secretary Norton also announced that she will be working with the White House and leaders in Indian Country to select a new Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. In the meantime, Jim Cason, currently Associate Deputy Secretary, will be tasked with fulfilling the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. For the past three-and-a half-years, Cason has worked extensively on a variety of Indian issues including law enforcement, land management and fractionation, trust responsibilities, historical accounting, and probate.

In his letter to Secretary Norton, Assistant Secretary Dave Anderson said, "Working with President Bush, Bureau of Indian Affairs staff, the more than 560 federally recognized Indian tribes, your staff and you, we made this a year of remarkable progress in Indian Country. Our accomplishments include:

- An additional $32.4 million in higher education funding was provided for BIA-managed schools as a result of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act.
- Key components of the No Child Left Behind Act will be implemented in a soon to be published final rule, following extensive consultation with Indian country.
- A new Replacement School Construction List was developed to establish priority funding for Indian Country schools that have critical health and safety concerns .
- Thousands of safety and security improvements were made in Indian country detention centers .
- A new American Indian Records Repository was dedicated, in order to preserve and consolidate

Indian records that are essential to carry out Interior's trust reform responsibilities.
- Ground was broken on a new National Indian Programs Training Center as part of an effort to improve the delivery of federal services to Indian country."

Assistant Secretary Anderson added, "Perhaps more important are the countless opportunities I had to meet with Indian parents, teachers and children to encourage them to reach their potential, to climb the academic ladder of achievement and prepare them to become contributing members of their families and tribes."

Anderson's letter to Secretary Norton concluded by saying "More than you can imagine, I am honored by the trust President Bush and you placed in me by asking me to serve as Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs. To lead Indian Country for the past year has been a great honor and valuable experience. As I return to private life, my experiences this past year have better prepared me to encourage all those in Indian Country to achieve their God-given potential."

The letters exchanged between Secretary Norton and Assistant Secretary Anderson can be found at https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/archive/news/archive/05_News_Releases/050131a.htm

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