



**For Media Release**

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## **NTUA ANNOUNCES APRIL POSTPONEMENT OF LIGHT UP NAVAJO II**

**FORT DEFIANCE, ARIZ.** - Out of concern and caution, the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, has announced the postponement of the Light Up Navajo II project for the month of April 2020.

This decision is the result of the evolving outbreak and increasing nationwide public response directly relating to the Coronavirus or COVID19. Consideration was contingent upon the declarations of emergency issued by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and U.S. President Donald Trump, and the neighboring governors of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

“We recognize and support the recommendations of health and government agencies that are working hard to mitigate the spread of COVID19,” said NTUA General Manager Walter Haase. “They indicate that travel restrictions may have a positive impact.”

“Therefore, we feel we should do our part and postpone the first month of Light Up Navajo II,” he said. “Our focus is for public health, safety, and well-being.”

NTUA has notified the 34 communities that signed up for Light Up Navajo II, explaining the postponement until Mid-April when organizers will revisit the decision to either postpone the entire Spring 2020 project or delay it until late Fall 2020.

In August 2019, NTUA officials said the tribal enterprise will host another year of “Light Up Navajo” – based on the outcome of the pilot project that successfully extended electricity to 233 families throughout the Navajo Nation in 2019.

“We want to provide that same opportunity for many other families who are still waiting,” Haase said. “The pilot project set the foundation and provided us with a blueprint of how we can extend electricity at an accelerated pace with the help of our sister utilities.”

Since the Spring of 2019, Light Up Navajo families have been plugging in basic appliances—making coffee or toast at home for the first time ever. They are enjoying the basic modern conveniences like refrigerated food, heating, air conditioning, and televisions.

Haase said the pilot project created a model to energize Navajo homes at an expedited pace. NTUA districts will be meeting with families who do not have electricity because the primary challenge will be to obtain Rights of Way and land clearance approval for powerline construction next Spring.

“Light Up Navajo was built on teamwork and partnership,” Haase said. “It is our hope that the utilities that signed up will still be a part of this meaningful, life changing project.”

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**About NTUA:** NTUA has continuously served the Navajo people for 58 years. The NTUA was established on January 22, 1959, to address the absence of utilities on the Navajo Nation. NTUA has grown into a thriving tribally-owned enterprise delivering a portfolio of services. The NTUA is organized for the operation, maintenance and expansion of electric, communications, natural gas, water, wastewater and generation, including photovoltaic (solar) services for the Navajo people at a low and reasonable cost. The fundamental goals of NTUA are to create employment opportunities, improve the health and welfare of regional residents, and improve the standard of life on the Navajo Nation.