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Idaho agency enacting layoffs, closures

Bonnors Ferry among nine sites cut by Health and Welfare

In a move that is expected to save \$7 million, Health and Welfare will lay off 126 employees and close nine of its 29 offices.

“Hopefully things will recover,” said Tom Shanahan, a spokesman. “We’re worried about future cuts more than anything. We just don’t know what 2011 brings if state revenues don’t start picking up.”

Bonnors Ferry’s is among the offices slated for closure, and although the St. Maries office will remain open, it won’t offer walk-in public assistance. The offices in Coeur d’Alene, Ponderay and Kellogg will remain open.

Also being closed are offices in American Falls, Bellevue, Emmett, Jerome, McCall, Orofino, Rupert and Soda Springs. Closure decisions were made based on client traffic, ability to deliver services from another location and the savings potential of the office site, an agency news release said.

Of the 87 workers employed at those offices, 21 positions are being eliminated; remaining staff will be reassigned. The additional 105 layoffs include 32 from administrative offices in Boise and 73 from other regional offices and institutions.

Two of the eight employees in Bonnors Ferry are being laid off, along with one of the seven employees in St. Maries. Two of the 29 people working in Ponderay are losing their jobs, along with four of the 161 people who work in the Coeur d’Alene office, Shanahan said.

Most layoffs will occur in May, which will enable employees to retain their medical coverage until July 1, Shanahan said. Office closures will depend on leases and time frames for transferring remaining staff but should be completed during May, he said.