



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs received a prestigious Government Information Technology Agency Award from Government Computer News for the development of the Trust Assets Accounting Management System, or TAAMS. Government Computer News, a trade magazine for the Information Technology industry dealing with the United States Government issues awards annually for excellence in information resources management to federal agency organizations in the application of information technology to improve service delivery.

TAAMS has been at the center of a major overhaul of the Indian Trust System begun during the administration of Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt.

"I am extremely pleased the BIA has been recognized for excellence for the development and deployment of TAAMS," stated Secretary Babbitt. "The Indian employees of the BIA want this trust system fixed, and this is an example of Indians fixing an Indian problem created by decades of neglect. I have always had faith in the abilities of the American Indian employees, and if they are given the resources to fix the trust system, it will be fixed."

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Kevin Gover was also pleased with the recognition the award represents for the hard work done by the BIA employees. There has been a great deal of controversy surrounding the efforts at Trust reform, including the development of the TAAMS. "This award from Government Computer News shows our employees that their work is being recognized as excellent from an independent source. I want to thank our appropriators in both the Senate and House and the Secretary for pushing through the funding to fix this problem. It took 112 years to break this system, and it is not easy or cheap to fix it, but given the resources, our people are showing they will get the job done."

The TAAMS development team went away from the traditional process of developing a government computing system. Instead of creating a system from the ground up, the strategy involved choosing a commercial off the shelf system, and then making the specific modifications necessary to meet the needs of the tribes and the 300,000 Individual Indian Money accountholders. With the help of the contractor, Applied Terravision, and the trust management employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, a system has been created that will move the trust system into the 21st century. The pilot for the system is now operating in the BIA Rocky Mountain Region. The TAAMS system will be deployed to 220 sites over the next 18 months. BIA manages 170,000 individual tracts of land comprising 56 million acres. Management includes overseeing 100,000 leases for timber, coal, oil, gas, gravel, grazing and agricultural uses.

"We are literally taking this system into the 21st century", said Gover. "The TAAMS system can be a system that all of Indian country can be proud of for a long time, and the credit should go to the hardworking employees of the BIA for moving heaven and earth to fix a problem that has been ignored for over a century. These employees are doing a great job at an incredibly difficult task."

Other agencies recognized with awards from Government Computing News included the Department of

Defense, NASA, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Food and Drug Administration, the State Department, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/taams-wins-government-computer-news-award>