BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

For Release September 13, 1967

RECLAMATION AWARDS $8.5 MILLION CONTRACT TO BUILD HERON DAM IN NEW MEXICO

The Bureau of Reclamation has awarded a $8,597,550 contract to construct Heron Dam, principal storage feature of the trans-mountain San Juan-Chama Project in New Mexico, the Department of the Interior announced today.

Commissioner of Reclamation Floyd E. Dominy said that Heron Reservoir will store water diverted from the Colorado River Basin through the Continental Divide into the water-short Rio Grande Basin. Dominy said the stored water will be released through the outlet gates of Heron Dam to flow down the Rio Chama and the Rio Grande for municipal and industrial uses by the city of Albuquerque and for irrigation of lands in the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District. Dominy added that Heron Reservoir, high up on the eastern slope of the Continental Divide, is expected to become one of New Mexico's outstanding scenic attractions.

The contract to build Heron Dam goes to Universal Constructors, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico, on the lowest of eight bids received under Specification No. DC-6558. Second low at $8,783,324 was Clement Brothers Co., Hickory, North Carolina; and third at $9,009,502 was Morrison-Knudsen Co., Inc., Boise, Idaho.

Heron Dam will be an earthfill and rockfill structure about 1,250 feet long at the crest and 265 feet high on Willow Creek, a Rio Chama tributary in northern New Mexico. On its upstream side the dam will be riprapped to a thickness of three feet. A concrete outlet works and an intake structure will be constructed in the dam's left abutment. The contractor will also build an earth and rockfill dike about 2,370 feet long and 78 feet high across a low point in the reservoir. The reservoir spillway, an open concrete chute, will be built on the left abutment of the dike.

Other work under the contract calls for relocating about 8.5 miles of New Mexico State highway No. 95. The highway will be relocated around the eastern rim of the reservoir and will cross the crest of Heron Dam. The relocation was planned with the cooperation of the New Mexico State Highway Department with the object of giving the public the opportunity to view some of the most spectacular scenery in New Mexico. Several turnouts at scenic overlooks will be included in the relocation.

The San Juan-Chama Project will divert about 110,000 acre-feet of water annually from upper tributaries of the San Juan River in southern Colorado through the Continental Divide into the Rio Grande Basin. Three diversion dams and tunnels to collect the water and bring it through the mountains and into Azotea Creek and Willow Creek.
above the Heron Reservoir site are now under construction.

Construction of Heron Dam is scheduled for completion in about three years. Work under the contract is expected to generate about 450 man-years of employment at the construction site and elsewhere in the manufacture and furnishing of equipment and supplies.