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For Immediate Release:

**Crow Nation and State of Montana Sign Compact
Signing Ceremony to be Held on Feb. 6 in Washington, DC**

February 1, 2008 – A signing ceremony will be held in Washington, DC, between the Crow Nation and the State of Montana to celebrate a compact reached between the Crow Nation and Montana for the Office of Secretary of State Brad Johnson to handle filings generated under the Model Tribal Secured Transactions Act (MTSTA). The ceremony will occur Wednesday, February 6, at 5:00 PM in the Mansfield Room at the U.S. Capitol Building. In April, 2006, the Crow Nation became the first tribe to adopt the MTSTA, and the compact with Montana is the first of its kind.

The MTSTA provides model legislation that covers a type of commerce called secured transactions. It was drafted by the Uniform Law Commission (ULC) over a period of four years with the active participation of representatives of a number of Indian tribes, including the Crow Nation. The drafting project also received considerable support from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

Secured transactions are agreements between parties in which personal property is used as collateral for loans or other obligations. The kinds of transactions that come within the scope of secured transactions law are as varied as bank loans for business start-ups, consumer or business revolving lines of credit, and auto loan financing, to name but a few.

Secured transaction laws in the United States generally fall within the jurisdiction of the states and not the federal government, and are governed by Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). As sovereign nations, Indian tribes are not subject to state laws. Commercial law varies among the tribes, with many having no laws governing secured transactions.

Many Indian tribes, tribal entities, tribal-owned businesses and individual tribal members have encountered significant barriers when seeking loans or other financing from off-reservation sources. One reason frequently cited is the lack of sufficient tribal commercial law to guide the parties in a business transaction that would fall within a tribe's jurisdiction. Access to affordable credit is a fundamental component of sustainable economic development in all modern private market economies. When the rules governing lender/borrower relationships are uncertain or nonexistent, the risks to the lender increase and the lender may either refuse to lend or may increase the interest rate and other costs of the transaction to offset the risks. Therefore, to effectively enable access to credit by businesses and individuals at affordable rates and on competitive terms, rules are needed to govern these lender/borrower relationships.

The MTSTA was drafted with the objective of creating a uniform tribal secured transactions law that is, to the extent practicable, consistent with the core principles of UCC Article 9. In order to

accommodate tribal business, legal, and cultural environments, the MTSTA differs from UCC Article 9 in a number of respects. However, the core principles, terminology, and processes that inform the MTSTA are sufficiently similar to the UCC to ensure that tribal and non-tribal practitioners will feel at ease working within both tribal and state jurisdictions.

The MTSTA, by establishing a substantive and procedural framework which will provide certainty to secured transactions, should be beneficial to economic development for Indian tribes. By adopting model commercial acts such as the MTSTA, Indian tribes can achieve a degree of uniformity with state law that reduces financial risks and facilitates relationships with off-reservation lenders.

Representatives of the Uniform Law Commission have been invited to attend the signing ceremony in recognition of the ULC's crucial role in developing the MTSTA. Attending on behalf of the ULC are: William H. Henning, Distinguished Professor of Law at the University of Alabama School of Law, Executive Director of the ULC during the time the MTSTA was being developed and current Alabama Uniform Law Commissioner; Timothy Berg, managing partner of Fennemore Craig in Phoenix, Chair of the ULC committee that drafted the MTSTA and an Arizona Uniform Law Commissioner; and Carl S. Bjerre, Professor of Law at the University of Oregon School of Law, Reporter for the MTSTA project and an Oregon Uniform Law Commissioner.

Information on the MTSTA and may be found at the ULC's website at www.nccusl.org.

The Uniform Law Commission, now in its 117th year, comprises more than 350 practicing lawyers, governmental lawyers, judges, law professors, and lawyer-legislators from every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Uniform law commissioners are appointed by their states to draft and promote enactment of uniform laws that are designed to solve problems common to all the states.

After receiving the ULC's seal of approval, a uniform act is officially promulgated for consideration by the states, and legislatures are urged to adopt it. Since its inception in 1892, the ULC has been responsible for more than 200 acts, among them such bulwarks of state statutory law as the Uniform Commercial Code, the Uniform Probate Code and the Uniform Securities Act.

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