



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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New NTUA fiber line will increase internet capacity for Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation, local schools, and businesses



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Council Delegate Otto Tso, NTUA Choice Wireless officials, and other officials celebrate the completion of a new fiber optic line in Tuba City, Ariz. on Feb. 10, 2021.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish joined NTUA Choice Wireless officials, Council Delegate Otto Tso, Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation CEO Lynette Bonar and board members, Tuba City Chapter President Gerald Keetso, Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Office Executive Director Christopher Becenti, Coconino County Supervisor Lena Fowler, and others in Tuba City, Ariz. to mark the completion of a new fiber optic line that will increase internet capacity for the local health care center, schools, and businesses.

“Today, we honor and recognize the work and contributions of many who spent years developing this project from the local level on up. With the installation of the new fiber optic line, the local schools, health care facility, first responders, and residents will have increased internet access, which also provides much needed assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. We know there are many needs in all of our communities and our administration continues to work together with all levels of government to address those needs and empower our Navajo people to help themselves as well,” said President Nez.

The nearly five-mile long fiber optic line was funded with CARES Act funds that were allocated and approved by the 24th Navajo Nation Council and signed into law by President Nez and Vice President Lizer on Aug. 16, 2020. The project includes 25,000 feet of underground fiber optic line and 2,000 feet of arial line that also increases broadband access for the community.

“It’s wonderful to see the partnerships and team work over the years come to fruition for the benefit of many in the Tuba City region. The pandemic has increased the need for fiber and broadband internet service across the board, so this project will bring many benefits for teachers, students, first responders, health care workers, and many others. We are very thankful to NTUA Choice Wireless, Tuba City Chapter, Delegate Otto Tso, Supervisor Lena Fowler, the 24th Navajo Nation Council, and many others who advocated and laid their hands to this great work,” said Vice President Lizer.

NTUA Choice Wireless Deputy General Manager Velen Tsosie also thanked Navajo Nation leaders, local officials, and NTUA workers who supported the project and worked to complete the new fiber optic line over the last six months. The project planning began over several years ago, but the CARES Act funds made it possible to complete the project in several stages. The Nez-Lizer Administration also worked with the Navajo Area BIA and Western Area BIA to help secure approval for the right-of-way, which allowed the fiber optic line to be constructed through a portion of Hopi land.

The project was funded with a \$32 million CARES Act allocation for NTUA, which also funded the completion of tower projects in the communities of Pinedale, Beclabito, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Chinle, Woodsprings, and summit east located near St. Michaels, Ariz. Once funds became available in late August, NTUA and other partners expedited the construction of tower projects and fiber optic lines to meet the federal CARES Act deadline.

During Wednesday’s event, President Nez also spoke about an initiative that the Nez-Lizer Administration is seeking support for to establish a housing manufacturing facility in the community of Tuba City to construct homes for residents of the Navajo Nation, including those who reside in the former Bennett Freeze area. The administration will move forward with legislation to secure funding for the housing initiative.

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