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The Department of the Interior today announced the award of three contracts totaling $887,704 for road and bridge construction on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona and New Mexico.

The largest contract, for $366,431, involves the grading, drainage and bituminous surfacing of 4.1 miles of Navajo Route 1 running west from the Arizona-New Mexico State line.

This section is immediately south of the famous Four Corners oil field development and is at the extreme eastern end of the unimproved portion of Navajo Route 1. A 22-mile connecting section of the road in New Mexico was previously graded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and surfaced by the State.

The road is important as a link from southwestern Colorado through the Navajo country to the Grand Canyon and west. A growing volume of traffic is expected to use it as the Four Corners oil field is further developed and moves into northern Arizona.

Longenbaugh and Coe, Inc., of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was the .successful bidder. Four other bids were received ranging from $393,669 to $494,499.

A second contract, in the amount of $348,301, is for widening and surfacing 9.6 miles of Navajo Route 3 running west from the New Mexico State line near Window Rock, Arizona, the location of the Tribal and Federal Government offices for the Navajo Reservation.

The two improvements on Navajo Routes 1 and 3 were made possible through special legislation enacted by Congress in 1958.

James Hamilton Construction Company of Grants, New Mexico, was the successful bidder on the Route 3 contract. Four other bids were submitted ranging from $398,942 to $445,703.

The third contract, for $172,972, covers the construction of a 434-foot, 9-span steel and concrete bridge across the San Juan River at Farmington, New Mexico.

This structure replaces an obsolete steel truss bridge which now spans the San Juan River at Farmington but will carry only the lightest loads. Traffic bound for the Bisti oil field, lying south of the river, has for some time avoided using the present bridge. Completion of the new structure will provide the first link in the construction of a highway from Farmington through Bisti to a connection with New Mexico 56 at Crownpoint. This routing will also service Chaco National Monument.

Award of the contract represents the culmination of negotiations carried on over a period of several months. As a result of these negotiations, the Navajo Tribe and the Bureau of Indian Affairs entered into an agreement with several oil companies, San Juan County, and the city of Farmington under which these latter parties pledged to furnish about half the funds that were expected to be needed for financing the structure, including the connecting approach with the city of Farmington. The State Highway Department and the El Paso Natural Gas Company will participate jointly in building a road from the bridge’s south approach to the Bisti field.

The low bid was submitted by M. C. Jacobs Construction Company of Denver, Colorado. Six other bids were received ranging from $177,837 to $228,295.