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For Immediate Release: April 7, 1961
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The Department of the Interior today announced the award of a $976,677.84 contract for construction of 18 miles of roadway on Navajo Route 1, starting approximately 38 miles west of Shiprock, New Mexico, and running westerly to Walker Creek, Arizona.

This section is part of the presently unimproved portion of Navajo Route 1 located south of the famous Four Corners Area of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico and Arizona. It will form a link in the Indian Bureau's extensive road program now underway on the Navajo Reservation, connecting at the east with a project recently completed and extending the paved highway westward into Arizona from the Junction with U.S. Highway 666 to a total of approximately 56 miles.

As sections of Route 1 are completed, it is anticipated that increasingly heavy traffic will use this important connecting route from southwestern Colorado, through the Navajo country to the Grand Canyon and West Coast. The rapidly developing Four Corners oilfield lies to the northwest and considerable traffic is expected as the field expands into northern Arizona.

Schmidt Construction Co. of Arvada, Colorado, was the successful bidder. Seven other bids were received, ranging to a high of $1,195,300.