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Planned development of visitor attractions in Indian areas of the U.S. is proving to be one of the more effective economic rehabilitation programs designed to provide tribal members with self-sufficiency, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said yesterday (September 16) in the official opening of a new highway link on the Navajo Trail.

As part of the ceremonies, Secretary Udall dedicated a unique marker where the corners of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah meet.

Completion of the 160-mile link on Navajo Route One, the first all-weather paved road to cross the northern portion of the huge Navajo Reservation, provides an important east-west connecting link between Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado and Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona. In addition, it provides new vistas, much of it through colorful Indian lands, for visitors en route to Bryce and Zion National Parks in Utah and a number of national monuments and other Southwest attractions.

In his dedication address, Secretary Udall said he was confident that the highway project, which he as a member of the House of Representatives joined with Senator Clinton Anderson as co-sponsor, would ultimately carry visitors to "our next new great national park--the Canyonlands in Utah. “

"This spot, where the four great States of Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico meet, has been one of our last frontiers,” he said.

"The Navajo Indians, whose lands occupy three corners of this unique point, and the Mountain Utes, who own the fourth, have remained largely isolated because of the lack of passable roads. Too, this lack of roads has been one of the barriers between these four States.

“Now, with completion of this vital link, commerce and friendship should thrive to the benefit of all--the Navajos and the Utes, as well as their non- Indian brothers in these growing mountain States. This highway will open up a whole new field of opportunity for both of these Tribes, and they should take steps at once to preserve the recreational and other resource values. I urge the tribes now, before it is too late, to develop a program for the orderly development of facilities along the routes and the kinds of zoning that will preserve the beauty of mountains and canyons which lie everywhere at hand."

The Secretary informed the tribes that the Department would, in cooperation with the tribal councils, begin immediately such a study for development of a plan for tribal consideration.

Lands surrounding the Four Corners site are owned by the Navajo Tribe and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, both of which participated in the dedication ceremonies.

"America is on the move in more ways than economic -growth," Secretary Udall said. "Our National Parks--a good barometer of prosperity-...have just ended record seasons of attendance, and this trend will continue to accelerate."

In the many economic rehabilitation programs now being administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs

and in the 56 Reservation Development Area projects being activated under the Area Redevelopment Act, tourism is emerging as a vital factor on the road to self-sufficiency for Indians everywhere," Secretary Udall said.

Self-supporting projects to provide income-producing outdoor recreation facilities are now being planned in Indian areas in Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, 'Wyoming, Wisconsin, Colorado, Alaska, and elsewhere, the Interior Secretary said. The tribal-owned Fort Apache Reservation's White Mountain Enterprise in Arizona is currently expanding recreational development from strictly seasonal to year-round use, including construction of a year-round lodge and development of ski slopes.

Secretary Udall said the newly formed Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in the Interior Department was providing valuable trained counsel to Indian groups interested in developing a tourism industry.

"We look forward to a generation of All-American travelers discovering the unparalleled scenic beauties and colorful history of America's first settlers," Secretary Udall said.