



For Media Release

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NTUA continues to increase utility connection numbers under CARES Act plan platform

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - The Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) announces more progress in the latest update of CARES Act projects. Since the Navajo Nation leadership approved use of its CARES Act funding in mid-August, NTUA mobilized internally and sent utility crews into the field throughout the region. The crews are working on an extended schedule, including 10-hour days, weekends, and holidays to complete projects.

“The families have expressed to our crews their heartfelt gratitude that electricity has finally reached their homes. Constructing the identified CARES Act projects is a challenging goal which we will work hard to surpass because as we are connecting homes, more families are coming forward submitting their applications for electricity,” said NTUA General Manager Walter Haase, explaining that NTUA has a goal to extend electricity to 510 families by the December deadline.

NTUA was approved to receive \$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, \$35.1 million for off-grid residential solar units, and \$32.8 million for wireless and broadband expansion from the CARES Act funds.

“We postponed all other non-CARES Act funded projects so that we may meet the deadline,” Haase said. “There is a short window for construction and we needed to get started as soon as possible.”

NTUA has connected 223 homes to the electric grid, upgraded 30 water wells, and is working with the Navajo Engineering Construction Authority (NECA) to install up to 150 water cisterns systems. A cistern water system is used where piped water connections are not feasible and the cistern water system can be used for household for drinking water, kitchens, and bathrooms. A cistern water system stores the water needed for a household in a large 1,000 gallon container that can be filled from a watering truck.

“We are very grateful to all of the NTUA crews and management for moving quickly to move forward with projects that will provide more electrical power, water resources, and internet access for our communities,” said Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez. “We are hopeful that our people will have access to electricity and water to help minimize the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are optimistic that NTUA will be able to connect electricity for well over 500 families by the end of the year.”

“The Navajo Nation Council continues to push for COVID-19 response aid and relief for the Navajo people. Through partnerships and coordination with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and with the input of the Navajo people throughout this process, the Navajo Nation Council worked quickly to approve project funding for water, power and broadband access for Navajo families,” said Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council Seth Damon. “Access to these resources and support is the difference between a pandemic that may last years or one that is effectively managed from the beginning and from within the home. We have much work left to do and we will continue to drive these critical projects through to their completion.”

NTUA water and well crews has replaced motors and pumps for 30 of the 45 targeted water wells. Other water projects include renovations and upgrades of regional water stations, construction of five new watering points, and converting off-line-wells to watering loading station for livestock.

NTUA has also put in place 32 free student Wi-Fi hotpots in various communities across the Navajo Nation to help students, parents, and teachers with online learning. The sites were selected in consult with the Navajo Division of Education. The goal was to have locations whereby parents and or students would not have to drive more than 30 miles to access the internet.

In addition, NTUA continues to accept applications from residents for its residential solar program. For more information about eligibility for the solar program, or to submit an application for electricity and water services, please visit www.ntua.com under CARES Act-NTUA Projects.

“Tribal leadership approved legislation that enabled NTUA to extend, build, and deliver utility services to homes and communities,” Haase said. “Each day our crews are in the field knowing that their work is critical to help prevent the spread of the devastating COVID-19 virus. Our work is critically essential and our teams are working hard to meet the December deadline.”