Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Ada Deer, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Indian Affairs, will travel to Alaska on October 19 to speak to Native Alaskans and visit the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

On Friday, October 20, at 9:00 a.m. she will address the Alaska Federation of Natives in Anchorage at the William Egan Civic & Convention Center on issues including drastic cuts in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) FY 1996 budget, self-governance and self-determination. Following the speech she will be available for other media questions.

Early on the morning of Saturday, October 21, Deer will fly to Fairbanks and then to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. After touring the Refuge, she will travel to Arctic Village to meet with Gwich'in chiefs. She will remain in the village overnight to participate in special ceremonies as a guest of the Gwich'in people.

On Sunday, Deer will travel by plane to view the caribou migration toward its winter feeding grounds. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has estimated that over 90 percent of the porcupine caribou calves are born on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in the early summer months.

Assistant Secretary Deer will conclude her activities with a discussion with students at the University of Alaska at Anchorage on Monday, and will return to Washington on Tuesday, October 24.

Any members of the media who would like to accompany her on this unique opportunity to tour the Arctic Refuge, speak with Native Alaskans and discuss the importance of the porcupine caribou herd with Gwich'in people in their ancestral village should contact either Thomas Sweeney (202/219-4150) or Stephanie Hanna (202/208-6416) in the lower 48 states to reserve space on charter aircraft. In Alaska, members of the media interested in traveling with Deer should contact Fairbanks BIA Superintendent Samuel Demientieff at 800/822-3596 or 907/456-0229.