Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: Carl Shaw (202) 343-4576
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Ross Swimmer, the Interior department's assistant secretary for Indian affairs, told tribal leaders, state officials and his own employees in New Mexico and Arizona that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is looking for a new way of doing business.

Swimmer began a four day speaking tour Jan. 12 in the two states to explain several major initiatives being proposed in the BIA's 1988 budget request.

The assistant secretary met on Jan. 12 in Albuquerque with the All Indian Pueblo council and several other New Mexico tribes. He met later in the day with New Mexico Governor Garrey Carruthers in Santa Fe. Swimmer also discussed his plans with the editorial boards of the Albuquerque Journal and The New Mexican newspaper.

Swimmer attended the Jan. 13 inauguration of Navajo Chairman Peter MacDonald in Window Rock, AZ, briefed BIA employees in the Navajo area office, toured the Navajo Times Today and met in Phoenix with tribal leaders from Arizona, Nevada and Utah.

Swimmer spoke on Jan. 14 to BIA employees in the Phoenix area office and met with Arizona Governor Evan Mecham and state education officials.

The BIA, which educates only about 10 percent of the nation's Indian children, is not providing the quality of education available in local systems like the public schools and oftentimes duplicates existing educational facilities, according to Swimmer.