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Award of three contracts totaling over $707,500 for road improvement projects on the Fort Berthold Reservation in North Dakota and the Cheyenne River and Pine Ridge Reservations in South Dakota was announced today by the Department of the Interior.

A contract of $285,102 was awarded to construct one 150-foot bridge, and to grade, drain and surface 12.9 miles on the Cheyenne River Reservation, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash said. The strip of highway will run west from Cherry Creek in Zieback County, South Dakota, and will provide the first half of all-weather access road between the Cherry Creek and Bridger communities in the extreme southwestern section of the Reservation. The low bidder was E. Stoltenberg and Son of St. Paul, Nebraska. Six bids were received on this project, ranging to $337,044.

On the Fort Berthold Reservation, a $269,636 contract to grade, drain, and surface 14 miles of road, from near White Shield in McLean County, North Dakota westward, was awarded to Tennefos Construction Company, Inc., Fargo, North Dakota. A part of the perimeter road system for the Garrison Reservoir, the project will serve to increase recreation and tourist travel on the reservation. Seven bids, ranging to $291,769, were received for this project.

On the Pine Ridge Reservation, a contract for $152,800 provides for grading and drainage of 6.6 miles of school bus route northwest of Kyle, in Shannon County, South Dakota. J. F. Bailey, of Bonesteel, South Dakota, was the successful bidder with the lowest of four bids that ranged to $189,496.

Improvement of reservation roads is an important phase of resource development efforts carried on by the Bureau of Indian Affairs on Indian lands to improve economic conditions and stimulate employment. The North and South Dakota projects will enhance school bus service, make city markets more accessible to farmers, stimulate recreational development on reservation lands, and create employment for Indian construction workers, Commissioner Nash said.