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For Immediate Release: November 29, 1984
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Interior Secretary William Clark announced today that Kenneth L. Smith, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs at the Department of the Interior, has submitted his resignation to President Reagan, effective December 7.

A Wasco Indian from the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon, Smith was the first Indian from a reservation background to direct the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Before coming to Washington in 1981 he served for ten years as the general manager of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation.

Secretary Clark _said, "This Administration has been well served by Ken Smith, and he will be remembered for his many accomplishments and by all who had the opportunity to work with him.

In his resignation letter, Smith noted that he had fulfilled his commitment to serve a full term and it is time for me to take on new challenges and opportunities.

Smith praised President Reagan for his Indian policy which "returned decision making authority to the tribal governments" and for his support of “innovative efforts in developing the economies on reservations."

In October of this year, Smith was honored by the United Indian Development Association as the 1984 Jay Silverheels Achievement Award winner for his significant contributions to the Indian community.

Smith, 49, grew up on the Warm Springs Reservation. After graduating from the University of Oregon in 1959, he went to work for the Confederated Tribes as an accountant and subsequently became controller and then general manager.

At Senate confirmation hearings in 1981, Oregon Senator Mark Hatfield testified that Smith had "utilized his managerial and organizational skills to make the (Warm Springs) reservation a model of economic success with more than 1,000 persons employed and an annual payroll of more than $10 million."

Throughout his term of office, Smith constantly stressed the need for tribes to establish sound, stable tribal governments to provide leadership for tribal programs and to create the environment for economic development on the reservation.

In a June 1984 talk to the National Tribal Chairmen's Association, he "There are breakdowns and insufficiencies and other problems in the BIA and on reservations -- and I am terribly concerned about them, just as you are determined to do whatever I can to eliminate them -- except that I won't go back to the old paternalistic band aid approach that covers up the symptom and does nothing to address the real problems. We are still convinced that Indian self-determination is the most effective policy for producing real change and real improvement in Indian reservation life."

Smith expects to serve as a consultant at Interior for the next month or two. He has announced no other

future plans, but indicated he expects to return to Oregon.