



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs Larry Echo Hawk today announced that the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Transportation has obligated to-date \$29.9 million of \$38.7 million in funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (P.L. 111-5) to perform maintenance on transportation infrastructure on the Navajo Nation reservation in northeastern Arizona. These ARRA-funded maintenance projects will enhance or repair approximately 760 miles of roads and repair 41 bridges used by residents and visitors travelling through the Navajo Nation.

“Having a well-maintained transportation infrastructure is critical for ensuring public health and safety, the free flow of commerce and obtaining an education, especially in Indian Country,” Echo Hawk said. “Funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has made it possible for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to improve miles of roads and bridges on the Navajo Nation reservation that are used by thousands of residents and visitors every day.”

Of the 70,000 to 100,000 miles of roads known to be on the Navajo Nation reservation, 10,000 are in the BIA's Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) inventory, and only 1,500 of the 10,000 miles are paved. All of the Bureau's roads on the 16 million-acre reservation are public roadways which serve the residents of both the Navajo and Hopi reservations, some with traffic of up to 20,000 vehicles per day. The roads service approximately 70 schools and 25 health care facilities within the Navajo Nation as well as seven counties and three states: Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

The BIA Navajo Regional Office in Gallup, N.M., awarded a \$23.8 million contract on March 30, 2010, to International Surfacing System of Chandler, Ariz., to apply rubberized chip sealing on 305 miles of paved roads under the Division's Road Maintenance Program for Road and Bridge Repair and Restoration (R&R). Separately, \$1.8 million was awarded by the Bureau to San Juan County, Utah, for maintenance of BIA roads within the county.

The Navajo Regional Office began its R&R field work in November 2009, and work is scheduled to continue through 2010.

The roads are being rehabilitated to ensure the life-cycle of the targeted road surfaces are extended for many years. Funds will be used to prevent roads and bridges from deteriorating further to unacceptable conditions or from becoming unsafe by replacing missing or badly deteriorated road features such as guard rails, fencing, bridges, bridge railings, signal lights, pot holes and ruts, and re-marking roads so that centerlines and passing lanes are visible for drivers.

The repairs made possible by the ARRA funds will bring quality-of-life improvements for residents such as reductions in missed school days and law enforcement and emergency response times due to bad road conditions, as well as improved access to medical facilities and quicker delivery of goods to schools and businesses.

The current list of the Indian Affairs ARRA projects can be found at the following link:

<http://recovery.doi.gov/press/bureaus/bureau-of-indian-affairs/>.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act offers a unique opportunity to invest in improvements to American Indian communities that enhance the long-term economic development potential and promote near-term economic recovery. The \$500 million allocated to the Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Indian Education will repair and upgrade Indian schools and detention centers, construct reservation housing, provide for road and bridge maintenance, spur economic development, and train a workforce with viable skills that can be used now and in the future.

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Note to Editors: A map of the Navajo and Hopi reservations with the locations of the ARRA funded road projects may be viewed via the following link:

<http://www.indianaffairs.gov/idc/groups/xopa/documents/stillimage/idc00...> Source: Navajo Region Division of Transportation, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior.
