Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Commissioner of Indian Affairs Morris Thompson today announced the award of a contract amounting to nearly $1.33 million to construct a Bureau of Indian Affairs elementary school at Casa Blanca, Arizona, on the Gila River Indian reservation. The school will serve young Pima Indians.

Successful bidder is J. R. Youngdale Construction, Inc., San Diego, California.

"About four years ago it became obvious that this new facility was essential if the young people on the Gila River Reservation were to get education that would measure up to that of other American citizens," Thompson said.

A planning committee made up of members of the Gila River Indian Community members, education specialists from the State of Arizona and other States, and Bureau of Indian Affairs personnel was formed to consider the various educational needs that might be served by the school.

A program was developed and incorporated into where the unique characteristics of the Pima people, who have continued the tradition of the ancient Hohokam --irrigated farming, industry, peacefulness, and artistic excellence, especially in basket making. Provisions for language work was included.

"The planners hope that the school will become the center of community life in Casa Blanca and that it will reflect not only the heritage of the Pima people but their aspirations as well," Thompson said.

The new unit will include four classroom buildings, instructional material center, combination building housing kitchen-dining facilities, and a multi-purpose area. When completed, the project will accommodate students in kindergarten through the eighth grade.