



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240



AUG 13 2007

Dear Tribal Leader:

I believe we are all aware times have changed and they will continue to change. We need to be sure the government-to-government relationships continue to function well as we move into the future. To accomplish this, we will need to discuss the changes that are occurring, and how they can be addressed and used to our benefit and to meet our needs.

For example, Indian Affairs, just like all sectors of the American workforce, is facing an aging and near retirement population. The fact is nearly 40% of the current Indian Affairs workforce will be eligible for retirement within the next 5 years. This represents a considerable potential loss of experience and knowledge for the organization, and it is time for us to plan how we will address this loss of experience and knowledge.

Competition for the most experienced and skilled employees will continue to increase. Many tribes continue to strengthen their government organizations and directly compete with the Federal Government for a knowledgeable and skilled labor force. Many of the same skill sets needed by Indian Affairs are needed by other Federal and State agencies as well as the private sector. Replacement of retired staff will be more difficult.

Finally, the availability of budget resources to meet the needs in Indian Country is a challenge and will continue to be a challenge into the future. Budgets continue to be affected by increasing costs, increasing demand for services, and many other external factors. We need to develop a plan to provide for these needs by being as resourceful and capable as possible. To do this, we need to decide how a modern Indian Affairs organization can function by continuing to increase our use of technology, operating smarter, and working more collaboratively to meet our common mission goals.

To start this dialogue and collect your thoughts and ideas on how to proceed, we will be holding consultation meetings in each Region during the month of September. I have asked Dr. Robert Middleton, Director of the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development to be responsible for organizing and managing the consultation meetings as well as collecting and compiling the information the participants provide. The schedule of these meetings is enclosed. Your Regional Office will provide the specific locations for these meetings directly to you by August 17, 2007.

I look forward to seeing the results of these important meetings and using the information to guide us in making Indian Affairs as effective as possible as we move into the future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Middleton at 202-219-0740.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl J. Artman', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Carl J. Artman
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

Consultation Meeting Schedule

Note: All meetings will start at 8:00 am and break for lunch at 12:00 pm. They will resume at 1:00 pm and adjourn at 4:00 pm. Specific locations for the meetings will be transmitted to you by your Regional Office by August 17, 2007.

September 4, 2007	Albuquerque, NM
September 5, 2007	Gallup, NM
September 7, 2007	Sacramento, CA
September 10, 2007	Muskogee, OK
September 11, 2007	Anadarko, OK
September 13, 2007	Nashville, TN
September 17, 2007	Minneapolis, MN
September 19, 2007	Anchorage, AK
September 21, 2007	Portland, OR
September 24, 2007	Billings, MT
September 26, 2007	Phoenix, AZ
September 28, 2007	Aberdeen, SD