NEW IBERIA- The Federal Government announced plans Friday to close the U.S. Naval Auxiliary Air Station in New Iberia by January, 1965.

Word was released simultaneously by Capt. Gordon J. Brown, commanding officer here, and by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara in Washington, D.C.

The closure is part of a government effort to reduce U.S. military defense spending.

Congressman Edwin E. Willis learned the news in St. Martinville and said he was taken by surprise. He immediately dispatched a telegram to President Johnson protesting the closure and the manner in which it was announced.

New Iberians went into action in an effort to counteract the order which would put an end to the four-year-old Navy installation which has contributed greatly to the economy of the city, with an estimated annual payroll of about $3 million. Annual Naval Station purchases from local sources was put at $168,000.