



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian

Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
JUNE 15, 2012

CONTACTS: John G. Duncan (315) 448-0672
Elizabeth Horsman (518) 314-7800

**ONEIDA NATION POLICE DEPARTMENT AND SAINT REGIS MOHAWK POLICE
OFFICERS AWARDED BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
FEDERAL OFFICER CERTIFICATIONS**

Special Training in Canastota, New York

[Plattsburgh, New York] — United States Attorney Richard S. Hartunian, Oneida Nation Police Department Chief Joseph Smith, and Saint Regis Mohawk Police Chief Andy Thomas announce that 16 Oneida Nation and 6 additional Saint Regis Mohawk Police Officers have earned and received Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) special federal law enforcement commission certifications which delegate BIA authority to enforce federal criminal statutes in certain circumstances within their jurisdictions. The certifications followed training and an examination held in the week of May 17, 2012 in Canastota.

The United States Department of Justice and the Bureau of Indian Affairs teamed to produce the training materials for the new course, “Criminal Jurisdiction in Indian Country”, designed to strengthen the ability of tribal and local law enforcement to participate in the investigation and enforcement of federal crimes in Indian country, fulfilling a key training requirement under the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. The training was offered for only the second time in Canastota. The Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 has among its provisions greater authority for law enforcement and prosecution by tribal police departments and tribal courts. “The special law enforcement commission gives tribal police the ability to investigate and make arrests in federal cases,” said Leslie A. Hagen, National Indian Country Training Coordinator for the Justice Department’s Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys. “This authority, and the protections that go along

with it, helps build the capacity of tribal law enforcement to keep their communities safe and strengthens federal and tribal partnerships for public safety."

United States Attorney Richard Hartunian agreed with the importance of the training within the Northern District of New York and provided the training through his Indian Country Liaison and prosecutor, a position he created and filled to address specific public safety concerns within Indian Country in northern New York.

The Criminal Jurisdiction in Indian Country training occurred over three days in Canastota at the Oneida Nation Police Department which has a state of the art training facility. The national level training was locally customized for New York-trained officers, and was expanded to take advantage of the depth of experience of the attending officers.

This brings to a total of 34 Oneida Nation police officers and 15 Saint Regis Mohawk police officers who are certified by the BIA to perform federal law enforcement functions and refer cases directly to the United States Attorney's Office for federal prosecution. Saint Regis Mohawk Police Officers also have New York State peace officer status and jurisdiction on their reservation through New York and federal law. The BIA certifications last for five years.

"We are fortunate to have the opportunity to work on the front line with these two police departments and to assist in training toward better federal investigations and prosecutions -- where appropriate and in coordination with the surrounding county District Attorneys -- to enhance public safety and the administration of justice in Indian Country," said United States Attorney Hartunian. "This is particularly important where we often have a longer reach for criminals under federal jurisdiction, such as when a crime takes place on both sides of the United States-Canada border on the Akwesasne Mohawk Territory in the north."

Any questions may be directed to Assistant United States Attorney Elizabeth Horsman, Indian Country Liaison, Plattsburgh, New York at 518-314-7800.

Attachments: Photograph- Suggested caption: "Oneida Nation Police Department and Saint Regis Mohawk Police Department Officers earn Bureau of Indian Affairs federal certification after training May 15-17, 2012 in Canastota, New York."