



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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January 17, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council delegates Joshua Lavar Butler, Walter Phelps attend Plateau Solar Project lighting ceremony in Canyon Diablo

CANYON DIABLO, Ariz. — A blessing was in store for Paula Curtis, who for the first time received electricity to illuminate her home. On Sunday, Ms. Curtis' home connected to a two kilowatt solar unit, which was made possible through the efforts of IINA Solutions and Mark Snyder of Electric Solar Water Power Systems.

"I never thought this would happen to me," said Ms. Curtis, a single mother with six children. "This all started with an application and now I have all these people here at my home. This is a very special occasion. With electricity, I will be able to do many things."

Navajo non-profit IINA Solutions and international solar specialist Mr. Snyder worked jointly to establish the Plateau Solar Project in an effort to bring solar electricity to rural elders and priority need to residents of northeastern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. The two kilowatt solar unit, funded by the Renewable Energy Investment Fund and Grand Canyon Trust, will provide the Curtis family with potable drinking water, heat, sanitation, electricity and a bathroom complete with a sink, shower and composting toilet. The Curtis' also received an energy efficient refrigerator as a gift both from IINA Solutions and Mr. Snyder.

"With funds from the REIF and the Grand Canyon Trust, phase one of the Plateau Solar Project commences with a 2 Kilowatt solar installation at the home of Paula Curtis," said Elsa Johnson, director for IINA Solutions. Ms. Johnson said IINA Solutions would continue focusing its efforts in the Former Bennett Freeze area. To date, 27 elders have been approved to receive electricity from the project.

The celebration began with a prayer to bless the Curtis homestead, which followed-up with presentations by Wahleah Johns of the Navajo Green Economy Commission and Roger Clark of the Grand Canyon Trust on the significance of alternative energy development and the future it has on the Navajo Nation. The Black Mesa Water Coalition provided dinner for the 80 people who attended.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, First Lady Martha Shelly, and 22nd Navajo Nation Council delegates Joshua Lavar Butler (To Nanees Dizi) and Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Birdsprings) were among the attendees.



Left to Right: Honorable Walter Phelps, Paula Curtis and Honorable Joshua Lavar Butler pose for a picture in front of Ms. Curtis' house, which was connected to a two kilowatt solar unit (Photo by Laphillda Tso).

The solar energy system the Curtis family received is regulated with a thermostat, which allows for users to set a comfortable temperature at any time of the day. The solar system is ideal for the Navajo Nation's climate, with over 300 days of sunlight a year. Mr. Snyder said solar energy could possibly replace power plants on the Navajo Nation, including the Navajo Generating Station in Page, Ariz. and the Four Corners Power Plant near Farmington, N.M.

"The winds, cold weather, dust and hot weather are an issue, but we created a very air tight building that has hot air panels on the outside. They heat the building up to a temperature of 80 to 85 degrees," said Mr. Snyder. "We modified the water tank so that it remains half full. It heats up the water at night. The new solar device heats the house, reducing the need for fire wood. It is also capable of cooling the house during the summertime. These systems will survive 125 mph winds. This is third generation solar energy. They are 300 percent more effective than the first generation. The system is designed to produce 360 gallons of hot water per day. All the water that goes into our systems is clean water."

"The system will communicate with the elders in the Navajo language, and telling them what buttons to push for the system's operation," added Johnson. "I hope the Navajo Nation will be an example for other nations with this project. President Shelly, let us help you make the Navajo Nation become a role model for green development."

Honorable Butler and Phelps offered words of gratitude and expressed unity between the legislative and executive branches to complete such projects.

"I congratulate the Curtis family and I am grateful for the partnerships that made this project possible," said Honorable Joshua Lavar Butler. "There is absolutely no doubt our rural of rural Navajo people need assistance and they greatly benefit from these types of projects. I am thankful our Navajo president is green-minded and with cooperation between the Council and president, we can certainly accomplish many projects like this."

Mr. Butler's district of To Nanees Dizi comprises a large area of the former Bennett Freeze Area. He was instrumental in initiating the Navajo Green Jobs legislation and the establishment of the Navajo Green Jobs Economy Commission, while he was a staff assistant with the last administration.

"This wonderful project is an example of what can be done by multiple organizations and partnerships. The Navajo Nation government working together with non-profit organizations is a strategic approach to addressing the needs of our people," added Honorable Phelps. "This will bring a coordinated and collaborative approach to improving our nation."

President Ben Shelly agreed.

"I support the good partnership IINA has with Mr. Snyder. I am will support IINA. Let's continue to move forward with this," President Shelly said. "Maybe we can find \$1 million to invest in this company. Together with the 22nd Navajo Nation Council, we will continue helping the Navajo people with solar energy."

With the nearest electricity line approximately eight miles north of her residence, Ms. Curtis said she will finally experience the benefits of having electricity.

"We have never had electricity here until now. I have been told that we could not get electricity because of the rocky terrain," Ms. Curtis said. "I appreciate all of this work and very privileged to be the first to get this service. Now, we will have internet, which my children are excited about."

She thanked Mr. Snyder, Ms. Johnson, Victor Gomez, and Jeremy Fredenberg for their contributions. Mr. Gomez and Mr. Fredenberg are two volunteers from San Diego, who assisted with setting up the solar system.

Acknowledgements were also made to the Renewable Energy Investment Fund Committee, Interline Matrix, Solar Roofs, MidNite Solar, Day Four, Enertopia, P2000, Marshall Johnson of Toh Nizhoni Ani, Nichole Alex of the Black Mesa Water Coalition, Leonard Nelson, Terrance & Cleveland, Clara Tsosie, American Battery Company, Rick Yoerg and Danny Begay.

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