



For Immediate Release

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NTUA prepares for CARES Act to extend Power to the People

FORT DEFIANCE – The Navajo Tribal Utility Authority is grateful the Navajo Nation Council passed the CARES Act legislation and Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez signed the legislation authorizing the connection of over 500 homes of Navajo families to the electric grid.

In anticipation of the approval of the CARES Act legislation, NTUA has been organizing internally to connect the hundreds of homes. NTUA presented a proposal to extend electricity to 510 homes, which includes 350 families that were identified during 2020 LIGHT UP NAVAJO II application process.

“We are grateful Navajo Nation leaders approved the legislation which will dramatically improve the quality of life for so many families,” said NTUA General Manager Walter Haase. “With the CARES Act funding, we will proceed with construction with a December 31st completion goal.”

With the CARES Act funding, NTUA electric line crews will do their best to connect all 510 families. This is a tremendously daunting task and will be extremely challenging to complete in the remaining 20 weeks left in 2020.

“Navajo Nation leaders have entrusted us with these major projects - to extend, build, and provide electric services to families living without,” Haase said. “This is especially critical with the dreadful COVID-19 virus that continues to loom throughout the region. We are getting ready to do expedited work because people are depending on us.”

In an effort to connect as many families as possible, in June, NTUA electric construction crews started working five ten hour days per week. By starting to connect families before the CARES Act legislation was in place, NTUA took on the risk that the legislation would not be funded as it was proposed.

“We did this with complete faith that Navajo leaders would approve CARES Act dollars for electric construction,” Haase said. “If we waited until September to start construction, over 100 families would not have been connected this year. We didn’t want to take that chance. We want to help as many families as possible.”

NTUA has already connected the homes of 55 Navajo families to the electric grid. NTUA has assigned 53 homes projects to construction crews and 6 homes projects have been released for construction. NTUA expects to release another 75 homes for construction before the end of this month.

For the next few months, NTUA will change internal operations to prioritize these CARES Act projects. NTUA staff members were notified of the announcement and encouraged to be prepared in order to meet the pending December deadline.

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