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Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ken Smith has assigned Charles Hughes the Bureau of Indian Affair's top financial official, to full time implementation of reforms and improvements which were initiated in the past year in the BIA's management of finances and trust funds

“The scope depth and importance of the efforts and their stage of development now require that these projects receive concentrated attention from all affected Bureau employees including my own office” Smith said.

In a memo to BIA central office directors and area directors, Smith said the new projects that Hughes will be working on include:

* Redesigning the finance system on an accelerated scheduled;

* Trust fund management, including a review of investments and reconciliation of accounts;

* Voucher processing, streamlining existing procedures and implementing a new automatic system;

* Debt collection and correction of accounts receivable records;

* Implementation in 1984, one year ahead of schedule, of a system for planning and reporting program accomplishments; and

* Achieving the Office of Personnel Management’s 30-day processing time for retirement papers

Smith said active participation by all levels of BIA would be required because the efforts involve operations and activities under the control of line officers throughout the Bureau. “The Deputy Assistant Secretary . . . and I will be apprised regularly of progress and problems in each of the initiatives.” he added.

Smith had previously informed Indian tribal leaders, in a July 26 letter, that the tribes needed “to develop effective administrative systems” for the management of both tribal and federal funds. He said that inadequate accountability, the abuse or misuse of funds and other deficiencies identified by the Interior Inspector General created pressures to cut back funding for Indian programs.

Smith told the tribal leaders that he had initiated actions to correct problems within the BIA.

Some other management efforts in 1984, Smith said, will include a review of the method used for distributing the BIA funds and a study of alternatives; completion of a plan for assessing national charges against operating offices, and development for the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of a number of special studies related to the 1985 budget.