Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Kevin Gover announced today that he is transferring the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Accounting Management from BIA's regional office in Albuquerque to a new Policy, Management and Budget Office in Washington, D.C. The new office will assist him in more effectively allocating BIA's resources.

The move was recommended by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in a study of BIA management and administration commissioned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. NAPA urged Gover to elevate BIA's accounting function as part of an expansion of high-level staff support the Assistant Secretary needs to plan, organize, coordinate, control and direct the Bureau's many activities and programs.

Gover said in explaining the decision, Alt is absolutely imperative that we establish a top-notch, top-level accounting function to establish credibility with the executive branch, Congress and the Indian people we serve.

In the latest of a long series of poor annual report cards, the Interior Department's Inspector General faulted the Bureau for failure to obtain a clean audit, to record or account for loan costs properly, to collect debts on time, and to pay bills on time during Fiscal Year 1998. Further, there were material weaknesses in property management accounts, control over automated information management systems, and control over financial integrity reviews.

NAPA noted the complexity of BIA's mission, combined with the extremely limited staff oversight and coordination of line management, as key factors in the steady erosion of BIA's administrative capabilities.

Gover is asking all employees of the Division of Accounting Management to accept equivalent positions in Washington, D.C. AI know it's not easy to pull up stakes here and move to Washington - I went through that three years ago. But that's where I need your help.

Those employees who choose to relocate will be given full relocation benefits, and will be requested to report to the new office by February 13, 2000. Those who do not, will receive assistance in finding alternative employment, either within or outside the federal government. Approximately 65 BIA employees will be affected by the action. BIA employs an additional 320 people in Albuquerque who will not be affected.