Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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A $16 million road construction program has been carried out on Indian reservations by the Bureau of Indian Affairs during the fiscal year which will end June 30, 1965, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash announced today.

Improved roads open up undeveloped sections of Indian reservations for industrial and commercial development, tourism, and increased recreational use. More and better roads also mean improved school bus services for Indian youngsters and easier access to market areas for Indian farmers and ranchers.

The two latest road contracts, announced today by the Bureau, total more than one-half million dollars for projects on Indian lands in the Dakotas and in California.

A $409,657 contract for grading and bituminous surfacing of more than 13 miles of road west of the Oahe Reservoir in North Dakota from State Highway 24 near Fort Yates west to State Highway 6, will provide Indians on the Standing Rock Reservation with an all-weather paved road to the market cities of Mandan and Bismarck, North Dakota, and will also make recreational areas more accessible to tourists. Low bidder was the Brezina Construction Company, Inc., of Rapid City, South Dakota.

A second contract for $134,750 was awarded for construction of more than 1.5 miles of roads and water lines on Big Sandy Reservation near Auberry, in Fresno County, California. This marks the final road project in a public works construction program undertaken on forty-one California rancherias and reservations under the Rancheria Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-671). Low bidder was Dan E. Mason, Inc., of Fresno, California.

One of the year's largest contracts, more than $1 million awarded in April, will open a north-south route through that part of the Navajo Reservation where Arizona and New Mexico have a common border. It will also improve access to the Wheatfields Lake Recreation Area. The project calls for construction of a 16 mile stretch of Navajo Route 12, one of the most scenic highways on the reservation, which will link State Route 264 at Window Rock, Arizona to State Route 64 at Mexican Water, Arizona. A contract for the remaining 17 mile stretch of Navajo 12 is expected to be awarded this summer.

Other road construction projects were undertaken by the Bureau on 55 Indian reservations located in 22 States during the current fiscal year.