



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Pinedale community celebrates new NTUA Choice Wireless tower dedicated to improving cell phone and internet access for families, students, and first responders



PINEDALE, N.M. – On Monday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Office Executive Director Christopher Becenti, NTUA Choice Wireless Deputy Director Velena Tsosie, and Pinedale Chapter officials and community members celebrated the completion and installation of a new NTUA Choice Wireless tower in the community of Pinedale, N.M., which will provide much-needed cell phone and internet access to Navajo families, students, and first responders using CARES Act funds.

The new tower was funded with a \$32 million CARES Act allocation approved by the 24th Navajo Nation Council and signed into law by President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer on Aug. 16,

which will also fund several more towers on the Navajo Nation. Once funds became available in late August, NTUA and other partners expedited the construction of the new tower to meet the federal CARES Act deadline.

“This project is a model for self-sufficiency and self-empowerment because this project began years ago at the grassroots level along with the support of Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, NTUA Choice Wireless, and others who dedicated their resources, time, and efforts. For many years, the community of Pinedale has struggled with reliable access to cell phone coverage and internet access, but now our students, families, and first responders will have telecommunications access. Thank you to the Pinedale community, NTUA Choice Wireless, Mr. Becenti, Navajo Land Department, and the 24th Navajo Nation Council,” said President Nez.

On Oct. 9, the Nez-Lizer Administration approved an additional \$15 million in CARES Act funds to provide more internet access, which was part of a legislation that also approved \$90 million for the Nation’s 110 chapters to help respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“NTUA is doing a great job in expediting CARES Act projects. We are truly grateful to their employees on the ground and also their management team for moving quickly on projects. The new tower in Pinedale represents the long-term benefits that we wish to see for our all of our communities. We look forward to seeing more progress as we move forward with expending CARES Act funds,” Vice President Lizer stated.

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, who represents the Pinedale Chapter as a member of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, commended the local chapter leadership and community members who advocated and let their voices be heard over the years.

“We have strong and vocal leaders who fought long and hard for this new tower. We have many students and people who work from home who will benefit from this project. I thank my colleagues on the 24th Navajo Nation Council, the Office of the President and Vice President, and NTUA for working together for our community,” Council Delegate Yazzie stated.

NNTRC Office Executive Director Christopher Becenti stated, “I’m excited to celebrate a milestone with the first CARES Act funded telecommunications project. Today marks a milestone for the community of Pinedale. This is just one of many telecommunications projects to help the people of the Navajo Nation.”

As of Oct. 9, the Navajo Nation has allocated the entire \$714 million in CARES Act funds for the Navajo Nation for hardship assistance, infrastructure development, first responders, direct relief, and many other resources and initiatives. The Pinedale community is located approximately 15-miles east of Gallup, N.M., and includes over 1,500 registered community members.

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