



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ross Swimmer today announced the appointment of Joe C. Christie as acting director of the new Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. Christie, Superintendent of the Northern California Agency in Redding, California, since 1984, will assume the new post created in the Office of the Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs by P.L. 99-570, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 signed by President Reagan last month. He will begin his duties in Washington, December 2

"While he was reluctant to leave northern California, I am highly pleased that Christie has accepted this important new assignment," Swimmer said. "His administrative experience as a superintendent at three different Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agencies over the past five years, and his background in education where much of his work will be concentrated, make him especially qualified for this new post. In addition, his recent experience in carrying out a marijuana eradication program in northern California, in cooperation with state and federal law enforcement authorities, further qualifies him to assist us," he added. Swimmer said that Christie will coordinate with his counterpart at the Indian Health Service (IHS) in developing a program to carry out jointly the memorandum of agreement signed in September between the BIA and IHS to combat alcohol and substance abuse among Indian people. The BIA portion of the \$1.7 billion Omnibus Drug Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1987 includes \$22.5 million for the BIA to be used in various ways. A total of \$5.4 million is appropriated for educational purposes -- \$3 million for curriculum development and materials and \$2.4 million for additional school counselors -- in the more than 180 BIA schools throughout the country. The school counselors are to have special techniques relevant to the treatment of youth alcohol and substance abuse. One million dollars is targeted for judicial training in the tribal government services area.

Law enforcement will receive \$3.6 million of which \$3 million is to be used for training of officers in the investigation and prosecution of offenses relating to illegal narcotics and in youth alcohol and substance abuse prevention and treatment; \$100,000 is for the development of a model juvenile code; and, \$500,000 will go to the Tohono O'odham (formerly Papago) Indian tribe in southern Arizona for the investigation and control of illegal narcotics traffic on the reservation. The remaining \$7.5 million is to be used to construct or renovate and staff new or existing emergency shelters or halfway houses for juveniles. A total of \$21.7 million was appropriated to the IHS to help fight the problem of alcohol and substance abuse. Christie, 41, is a native of southeastern Oklahoma and an enrolled member of the Choctaw Tribe of that state. He earned a B.A. in education from the Southeastern State College in Durant; a M.S. degree from Kansas State College in Pittsburg; and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of New Mexico. He began his federal government career in 1972 as an elementary school teacher in BIA's Phoenix area. The following year he moved to Muskogee, Oklahoma, where he served as an education specialist for four years. Until 1981, when he took his first Superintendent's position at the Fort Totten Agency in North Dakota, Christie served in BIA offices in Billings, Montana, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. He served for 18 months as Superintendent of the Winnebago Agency in Nebraska before assuming his present post in northern California. He is a veteran of the U.S. Army.

<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/opa/online-press-release/christie-named-acting-director-new-office-alcohol-and-substance>