Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan today announced his intention to appoint Jana McKeag, a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, to the newly created National Indian Gaming Commission.

"Jana McKeag has done outstanding work in Indian Affairs both inside and outside of government for well over a decade," Lujan said. 11 She was instrumental in the early drafting of Indian gaming legislation prepared by the Department of the Interior. She feels that the Indian gaming industry has significant potential for providing capital to tribes for economic development and she believes that effective and timely regulation are vital to the continued success of the Indian gaming industry."

The commission is being established in accordance with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (P.L. 100-497) enacted by the 100th Congress. The appointment of Ms. McKeag will complete the three-member commission which will regulate, establish standards for, and monitor gaming on Indian lands and reservations.

The public will have 30 days to comment on the selection before it can be made official by Lujan. In 1990, President Bush nominated and the U.S. Senate confirmed Tony Hope to serve as the chairman of the commission. Under the Act, the Secretary of the Interior names the other two members of the Commission, but must allow for a comment period after announcing his choice. Last October, Lujan announced the appointment of Joel Frank as the first of his two selections for the commission.

Ms. McKeag currently is director of Native American programs at the Department of Agriculture. Prior to moving to the Agriculture Department in 1990, she held a number of positions in the Department of the Interior, including staff assistant to the deputy assistant secretary in charge of the Bureau of Indian _Affairs (BIA) Office of Trust and Economic Development; program analyst in the departmental Office of Policy Analysis; executive assistant to the deputy assistant secretary for Indian Affairs; and intern budget analyst for the department. She also has worked in the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Ms. McKeag was education director for the National Congress of American Indians in 1974-1975, and was assistant to the staff director of the American Indian Policy Review Commission in 1975-1976.

She holds a B.A. from Gettysburg College and a Master in Public Administration degree from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. In 1975, Brigham Young University presented her its Award for Outstanding Native Americans.

An officer and member of the Board of Directors of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington, Ms. McKeag received the YMCA Washington Achiever Award in 1989. She is also on the Board of Directors for the Coalition for the Homeless.

Comments on the nomination should be addressed to Morris Simms, Director of Personnel, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.