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PNM travels to greater Shiprock area volunteering to bring power to Navajo families

Light Up Navajo, a nationwide utility collaboration project, connects families on the Navajo Nation to the power grid for the first time

(ALBUQUERQUE, NM) – A PNM line crew recently traveled to the greater Shiprock area volunteering in a nationwide utility collaboration project called *Light Up Navajo*. The Navajo Nation is the largest Native American territory, yet more than 14,000 families do not have electricity. The Navajo Nation, American Public Power Association, and the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA), launched the *Light Up Navajo* project in 2019 to energize homes that have never had power.

Imagine life without electricity. Without television, without computers, tablets, or cell phones. Picture life where refrigerators don't exist because there is no electric power. For approximately 14,000 families on the Navajo Nation, this is reality. The *Light Up Navajo* project is helping to change that for families throughout the region.



PNM was one of the electric utility companies in the country that proudly participated in this life-changing project, including utilities from Arkansas, Arizona, Delaware, California, Connecticut, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Washington D.C.

This year, the 11-week *Light Up Navajo* initiative worked to connect 300 homes on the Navajo Nation to the electric grid for the first time. Five journeyman linemen represented PNM, worked alongside NTUA crews, and other utility volunteer linemen, to construct and install

new power poles and run new distribution lines to energize existing homes that have never had electricity. Since the *Light Up Navajo* project started in 2019, nearly 7,000 family homes have been connected to the power grid.

The average cost to connect one family to the power grid is about \$40,000. Retired military veteran, Travis Harvey, who lives about 13 miles south of Shiprock and was notified he was selected as part of the *Light Up Navajo* project said, "I was considering ways to try and pay for connection since my home was built in 2008, but I had not been able to figure out a way to pay for it." He added, "When PNM arrived, I had been living without power for about 14 years. By the end of the

day, I was connected to the power grid and am very appreciative for the PNM linemen volunteering to be part of the *Light Up Navajo* program, especially when Shiprock is not even in the area PNM serves. You have completely changed my life.”



“Navajo people have a spiritual and cultural connection to their land, and they raise their children to speak Navajo and understand their culture. They live in more isolated areas, but they should not have to sacrifice having the basic necessities of electricity and running water,” said Cathy Newby, director of Tribal Government and Customer Relations for PNM. “I am so incredibly proud of PNM and our hard-working crew for being a part of this project.”

The *Light Up Navajo* project represents an unprecedented partnership between the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, which is a tribal utility company, and the American Public Power Association (APPA), which is the service organization for more than two thousand utility companies in the United States, and the Navajo Nation.

“Working together is how things get done. NTUA and the American Public Power Association have demonstrated that through the successful electrification of hundreds of homes for Navajo families through Light Up Navajo,” said Navajo Nation President, Jonathan Nez. “With the support of the leadership of the Navajo Nation, NTUA continues to connect the homes of our families to the electric grid. We are proud of the work being done and we look forward to seeing more Navajo homes connected with the continued partnership success of Light Up Navajo.”

“This is my second time volunteering for the *Light Up Navajo* project,” said Milnor Branch, PNM Crew Foreman. “We work long days to set distribution poles, sometimes running four to five miles and then run service lines to homes, working side-by-side with other volunteer crews. It’s gratifying work to turn on electricity to a home for the first time and seeing the reaction of families full of – smiles and tears of joy.”

The 2019 *Light Up Navajo* pilot project inspired nationwide utility participation that has continued to forever change the lives of Navajo families.

About PNM

With headquarters in Albuquerque, PNM is the largest electricity provider in New Mexico, serving more than 530,000 customers in dozens of communities across the state. PNM strives to create enduring value for customers, communities and shareholders built on a foundation of Environmental, Social and Governance Principles. At the core of our business, we are focused on our vision of creating a clean and bright energy future, our purpose of working together with our customers and community to serve their energy needs, and our values of safety, caring, and integrity. PNM is a subsidiary of PNM Resources, an energy holding company also headquartered in Albuquerque. Visit PNM.com for more information.

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