



## News from

—by Ron Scherler



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is committed to fulfilling its trust responsibilities to

American Indians and Alaska Natives. To do this effectively and efficiently, BLM has created twelve new staff positions—BLM Indian Lands Surveyors—and is developing the Certified Federal Surveyor (CFedS) Program.

One BLM Indian Lands Surveyor has been placed in each of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Regional Offices. The surveyors' primary responsibilities include consultation for the BIA Real Estate program on such issues as boundaries, surveys, land ownership, resource management, and other legal and technical survey matters related to Indian trust, restricted and fee lands. The surveyors will also ensure the survey work complies with applicable laws, regulations, and survey instructions. In essence, these surveyors will help resolve problems caused by conflicting evidence, request surveys, and develop specific solutions to survey and title situations within their regions. Because their role is primarily to consult, they will not perform survey field work as part of their day-to-day duties.

The Bureau of Land Management recognizes that accurate trust management must begin with good surveys; that the private sector provides an excellent resource for accomplishing these surveys; that Indian lands have some unique survey issues; that many essential records are found only with the Bureau of Indian Affairs offices; and that a program to train and certify private sector surveyors in these and other unique aspects of Indian lands surveys is needed to prepare surveyors to execute the surveys.

The CFedS program is a voluntary program developed to train and certify Professional Licensed Surveyors to perform boundary surveys and related cadastral services. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Tribes, individual allottees and federal agencies will be encouraged to select surveyors from the CFedS roster when contracting for surveys or other cadastral services.

The program will consist of three components: initial training, certification examination, and advanced continuing education modules. The initial training will be delivered by various distance-learning methods and will require approximately 120 hours to complete, which is equivalent to a 3-credit college course.

For more information on CFedS visit:  
<http://www.blm.gov/cadastral/truststd/trust.htm>