



# Memorandum

U.S. Department of  
Transportation

Office of the Secretary  
of Transportation  
Office of Inspector General

Subject: **INFORMATION:** Audit Announcement –  
Federal Highway Administration's Oversight of  
the Indian Reservation Roads Program  
Federal Highway Administration  
Project No. 12U3004M000

Date: May 8, 2012

From: Joseph W. Comé *Joe Comé*  
Assistant Inspector General for  
Highway and Transit Audits

Reply to  
Attn. of: JA-40

To: Federal Highway Administrator

The Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) system provides transportation and public access to, within, and through Indian reservations. According to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Federal Lands Highways (FLH), approximately 11 billion vehicle miles are traveled annually on the system even though more than 60 percent of its roads are unpaved and 27 percent of its bridges are classified as deficient. The IRR program addresses transportation needs of tribes by providing funds for planning, design, construction, and maintenance activities. From fiscal year 2005 through fiscal year 2011, the program received \$3.17 billion, including \$310 million provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. FHWA has classified the IRR, FLH's largest program, as high risk. The program is complex because it requires working with 565 federally recognized Indian tribes, which have varying expertise in completing highway infrastructure projects. In addition, FHWA must coordinate extensively with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs to implement the program.

Our objectives are to assess whether FHWA is (1) effectively coordinating with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to administer and manage the IRR program and (2) providing adequate oversight of projects contracted directly with tribes.

We plan to start this audit the week of May 14, 2012. We will conduct our work at FHWA and other related sites as needed. We will contact your audit liaison to schedule an entrance conference. If I can answer any questions or be of further

assistance, please contact me at (202) 366-5630 or Gary Middleton, Program Director, at (202) 366-0625.

#

cc: Arthur Jacobs, FHWA, HAIM-13  
Martin Gertel, M-1