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RECLAMATION BUILDING TO HOUSE NAVAJO ELECTRONIC FACTORY

A new industry to employ Navajo Indians is being established in the former administration building of the Bureau of Reclamation in Page, Ariz., Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall reported today.

Reclamation transferred the building to the Bureau of Indian Affairs as it is no longer needed for Reclamation's activities. The building was the center of activity at Page during construction of the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado River.

Under a $27,568 on-the-job training contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, EPI-Vostron of Anaheim, Calif., will use about half of the 12,500 square foot building as an electronic assembly plant and later may use more of the structure. The company is providing its own financing and machinery.

Initially, 28 Navajos will be trained and employed by EPI-Vostron. Employment is expected to expand to as many as 60 Navajos during the first year of operations. Two young Navajo men are employed by EPI-Vostron and undergoing training so that they can function as lead men at the company's facility in Page when it becomes operational. The company was attracted to a Navajo Reservation location by publicity on the decision of General Dynamics Corp. to establish a missile components manufacturing facility at Fort Defiance.

Through the Bureau of Indian Affairs, arrangements were made for a meeting with tribal officials. Raymond Nakai, Navajo Tribal Chairman, sent a personal representative to Anaheim to negotiate with company officials.

Navajo Indians are engaged in similar employment in the Fairchild Semiconductor plant at Shiprock, N. M.

Reclamation transferred the building for projected industrial use under its policy of encouraging the early conversion of government towns, established in connection with construction projects, into self-sufficient communities.

Establishment of such industries in Page, and the benefits resulting from the payrolls, are expected to help form a sound basis for transition of the community from government town to municipal status. In a further effort to stimulate such conversion, the Bureau of Reclamation recently contracted with Arizona State University for a study of problems involved in incorporation. The report and A.S.U. recommendations are expected by December, 1967.

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