

Rosebud Sioux Tribe
Mr. Rodney M. Bordeaux,
President
Rosebud Indian Reservation
Rosebud, SD 57570

Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Oversight Field Hearing
*“The Needs and Challenges of Tribal Law Enforcement on Indian
Reservations”*
Friday, June 1st, 2007 at 12:00 pm at the
Lower Brule Tribal Headquarters
187 Oyate Circle
Lower Brule, SD

“Good afternoon Madam Chair Herseth-Sandlin and members of the Committee. My name is Rodney Bordeaux and I am the President of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. On behalf of the members of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, I would like to thank all of you for the invitation to testify before you here today on the needs and challenges of tribal law enforcement on Indian Reservations.”

“The Rosebud Indian Reservation is located in south-central South Dakota and has twenty communities that encompass a four-county area. It is home to approximately 19,000 of the approximately 26,000 members of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. I am glad to see the focus of this hearing today is going to be on Law Enforcement issues that are of critical concern to not only the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, but also to many other tribes throughout the state of South Dakota, and the rest of the United States. Many of our tribes are located in very rural and isolated parts of this region. Many of our tribes suffer from high rates of unemployment, low life-expectancies, high rates of diabetes, heart disease, suicides, low secondary and post-secondary graduation rates, along many other categories.”

“As many may already know, at Rosebud there is an alarming increase in illegal activity. For example...

- Methamphetamine use is on the rise.
- Gang violence is on the rise.
- Crime has increased steadily between 18-23% over the last four years.

- The Rosebud Police Department receives approximately 22,000 calls for emergency services each year.
- We are under-funded to adequately provide law enforcement functions for public safety. We are short by 60 police officers.
- The officer-to-resident ratio at Rosebud is 0.9 per 1,000 residents, whereas, the minimum officer-to-resident ratio in the United States is in the range of 3.9 to 6.6 officers per 1,000 residents. When comparing the Rosebud ratio of 0.9 per 1,000 residents to 6.6 officers per 1,000 residents in the United States, we are short of police officers by over 700%”
- The Rosebud Sioux Tribe currently has 19 police officers to cover a land base of 922,759 acres, where each officer has to cover over 48,566 acres of land. With an average of three 8-hour shifts, we only have an average of 6 officers on duty per each shift to cover over 22,000 people, tribal members, as well as non-tribal members, who call our 911 dispatch center.
- The Adult Jail at Rosebud does not have adequate space for the service population. The Jail itself has consistent water leaks. The Air Conditioning system fails every summer. There is no space for rehabilitation services for inmates such as a library for GED, or, higher education services to help keep inmates from coming back to jail.
- In addition to the \$1.7 million the Rosebud Sioux Tribe’s Police Department receives in federal funding, we would need an additional 60 uniformed police officers at a cost of \$5.1 million, for an annual base funding amount of \$6.8 million. This would require a 400% increase in funding just to provide adequate law enforcement services *to all citizens* within Todd County, and all tribal communities within Mellette, Tripp, & Gregory Counties.

“Madam Chair and members of the Committee, the direct answer to these problems is more adequate funding within the Bureau of Indian Affairs from Congress for law enforcement personnel, vehicles and equipment, and incarceration facilities, so that we can cover the vast amounts of area that require us to provide adequate public safety. At a minimum, the funding from Congress has to at least be increased by 400% Three-year grants from the Department of Justice are not enough to provide a continuity of public safety for all residents, Indian and non-Indian, within the Rosebud Indian

Reservation. These grants eventually run out and create yet another public safety crisis.

“We cannot raise taxes on our land-base because it’s all federally-held land that cannot be taxed. Therefore, we cannot raise the funding necessary to adequately fund our law enforcement program and our court system like other cities and counties can. We do not have the necessary economic activity sufficient enough to raise tax-revenue to fund our government services such as law enforcement. Yet, we are expected to provide law enforcement in one the fastest growing population areas within South Dakota. We are in a real crisis here...we need your help from Congress in order to alleviate these ongoing problems.”

“I thank you Madam Chair Herseth-Sandlin and members of the Committee for your time today to address this important issue on behalf of the residents of the Rosebud Indian Reservation. I’ll stand by for any questions that you may have.