

## OPVP seeks to provide off-the-grid families with solar

Written by Staff Reports

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### Begaye signs contract with Big Navajo Energy

WINDOW ROCK — President Russell Begaye signed a services contract between the Office of the President and Vice President and Big Navajo Energy Nov. 28 to bring solar power units to Navajo families.

“This money is to provide electricity to families that need it, especially in places where it’s really expensive to run electric lines to homes,” Begaye said. “Because if a person lives up to seven miles off the grid, that could easily be up to \$200,000 to provide electricity to that home. With solar energy, we could provide cheap energy. We’re excited for the families receiving this.”

Due to the impact of the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute; Veterans, elders and those with medical needs living on the Hopi Partitioned Land and the Former Bennett Freeze Area have priority to receive the solar power units. Each of the 1500-watt units will last about seven to 10 years for families living off the grid.

When the solar system is in operation, it will provide power for electrical needs, such as lights, refrigeration, cell phones, computers and portable medical equipment.

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“In this day and age access to energy is how we live our lives,” said Jessica Keetso, executive staff assistant for OPVP who helped facilitate the contract. “It creates opportunities for somebody to gain knowledge, access to education. In a lot of cases, it’s access to revenue for a family. If somebody has electricity in their home, they have independence. They have power. And this project is a step toward central government giving their people to tools to electrify their homes.”

In the past few years, Big Navajo Energy has installed close to 100 solar generators on the Navajo Nation.

The recently signed contract for \$253,000 is expected to power approximately 40 new homes.

“I appreciate President Begaye’s efforts to provide the funding needed for our veterans, elderly and families with disabilities that require electricity,” Dory Peters, president of Big Navajo Energy, said. “The need is extremely high for families on our nation that require basic electricity. I am very proud to provide some of the solutions for power to our tribal members.”