



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 26, 2025
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‘Light Up Navajo’ effort brings electricity to hundreds of Navajo families

PNM crews join multi-utility effort to bring electricity service to families for the first time

(Albuquerque, NM) – Multiple PNM line crews joined Light Up Navajo -- a nationwide utility collaboration project to help bring electricity for the first time to hundreds of families living on the Navajo Nation in greater Shiprock area.

The Navajo Nation is the largest Native American territory, yet more than 10,000 Navajo Nation families do not have electricity. The Navajo Nation, American Public Power Association, and the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority launched the Light Up Navajo project in 2019 to energize homes that have never had power.



PNM lineman Johnathan Turner climbs a pole to secure the newly hung power line.

This year, the 11-week Light Up Navajo initiative worked to connect at least 150 homes on the Navajo Nation to the electric grid for the first time. Eight journeyman linemen represented PNM, working alongside other utility volunteer linemen, to construct and install new power poles and run new distribution lines to energize homes. Since the Light Up Navajo project started in 2019, approximately 880 family homes have been connected to the power grid.

Reporter Tool Kit:

Photos, b-roll, and interviews:

Photos and b-roll, along with interviews of PNM crews and the President of the Navajo Nation, Dr. Buu Nygren, [can be found here](#).

Quotes:

“Navajo people have a spiritual and cultural connection to their land which makes it a challenge to extend electricity to many families who live in remote areas of the Navajo Nation. PNM is honored to be a part of this great effort, and I speak on behalf of my colleagues when I say we are grateful for this opportunity to help bring power to more Navajo families.” - Cathy Newby, PNM Director of Tribal Government and Customer Relations.



PNM crew members join Sona Francis Shorthair (center, pink shirt) to celebrate connecting her home to the power grid.

“Light up Navajo has continued to restore hope and encourage our communities and our people that good people all over this country dedicate their time and resources to come out to Navajo for one week, two weeks, to really change lives.” – Dr. Buu Nygren, President of the Navajo Nation.

“It’s really cool, we’re out here helping people out. You really don’t realize what you need for electricity. It runs everything... We take everything for granted, we have our power... They live without...It’s just the little things.” - Lucas Gonzales, Linemen Apprentice for PNM.

“I want to say thank you to Brian Cooper and the PNM crew. Our oldest son is 19 years old and that’s how long we’ve been without power and have been working to get electricity to our home. Our children have had to go on top of the mesa near our home to get a signal when they had to do their homework. The work all of you have done, I really appreciate it, I’m very thankful, and have happy tears.” – Sona Francis Shorthair, Resident.



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About PNM

PNM is the largest electricity provider in New Mexico serving nearly 550,000 customers. PNM is committed to transitioning its electricity to 100% carbon free while ensuring a reliable and resilient power system. Visit PNM.com for more information.