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*The Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association Takes Steps to Address the Trust Reorganization that is Moving Forward Without Consultation with Tribes*

PRESS RELEASE:  
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March 31, 2004

The Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association consists of the eighteen tribes in the Aberdeen Area which includes the states of Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The officers for the Association are: Harold Frazier, Chairman for the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is the Chairman; James C. Crawford, Chairman for the Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe is the Vice-chairman; Roger Trudell, Chairman for the Santee Sioux Nation is the Secretary; and John Yellow Bird Steele, President for the Oglala Sioux Tribe is the Treasurer.

The Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association held its regularly scheduled meeting in Flandreau, South Dakota on March 18, 2004. After much discussion on the Trust Reorganization a Resolution was passed to remove any Trust Officers or Deputy Superintendents off their reservations as according to their respective Exclusion Code pursuant to their Tribal Laws.

The staff from the Office of Special Trustee (OST) has stated that, "the Trust Reorganization has already left the station and that the reorganization is inevitable and the Tribes were consulted". According to a great number of Tribes across the Nation this is not true and they all share the common statement that they were not consulted.

Chairman Frazier stated that, "the Great Plains Region are major stake holders as they represent 27% of all IIM accounts, 36% of all landownership records and 37% of all land interests handled by the Bureau of Indian Affairs." The Great Plains Tribe has a unified voice to Congress and the Department of Interior (DOI) that true consultation with the Tribes did not occur". The Great Plains Tribal Leaders all agree that the OST's definition of "consultation" is to gather all the Tribes together and inform them about the Trust Reorganization. "True consultation is when the Tribes and the Government sit at the table together and negotiate and come to an agreement and this did not happen", said Chairman Frazier.

The Great Plains Tribal Chairmen presented an alternative Plan in which a majority of Trust function would remain at the Agency level and to fund more positions at the local level instead of top heavy bureaucracy where reform can be implemented closer to those who are affected by Trust Reform.

The Great Plains Tribal Chairmen went a step further by passing a Resolution with the following positions:

- the Tribes of the Great Plains Region are prepared to peacefully remove any Trust Officer or Deputy Superintendent off their reservation as according to their respective Exclusion Code pursuant to their Tribal Laws
- call on Congress and the Department of Interior to halt the implementation of the Reorganization Plan and the placement of Trust Officers and Deputy Superintendents on their Reservations.
- call on Congress to direct the Department of Interior to reprogram the funding for the Office of Special Trustee, the Trust Officers and the Deputy Superintendents to the Bureau of Indian Affairs at the local Reservation agencies

\* call on Indian Tribes/Governments throughout the Nation to join them in this effort.

"We took this action because we do not need any Trust Officer or Deputy Superintendent on our reservation to duplicate the duties of the current Superintendent when there is a greater need for services such as Range Technicians, Surveyors, Accountants, Appraisers and other Trust services at the local level" said Chairman Frazier.

The Office of Special Trustee has already placed two Trust Officers in the Oklahoma region and is in the process of advertising for a Trust Officer to be placed at the Pine Ridge Agency in the very near future.

Chairman Harold Frazier stated, "OST is moving forward without consultation and we will reject the implementation of their "Trust Plan". As sovereign nations we have the right to remove any individual who is a threat to our people and implementation of the "Trust Plan" is the beginning of termination and we will utilize our Tribal Laws to remove these people".

The Great Plains Tribal Chairman's Association is in agreement with the National Congress of American Indians to HALT the Reorganization.