

## NTUA connects 260 families to electric grid with CARES Act funds

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 30 October 2020 02:51

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer received an update report from Navajo Tribal Utility Authority regarding the use of CARES Act funds, which indicates that NTUA has now connected 260 homes to the electric grid, upgraded 32 water wells, continues to install up to 150 water cisterns systems in the first third of October, and continues to make progress using CARES Act funds.

NTUA utility crews continue to work 10-hour days, weekends, and holidays to complete projects. NTUA is planning to extend electricity to 510 families, which includes over 350 families that were identified during the *2020 LIGHT UP NAVAJO II* application process. In addition, NTUA continues to accept applications from residents for its residential solar program, which was allocated \$35.1 million in CARES Act funds.

Nez expressed mixed emotions about the CARES Act funds.

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we thank NTUA for being an example for all of us in terms of working through the red tape to expedite projects for the benefit of the Navajo people,” he said. “It’s unfortunate that NTUA has not received all its CARES Act dollars from the Office of the Controller, but they have stepped up to use their own funds to front the cost of these projects.

“We’ve met with the Office of the Controller and indicated the need to transfer those funds immediately. To all of the men and women working long hours, seven days a week, to move

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these projects forward, we thank you and we want you to know that you are making a lasting impact on your communities and Navajo people,” he stated.

In August, the 24th Navajo Nation Council and the Nez-Lizer Administration approved \$13.8 million for power line projects, \$24.7 million to increase overall electric grid capacity, \$20.9 million for cisterns systems, \$18.6 million for wastewater systems, and \$32.8 million for wireless and broadband expansion for NTUA from the Navajo Nation’s CARES Act funds.

“Two-hundred-sixty Navajo families now have electricity and there is more to come! We are very excited about the progress that NTUA is making by working in partnership with the Navajo Nation and others,” Lizer exclaimed. “When we work together, we can accomplish anything and NTUA is proving that. Thank you to General Manager Walter Haase, their management team, and all the boots on the ground for the tremendous progress being made.”

Among numerous water projects, NTUA utility crews renovated, upgraded, and/or installed six regional watering loading stations in the communities of Bodaway-Gap, Leupp, Lupton, Torreon, Lake Valley, and Wide Ruins, which are now open for public use. Renovations and upgrades are also in progress in Chilchinbeto, Inscription House, Whitecone, Kin Dah Lichíí, and Pueblo Pintado.

The work includes replacement of motors and pumps for up to 42 targeted water wells, and working with Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority to install 150 water cisterns systems where there is no water available for household drinking, and bathroom and kitchen usage.

Other projects include renovations and upgrades of regional water stations, construction of several new watering points, converting off-line-wells to watering loading stations for livestock, water well renovations, replacement of exposed water lines, and more.

NTUA has also established 33 free wifi hotspots in various communities across the Navajo Nation to help students, parents, and teachers with online learning. NTUA and NTUA Choice Wireless are assessing the possibility of installing additional wifi hotspots due to increased demand and usage.

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NTUA is also awaiting the arrival of new materials and equipment to construct new towers in several communities. One wifi hotspot to go live recently is located at the Shiprock fairgrounds.

Overall, the Navajo Nation received over \$714 million in CARES Act funds: \$600 million on May 6, \$86 million on June 16, and \$27 million on June 18.

***For more information about eligibility for the solar program, please visit [www.ntua.com](http://www.ntua.com) under CARES Act-NTUA Projects.***