Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Thomas W. Fredericks announced today that proposed regulations governing business practices on Indian reservations were published January 6 in the Federal Register.

The new proposals modernize the trading regulations by adopting as its regulations the consumer statutes of the states where the business is located, as well as applicable tribal regulations. Minimal licensing requirements are imposed in most areas to comply with federal statutes requiring the licensing of all businesses trading with Indians on an Indian reservation. On a few reservations and parts of other reservations, because of isolation or other social and economic conditions, some additional requirements have been included in order to protect Indian consumers.

"This is not a case of more federal regulations for privately owned businesses," Fredericks pointed out. "In fact, by exempting most reservations or parts of other reservations from many requirements of the regulations, we are -- in a sense -- deregulating these businesses by bringing up to date those regulations on the books since 1957 which experience has determined were unenforceable from a practical standpoint. All the reservations will have a less cumbersome set of rules to follow -- while still protecting the Indian consumer -- than the old outdated regulations," he added.

The new proposals will not apply to the Navajo, Hopi, or Zuni Reservations which are regulated under other provisions of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A notice of proposed rulemaking amending the 1957 regulations was originally published in April 1980. Comments received from those proposals formed the basis for these new regulations.

Comments must be received by no later than 30 days after publication of these regulations in the Federal Register. Written comments should be addressed to Eugene F. Suarez, Sr., Chief, Division of Law Enforcement Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, 18th and C Streets, NW, Room 1342, Washington, D.C. 20245.