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Stephanie A. Finley
United States Attorney
(337) 262-6618
mona.hardwick@usdoj.gov

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER, UNITED STATES ATTORNEY STEPHANIE A. FINLEY, AND OTHER OFFICIALS HOLD LISTENING CONFERENCE WITH TRIBAL LEADERS

Lafayette, La.: Stephanie A. Finley, United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, joined Attorney General Eric Holder and other administration officials this week as they met with tribal leaders and advocates in the fields of tribal safety and domestic violence in Rapid City, S.D. The tribal listening conference coincided with the one year anniversary of President Obama's signing of the Tribal Law and Order Act (TLOA) into law - a measure aimed at helping both tribal governments and the federal government better address the unique public safety challenges facing Native American communities across the country.

U.S. Attorney Finley met last week with representatives from Louisiana's tribes at the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe in Marksville, La. The Western District of Louisiana is home to four tribes - the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana. U.S. Attorney Finley stated, "This meeting was the first of it's kind in our district. My goal is to continue and expand on the good relationship that we have with all of the tribes. Our Native American communities bring so much to our district and to the state. It is important that we address the issues that are unique to their communities. It is a priority for me and for this administration."

During this week, U.S. Attorney Finley, Attorney General Holder, Associate Attorney General Thomas J. Perrelli, Assistant Attorney General Ignacia Moreno of the Environment and Natural Resources Division, Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs Secretary Larry Echo Hawk, and 30 other United States Attorneys engaged in a host of conversations, including combating violence against women, protecting tribal lands, honoring traditional Native American values, and training tribal prosecutors and police forces. U.S. Attorney Finley serves on the Native American Issues Subcommittee (NAIS) of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, advising Attorney General Holder on Indian Country matters since her appointment as United States Attorney.

Soon after he came into office, Attorney General Eric Holder identified building and sustaining safe and secure tribal communities as one of the Department of Justice's top priorities. In June of 2009, the Department launched a wide-ranging initiative to strengthen public safety in Indian Country. Since that time, the Department has taken a number of steps to deepen its commitment to tribal communities and to develop more effective partnerships with tribal leaders, police, prosecutors, courts, and advocates to combat crime in tribal communities.

Also this week, the Justice Department is hosting the 2011 National Intertribal Youth Summit in Santa Fe, NM, convening 175 young men and women from nearly 50 tribal communities across the country for the week-long summit. The summit features administration officials from the White House and the Department of Justice, Interior, Health and Human Services and Education, and provides an opportunity for Obama administration officials to hear directly from youth in Indian Country.

Last week, the Obama Administration unveiled a new proposal for legislation to combat the epidemic rates of violence against Native women in Indian Country. The proposed legislation offers a broader set of tools for federal and tribal law enforcement agencies to hold perpetrators of domestic violence accountable for their crimes. It builds on the philosophy of the TLOA by recognizing that tribal authorities, in collaboration with their federal partners, are best able to address crime in their communities if they are given the tools and resources needed to do it.

For a list of the Justice Department's accomplishments in Indian Country, visit: <http://www.tribaljusticeandsafety.gov/docs/indian-country-accomplishments.pdf>

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