Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Aurene M. Martin today announced that she has confirmed Terry Virden, a member of the White Earth Band of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, as Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). "Terry Virden has been a strong advocate for the BIA," said Martin. "I am confident that he will continue to guide the Bureau with a steady hand now and into the future." The Deputy Commissioner is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the nearly 180-year-old federal agency.

Virden, a 25-year veteran of the BIA, had been acting Deputy Commissioner since July 1, 2002 when he was chosen for the post by former Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Neal McCaleb. Prior to his appointment, Virden had served as director of the BIA's Office of Trust Responsibilities.

Virden's career with the Bureau began in 1977 as a Reservation Forester on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in Wisconsin. In 1981, he was promoted to Forest Development Officer at the Great Lakes Agency in Ashland, Wisc., where he provided technical assistance to ten tribes in the state. In 1983, he accepted the position of Timber Sales Forester in what was at that time the Bureau's Minneapolis Area Office (now the Midwest Regional Office). From 1990 to 1993, Virden served as the region's Area Forester.

In September 1993, Virden moved to the BIA's Central Office in Washington, D.C., as Assistant Chief Forester. In April 1994, he was selected for the position of Chief Forester for the BIA and served in that capacity until July 1995 when he was named Director of the Office of Trust Responsibilities.

Virden was born and raised in Northern Minnesota. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Management from the University of Minnesota (1977). He is a member of the Minnesota Forestry Association and the Society of American Foresters, Appalachian Chapter.

The Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs has responsibility for fulfilling the Department's trust responsibilities and promoting self-determination on behalf of the 562 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments. The Assistant Secretary also oversees the Bureau of Indian Affairs, an agency with 10,500 employees nationwide, which is responsible for providing services to approximately 1.4 million individual American Indians and Alaska Natives from the federally recognized tribes.

Note to Editors: A photo of Terry Virden may be viewed via the Interior Department's web site at www.doi.gov.