

# NAVAJO TIMES

DINÉ BI NAALTSOOS

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## Kayenta solar project is operational

**FORT DEFIANCE** – Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and its wholly owned subsidiary, NGI-Kayenta Inc., on June 16 announced that the Kayenta Solar Facility is sending power to the transmission grid, according to an NTUA news release.

This is the first-of-its-kind utility-scale solar project within the Navajo Nation and will enhance clean energy initiatives of the Navajo Nation and NTUA, the release says.

“The completion of this project demonstrates that the Navajo Nation is ready for large scale renewable energy production,” said NTUA General Manager Walter Haase. “This is a huge step into the area of energy production and sales, as well as a gigantic first step toward enhancing the green economy for the Navajo Nation.”

The Navajo Nation has always purchased energy from the outside, he said, but now can sell electricity and related attributes to other parties.

In April 2016, NGI-Kayenta, NTUA, Isolux Corsan (the contractor) and tribal leaders officially broke ground in a field just north of Kayenta. Eight months later construction got underway and was completed in six months. The \$60 million facility was commissioned this month.

Isolux Corsan was selected for its vast experience in photovoltaic solar plants construction

throughout the world, including California, Spain, Italy, Peru, and Japan.

The Kayenta project is the second U.S. solar power plant construction by Isolux.

The Navajo Nation also becomes the first among tribes to develop a utility scale solar farm that will produce 27.3 megawatts of electricity.

The project also brought much needed construction jobs to the region. More than 550 people attended the regional job fair for construction jobs. Close to 250 individuals – 195 Navajo – worked during the height of construction.

One of the early challenges in developing the project was finding available land. Fortunately, the Kayenta community supported the project and voted in favor of it.

“I want to thank the citizens of the Kayenta Chapter for approving this new direction for the Navajo Nation as a supplier of renewable energy,” Kayenta Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown said. “Our community is proud of being the first Navajo community to have a large scale solar energy farm on the Navajo Nation.”

The facility consists of 119,301 photovoltaic panels on single axis trackers, which follow the daily path of the sun. The plant’s output of 27.3 MW is enough energy to service approximately 13,000 homes.

The service life of the plant is expected to exceed 25 years, during which it will generate up to 1,900 GWh of energy.