Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Ralph E. Gonzales (202) 219-4152
For Immediate Release: May 20, 1997
Print PDF

On May 20, 1997 Ms. Deer, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs called an all employees meeting at BIA Headquarters, Washington, DC. The purpose of this meeting was to provide information relative to current matters taking place within the Bureau of lndian Affairs and to present a Summer Action Plan. "I would like to see the Bureau become a dynamic entity accomplishing positive things at the end of this Summer," Ms. Deer said.

The Summer Action Plan

BIA employees were equated to being front line troops in the "war supporting tribal sovereignty," and Ms. Deer challenged the employees to accomplish the following ten goals within the next 90-days.

1. Gear up for the "fight of our lives" regarding proposals to tax Indian gaming and all anti-sovereignty proposals. Requests from Congressional Affairs are going to require rapid response and quick turn around when Congress returns in June.
2. Improve the overall quality of our internal communications. An all employees meeting will be conducted once a month for the remainder of Ms. Deer's term so that everyone will have good information about what is happening. The meetings will take place on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 AM.
3. The Office of Indian Education Programs will work to complete the Five Year plan supporting tribal colleges as required by the President's Executive Order on Tribal Education.
4. Continue work and cooperation with the Office of Audit and Evaluation to maintain the excellent progress we have achieved in resolving audit findings and to continue to improve and strengthen our operations.
5. Supporting the BIA's budget process and the Office of Management and Administration in pulling together by providing effective, well-prepared, and timely submitted budget justifications.
6. Re-double our efforts in drafting performance measures as part of the National Performance Review and Government Performance Results Act.
7. Finalize the Self-Governance draft regulations and have them sent to OMB for clearance by the end of August.
8. Complete the Tribal Shares process.
9. As a personal work assignment Ms. Deer pledges to work more directly with the White House and the new House Native American Caucus in advocating for Indian Country and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
10. Form a new working group to develop plans for a Summer Indian Affairs picnic. Schedule date is Wednesday, June 25, 1997, Little Bighorn Day.

Ten BIA employees were recognized for "On the Spot" awards for accomplishing and performing extra "hard work" over the last few months. The ten individuals are:

Ross Mooney
Division of Water & Land Resources
John Nicholas

Equal Employment Opportunity Programs
Deb Purvis
Office of American Indian Trust
Paula Hart
Indian Gaming Management Staff
Cate Vandemoer
Office of Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs
Marge Wilkins
Office of Congressional & Legislative Affairs
Bill Mehojah
Office of Indian Education Programs
Thelma Harjo
Office of Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Thomas Sweeney
Office of Public Affairs
Harriett Brown
Offce of Deputy Commissioner of Indian Affairs