Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Bureau of Indian Affairs has asked Congress for $901.4 million dollars for its fiscal year 1984 programs and projects. An additional $100 million is to be provided for reservation road projects under the Highway Improvement Act of 1982 recently enacted by President Reagan.

The $100 million roads allocation through the Department of Transportation "will create thousands of new jobs while helping the reservations build infrastructure for economic development", said Kenneth L. Smith, Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs.

Not considering this $100 million, the 1984 request is about $53 million less than 1983 funding. Most of this decrease is in construction of roads, and irrigation projects. The 1983 total for construction was $110.8 million as compared to the 1984 request for $59.9 million.

The 1984 request includes continued funding for two initiatives started in 1983. A total of $5 million has been requested for grants to small tribes to help them acquire and maintain basic management capabilities and $10 million for grants to encourage private sector investment, promote sound business principles and assist enterprise development on the reservations.

The request of $249.1 million for Indian education programs reflects a decrease of $15 million from the 1983 funding of $264.1 million. Included in the 1983 funding, however, was a non-recurring payment of $9.4 million ed to the State of Alaska for renovating former BIA schools transferred to the state system. The Bureau also expects to operate 12 fewer schools in 1984. Ten BIA Alaska village schools will be transferred to the state system at the end of the 1982-83 school year. Two off-reservation boarding high schools, Intermountain at Brigham City, Utah and Mt. Edgecumbe in Alaska, are also scheduled to be closed in fiscal year 1983.

The $242.9 million requested for Indian service programs is a slight increase over the 1983 funding. Programs for economic development and employment assistance were increased to $65.5 million from $59.3 million in 1983 and the request of $89.3 million for natural resources development is an increase of $5 million over the 1983 funding.