Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior today announced the award of two road construction contracts in South Dakota by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to replace existing reservation roads to be inundated by Oahe Dam Reservoir on the Missouri River.

Totaling $477,387, the contracts are part of the Bureau's diversified rehabi1itation program designed to alleviate distress to area residents of the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations of South Dakota as the reservoir project advances.

A $247,369 contract for Standing Rock provides for 10.9 miles of grading and gravel surfacing on the Fort Yates-Kene1 Road, in Carson County, South Dakota.

The successful bidder was Archie Campbell Inc., Hew Rockford, North Dakota. Fifteen other bids were received ranging to $333,790.

A $230,018 Cheyenne River contract covers grading and gravel surfacing on 14.7 miles of the Whitehorse-Promise Road in Dewey County, South Dakota. This new road will provide year-round travel to marketing centers, access for tourists, and better mail and school bus services. The contract was awarded to Brezina Construction Company, Inc., Rapid City, South Dakota. Seven bids were received ranging to $271,715.

When Congress authorized the acquisition of Indian lands and other properties for the Oahe Project, it resulted in the reestablishment of 200 families and loss of 117,000 acres of land at Northern Cheyenne Reservation, and the relocation of 190 families and loss of some 55,000 acres at Standing Rock Reservation. In addition, the tribes will lose an approximate combined total of 160,400 acres to be covered by waters of the Oahe Project.

Congress, however, provided reestablishing the Indian families affected and for rehabilitating all members of the tribes. The goal as to develop community, individual and family plans and to relocate, establish, and provide other assistance designed to improve the economic and social conditions of all recognized members of the tribes.

Today, improvements are visible in the many new housing units established on the reservations, the better furnishings and modern conveniences in the homes, improved water supply and sanitation facilities, and the neat and orderly appearance of hone sites.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs said there is growing evidence of a changing attitude among many people, reflected in the increasing participation in all phases of the rehabilitation program. Tribal councils also are taking the initiative and assuming greater responsibility in promoting better tribal enterprises, the Bureau added.

The Government, attempting to ease the burden of relocation and to preserve the culture of the Indians, has attempted to record and salvage valuable data concerning notable Indian historic sites to be affected by the inundation. The National Park Service, in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution,

conducted a program of photography and an archeological excavation of the ·many ancient Indian villages in the reservoir area.

The Bureau said road building is only part of the large long-range program designed to aid the Indians of Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Reservations, whose lives were disrupted by the Government's comprehensive plan for developing the Missouri River Basin. At a time when the Indians are striving to improve their tourism and recreation industry, new and better roads leading to the reservations will be a definite asset, the Bureau explained, adding that continued improvement projects along these lines are planned for the immediate future.