

# Indian News

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## SWIMMER TELLS ND BROADCASTERS OF ADMIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Ross Swimmer September 23 told the annual meeting of the North Dakota Associated Press's Broadcasting Association in Bismarck that President Reagan's policy of self-determination and a government-to-government relationship with Indian tribes has done more to advance their sovereignty than any action taken by any Administration in the past. "I sat down with the President when I took this job and talked to him about the policies we should follow that met the broad responsibilities that should be undertaken by Indian tribes under the policy statement he issued in January, 1983," Swimmer said. "He agreed with me and those were my marching orders to give the tribes more authority in making the decisions that affect their reservations on a day-to-day basis. It meant that the Bureau of Indian Affairs should get out of the way of the tribes; let them pave their path of advancement and as that happened the BIA would slowly go away," he added. Swimmer said there were many things to do before that could happen. "And I have begun the process of getting the BIA's house in order so that it could be accomplished down the road. We have signed a contract to strengthen internal management and administration of more than \$1.8 billion in Indian trust funds; convinced the Congress to begin the process of providing direct funding to Indian tribes to spend in areas of need instead of funneling the money through layers of BIA bureaucracy; been supportive of legislation to give the tribes the authority they seek; supported many tribes in their legal cases before the courts having to do with jurisdiction, water and land claims; and improved other internal systems and done away with outdated regulations which makes it easier for the tribes to end their dependence on the BIA."

When asked about a U.S. Senate report that more than \$5.8 billion in Indian oil and gas revenues were unaccounted for, Swimmer said the inflated figure was "mythology then and it is mythology today." In commenting on reports of poor education in BIA-operated schools, he said: "It is costing the U.S. Government \$8,200 per student annually to educate Indian children in our schools; we are losing effectiveness because we have too many teachers aides instead of teachers which means we have an employment program instead of an education program."

## INTERIOR SIGNS TRUST FUND CONTRACT

A September 14 press release announced the signing of a contract between the Department of Interior and Security Pacific National Bank of Los Angeles to strengthen internal management and administration of more than \$1.8 billion in Indian trust funds. "The contract will provide better management of resources belonging to individual Indians and tribes," Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel said at a contract signing ceremony in his office. "As

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trustee, what we are doing is assuring that the Indians will get the best possible administration and accounting of the assets involved," Hodel said. "And I want it known that this day would never have happened had it not been for the persistence of Ross Swimmer in assuring the Indian people the best possible return and accounting of their trust monies."

Swimmer, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs who signed the contract for the Government, called it "an historic day." He said this had been his number one priority since he took over the management of the Bureau almost three years ago. "This contracting for services does not end the responsibility of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in accounting for these funds we hold in trust; it strengthens the bond of responsibility and accountability we have to the Indian people," he said.

Michael J. Barrett, vice president of Security Pacific's Government Services Division, said his firm was extremely pleased to be selected as contractor in this important initiative for the BIA. "We feel this program can enrich the future of Indian tribes and individuals across the Nation. Our integrated approach to this project backed up by the technical expertise of Computer Data Systems, Inc., will provide the Native American community with the best service available to strengthen its financial future," he added.

Security Pacific is the Nation's sixth largest banking company with over \$70 billion in assets and has more than \$147 billion in assets under management.

**INDIAN GAMING BILL  
PASSES SENATE**

The U.S. Senate by voice vote on September 15 passed S. 555, a bill to regulate gaming on Indian lands. The bill creates a five-member National Indian Gaming Commission in the Department of Interior to regulate gaming on Indian lands. The chairman of the Commission would be named by the President and confirmed by the Senate; the remaining four members would be named by the Secretary of the Interior. Not more than three members could be of the same political party and appointments would be for three years.

Class I (social and traditional games) remain under exclusive tribal jurisdiction. Only class II (bingo and lotto) and class III (all forms of gaming not of class I or class II) would be regulated under the bill. Tribes would be required to adopt an ordinance or resolution approved by the Commission Chairman to permit gaming on their reservations. All management contracts for gaming operations would need approval of the Commission and existing contracts signed before passage of the bill would be submitted within 60 days to the Commission for approval. Class III gaming would require a tribal-state compact entered into between the Indian tribe and the state in which it is located. The continued operation of class II gaming activities of certain games played in the States of Washington, North and South Dakota and Michigan which ordinarily would fall within the definition of class III gaming and which were in operation on May 1, 1988, would be permitted under the bill. The measure will be sent to the House where action is expected September 26.

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