Media Contact: Office of the Secretary
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Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, in cooperation with the Navajo Trail Association, is organizing an unusual three-way observance to be held September 16 at Four Corners where Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah meet.

The ceremonies will: (1) mark the completion of Navajo Route 1, the first all-weather paved road to cross the northern portion of the huge Navajo Reservation; (2) dedicate a new monument marking the Four Corners site, which is the only point at which four States meet; (3) observe the successful completion of a 25-year effort by the Navajo Trail Association to construct a primary highway across southern Colorado into and through the Indian reservation country of southwestern Colorado, northwestern New Mexico, northeastern Arizona, and southeastern Utah.

"This will be a great day for many people in that fascinating part of our country," Secretary Udall commented.

"I know what this new highway means to the Navajo people, not only in terms of a greater tourist industry for their new Tribal Parks Program but in such fundamental matters as better access to doctors and hospitals, better educational opportunities for their children, more rapid economic development and improved relationships and contacts with surrounding communities."

(As a member of the House of Representatives from Arizona, Secretary Udall, with Senator Clinton Anderson of New Mexico, co-sponsored the legislation that provided funds for Navajo Route 1. The new highway stretches 160 miles from Tuba City, Arizona, on the west to the Four Corners site.

Secretary Udall noted that the lands surrounding the Four Corners site are owned by the Navajo Tribe and the Ute. Mountain Ute Tribe, both under the trusteeship of the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior. The Navajos own the New Mexico, Arizona and Utah quarters, and the Utes own the Colorado quarter. Both tribes are taking part in the celebration.

The monument has been designed by the Bureau of Land Management, successor to the old General Land Office whose survey crews first marked the spot in 1868. The plans have been approved by both tribes, and the monument is now under construction by BIA. A new bronze cap, carefully kept at the same precise point and elevation as the original because the marker is still used occasionally for survey purposes, will be placed in the center of the colorful plaza-type structure. Each State is providing a bronze casting of its State seal for the monument.

In a recent letter to Mr. Ralph Buress of Delta, Colorado, president of the Navajo Trail Association, Secretary Udall praised the Navajo Trail Association for its contributions to improved roads in the region during the past 25 years. He noted that one direct result of the Association's efforts in supporting development of U.S. 160--when Navajo Route 1 is completed in September--is a good east-west connecting link between Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado and Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona.

"With Bryce and Zion National Parks nearby in Utah, with the many National Monuments in this four-state region, and with the proposed Canyonlands National Park in eastern Utah, every new paved road in this area opens up new recreational horizons for citizens all over America, and new economic possibilities for the region itself," Secretary Udall said.

Secretary Udall said that the new highway through the reservation was one link in his "Golden Circle" plan to connect major parks and monuments in the region by adequate roads.

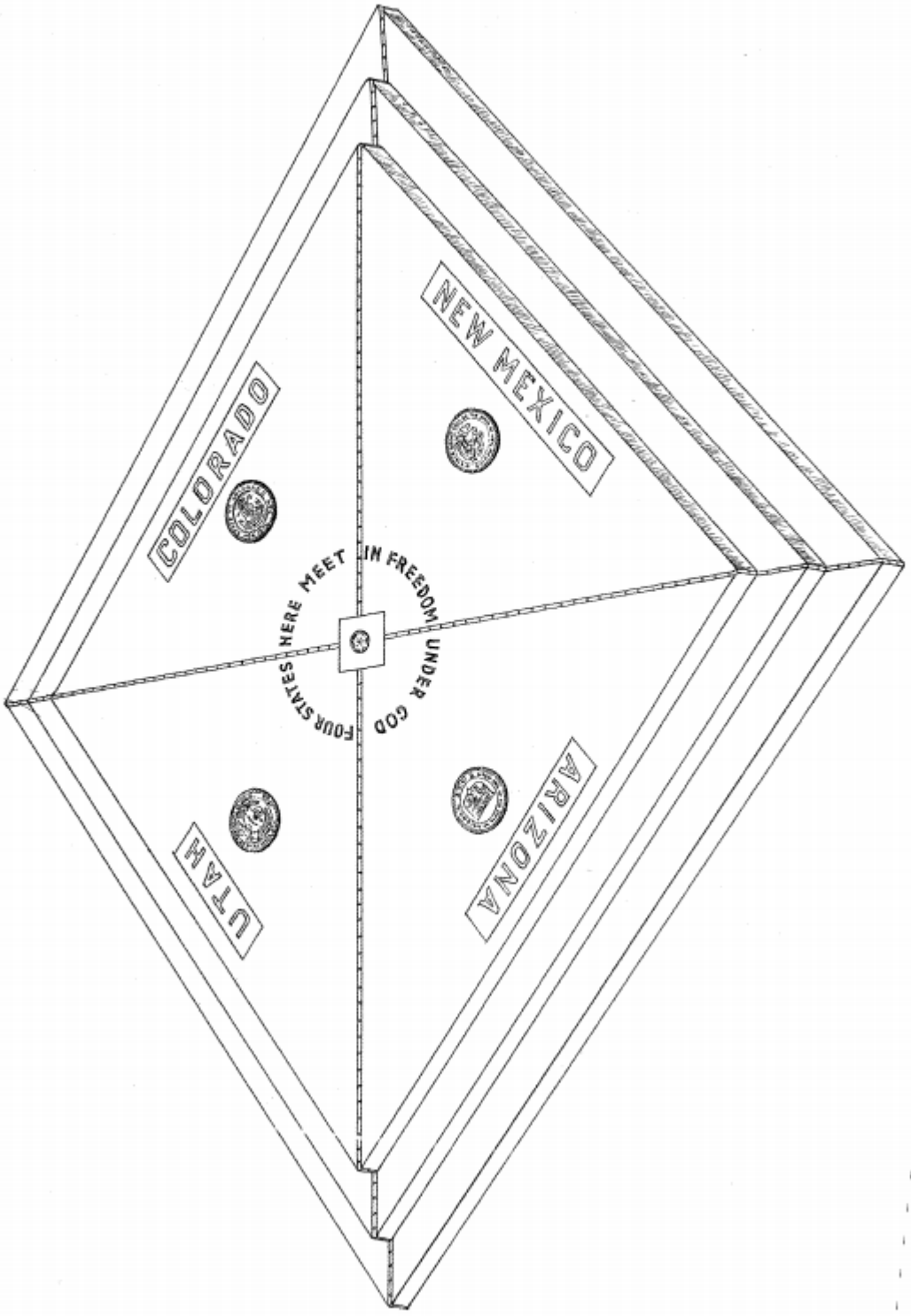
Governors, Senators and Congressmen of the four States, past and present, will be invited to take part in the celebration Secretary Udall noted. He pointed out that Governors and state highway departments of Colorado and New Mexico were responsible for providing connecting links to the Four Corners site, and that his own home state of Arizona had contributed greatly by agreeing to provide maintenance for Navajo Route 1 after it is completed.

Plans for the observance are now underway, details to be announced later.

Local headquarters address of the organizing committee of the Navajo Trail Association is P. O. Box 1311, Durango, Colorado.

A sketch of the new monument is attached.

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