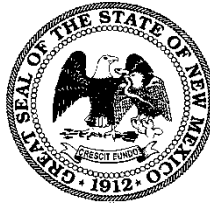


NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

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NEWS RELEASE

USDA Presents Sacred Wind Communications With \$13.8 Million Funding Obligation for Broadband *PRC Commissioners attend March 17 ceremony*

SANTA FE – New Mexico Public Regulation Commissioners Lynda Lovejoy and Karen Montoya attended the obligation presentation ceremony held by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to honor Sacred Wind Communications Inc., at the USDA’s Albuquerque location, on Thursday, March 17.

Sacred Wind, a New Mexico telecommunications company, is set to receive a \$13.8 million low-interest SUTA (Significantly Underserved Tribal Areas) loan from the USDA’s Rural Utility Service-Telecom to improve Internet service in the Four Corners region of the state. The loan is being awarded through a program that intends to expand infrastructure in underserved tribal communities.

Sacred Wind plans to extend fiber optic cable from Gallup to the Navajo community of To’hajiilee west of Albuquerque with funds from the loan during a project expected to take three years.

Sacred Wind serves portions of Navajo lands in the northwestern corner of New Mexico, and has focused mainly on introducing basic telephone services to the many thousands of unserved homes on Navajo lands. The company also aims to provide the most advanced services – including high-speed Internet – to Navajo, non-Navajo residents, governmental entities, and businesses in their territory.

“We are very gratified to receive this SUTA Loan from the USDA,” stated John Badal, Chief Executive Officer of Sacred Wind Communications. “This will enable us to expand our broadband, and to meet the future demands of our customers. This loan will not only tie in the To’hajiilee community into the network, but it will also ensure that we have increased broadband speeds now and into the future.” Badal stated that the aim is for the project to be completed in less than three years. Sacred Wind is presently working on right-of-way acquisitions, and hopes to have surveys completed in about a year and have construction commence by the first or second quarter of 2017.

“This is a great opportunity for Sacred Wind to further expand its network into areas that have been historically underserved and unserved,” stated NMPRC Commissioner Lovejoy, who represents District 4, where Sacred Wind Communication is located. “I am extremely pleased to see these funds utilized to help expand a much needed service in New Mexico.”

“I congratulate Sacred Wind for its commitment to its customers and investment in New Mexico,” stated Commission Vice-Chair Montoya, who represents District 1 (Albuquerque). “While many people have discussed how to get broadband to our rural areas, Sacred Wind took action with this loan from the USDA.”

The USDA’s Telecommunications Program improves the quality of life in rural America by providing capital for the deployment of rural telecommunications infrastructure, according to the agency’s website. USDA Rural Development is committed to ensuring that rural areas have access to affordable, reliable, advanced telecommunications services comparable to those available throughout the rest of the United States. With this access, rural America will see improved educational opportunities, health care, safety and security and ultimately, higher employment.

About the NMPRC

The NMPRC regulates public utilities, telecommunications companies and motor carriers operating in the State of New Mexico. It also administers the State Fire Marshal’s Office, the New Mexico Firefighters Training Academy in Socorro, N.M., and the Pipeline Safety Bureau.

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