

Juneau BIA office downgraded

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Bureau of Indian Affairs' regional office in Juneau would be converted to a field office and moved to Anchorage under a plan proposed Thursday by Interior Secretary James Watt.

Under the plan the number of regional offices nationally would be cut from 12 to six resulting in the saving of \$16 million annually and cutting staffing levels by 500, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Kenneth Smith said in briefing congressional staffers.

Under the proposal, which

Smith said was subject to modification after consultation with Congress and Indian leaders, six of the current regional offices would be closed and another two would be downgraded in status.

The regional offices that would be closed are in Aberdeen, S.D.; Anadarko, Okla.; Muskogee, Okla.; Billings, Mont.; Arlington, Va.; and Sacramento, Calif.

The four regional centers which would not be moved are in Portland, Ore.; Minneapolis, Minn.; Albuquerque, N.M. and Phoenix, Ariz.