Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ada E. Deer today announced that the Bureau of lndian Affairs will assume the operations of law enforcement for the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma effective immediately for a period of approximately two months. This period will allow the Nation to resolve internal difficulties which have recently developed.

The decision by the BIA is based upon recent events that have occurred at Cherokee. "The BIA is committed to ensure that law and order is maintained within the Cherokee Nation," Ms. Deer said. "We will assume the Cherokee Nation's law enforcement program as a cooperative effort with the Nation and local officials."

This action does not indicate any BIA position in the Cherokee Nation's internal dispute over local matters and the Nation must use its own governmental procedures to resolve the conflict between the judiciary and the executive branch. "Of course, the BIA will provide necessary technical assistance and advice as requested, but BIA's law enforcement's mission will be to ensure the safety of the community and its property," Ms. Deer said. "The BIA is prepared to assist the Nation in this assumption initiative until the situation has stabilized and the Nation is able to reassume its own law enforcement program".

The BIA Muskogee Area Office will be the field office responsible for initiating this action. The Official in charge during the transition of the Law Enforcement Program is Criminal Investigator Mr. Perry Proctor.