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**NAVAJO NATION SPEAKER AND CHIEF JUSTICE ATTEND TRIBAL
BUDGET ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council Lawrence T. Morgan and Chief Justice Herb Yazzie were both in attendance at the Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Budget Advisory Council meeting on May 23, 2006, held in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The quarterly meetings are important for the Navajo Nation because tribal leaders are updated on the budget for the Department of the Interior and work on budget development and priorities for the future.

Heading the meeting were the Co-chair of the BIA/TBAC Joe Garcia, who is also the President of the National Congress of American Indians, and the acting assistant secretary for Indian Affairs Jim Cason. The meeting continues to tomorrow.

The BIA/TBAC group received updates for the BIA budgets for Fiscal Years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008. The Tribal Budget Advisory Council heard that the budget for FY 2005 has been closed out. The BIA/TBAC also discussed budget shortfalls for FY 2006 and appropriations for FY 2007. The budget development process for FY 2008 is in the beginning stages.

In addition to the BIA budget updates, the BIA/TBAC heard a similar update from the Office of Special Trustee, the office within the Department of Interior that handles trust services for Indian tribes and people. The group also heard from the Economic Development/Energy Program for the first time during the meeting.

Finally, the group heard from its own Budget Subcommittee. The subcommittee has been meeting with the federal Office of Management and Budget and with Cason on the budget development for FY 2008. The budget development is based on priorities that were set during the November 2005 BIA/TBAC meeting in Pala, California. The priorities are Public Safety & Justice, Natural Resources, Contract Support Costs and Education.

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