Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

Media Contact: McGuire - 343-4662
For Immediate Release: May 5, 1964
Print PDF

The Department of the Interior today announced award of a $5,402,994 contract to build a two-mile tunnel near Aztec, N. Mex., first major work on the $135 million Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, which the Bureau of Reclamation is building for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Fenix &Scisson, Inc., of Tulsa, Okla., lowest of 16 bidders, was awarded the contract.

The Navajo Project contract marks the third new start in fiscal year 1964 on a western irrigation project. The others were the Bureau of Reclamation's San Juan-Chama Project and the Rio Grande Project recreational facilities, both also in New Mexico.

Commissioner of Reclamation Floyd E. Dominy said the Navajo tunnel bid invitation was the first of its type issued by Reclamation in which offers could be submitted on a "per-foot" basis. He explained that conditions favor use of a "mole," a giant horizontal power drill, for excavation. Rapid follow-up behind the mole with concrete tunnel lining may obviate use of structural-steel supports.

"In essence, the linear-foot option offered more flexibility for bidders, II Commissioner Dominy explained.” It permitted contractors to use their ingenuity in arriving at the lowest possible construction cost, while still meeting the Bureau's specifications."

The tunnel will extend from the Bureau of Reclamation's Navajo Dam--about 30 miles east of Farmington, N. Mex.--to Governador Canyon, approximately two miles south of Farmington. A system of tunnels, siphons, and canals will extend the system an additional 150 miles. These will be covered under future contracts.