

\$137 MILLION LOW ABM BID - Contract May Be Let Soon

By Ridder News Service

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St. Paul, MN - A combine headed by Morrison-Knudsen Co. Inc. of Boise, ID, submitted the apparent low bid of \$137.9 million Wednesday for construction of Safeguard antiballistic missile (ABM) facilities in Pembina and Cavalier counties.

Although the bid exceeded the government estimate by more than \$11 million, it fell within the 15 percent variation allowed by the government. However, all bids are subject to review before a contract is awarded, possibly next Wednesday or Thursday.

Minuteman Contractor - Morrison-Knudsen also headed the combine which constructed Minuteman Missile facilities in the Grand Forks area several years ago, under a contract exceeding \$120 million.

Its bid of \$137,858,850 was nearly \$40 million lower than the next low bid. The government estimate was \$126,119,014.

Joining with Morrison-Knudsen in the joint venture are Peter Kiewit & Sons, Omaha, Nebraska; Fischback and Moore Inc., Denver, Colorado, and C.H. Lavelle Co., El Paso, Texas.

Three Bids Only - The letting Wednesday was conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers, which will award the contract from Washington. Only three bids were submitted Wednesday, all by combines of giant construction companies. Other bids included \$176.6 million by a combine headed by Dravo Corp., Pittsburgh, and \$181.1 million by a group headed by Martin K. Eby Construction Co., Wichita, Kansas.

Included in the project are construction of a Missile Site Radar (MSR) facility near Nekoma, ND; a Perimeter Acquisition Radar (PAR) facility near Concrete, ND, and remote sites for Sprint missiles.

Mid-April Start - If the contract is awarded next week, first construction work is expected to begin in mid-April.

The North Dakota project is the first in the nation for which bid lettings have been taken in the initial phase of the ABM construction. Another similar project near Great Falls, Montana, also has been authorized.

The work covered in the technical facilities contract, for which bids were opened Wednesday, is expected to be completed sometime in 1974. A peak construction work force of 3,200 is expected during the summer of 1971.

Many Present - Several hundred representatives of suppliers and subcontractors watched as the bids were opened and read by Col. Robert McBride, contracting officer for the Huntsville, Alabama, division of the Corps of Engineers.

The Huntsville division will supervise construction of the Safeguard system, which will be installed in North Dakota and Montana to protect against a possible missile attack on sites in those states housing the Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile.

Suppliers and subcontractors attend bid openings in order to make early contact with winning bidders.

This contract involves radar sites, a power plant and the bulk of construction to house the missile-handling machinery and the men who will run the operation. It does not include the missiles themselves.