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Award of a $701,853 contract calling for the construction of more than 23 miles of highway to promote tourism and facilitate travel through the Navajo and Hopi Indian Reservations was announced today by the Department of the Interior.

This project will complete construction of approximately 400 miles of primary reservation roads for Routes 1 and 3 authorized by a 1958 amendment to the Navajo-Hopi Rehabilitation Act of 1950.

Route 1, an east-west highway in the northern part of the Navajo Reservation, provides the increasing tourist and commercial traffic on the reservation with a broad, all-weather, paved road stretching 183 miles from U. S. Route 89 near Cameron, Arizona, to the Four Corners area where Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah meet, and on to Shiprock, New Mexico.

Route 1 was officially dedicated in September 1962 by Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, who stated at the time:

"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."

Route 3, the main east-west road in the southern part of the Navajo and Hopi Reservations, spans 164 miles of reservation lands from Tuba City, Arizona, to U. S. Route 666 north of Gallup, New Mexico.

The two highways have already been incorporated into the State Highway Systems of Arizona and New Mexico and will be operated and maintained at State expense.

The successful bidder was James Hamilton Construction Co., of Grants, N. Mex. Two additional bids reaching a high of $785,587 were received.