
NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 3 COMMISSIONER VALERIE ESPINOZA

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NEWS RELEASE

Commissioner Espinoza Praises Solar Array Partnership of KCEC & Picuris Pueblo

Public Invited to May 6 Ribbon Cutting in Taos for 6 More Arrays

PICURIS PUEBLO, N.M. – New Mexico Public Regulation Commissioner Valerie Espinoza, who represents the NMPRC’s District 5 located in northern New Mexico, attended a much-anticipated groundbreaking ceremony for a solar array being developed on the magnificent Picuris Pueblo. The ceremony was held on Wednesday, April 19, 2017.

Picuris Pueblo’s array is the first of seven being installed by Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) and its partners in order to achieve the goal of 100 percent renewable energy utilization in the summer months.

Since 2014, the Picuris Pueblo has declared a commitment to “encourage energy independence through self-generating clean energy, which demonstrates initiative, and models innovative green leadership.” One of the key goals expressed in the plan was to have 100 percent renewable energy production on the Pueblo. This project will begin to assist the Pueblo to meet that goal.

The Picuris Pueblo Community Solar Array Project is a one-megawatt (MW), single-axis, ground-mounted solar array located on six acres of a tribal trust land. The array will produce 2.6 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) of renewable energy annually from approximately 4,000 photovoltaic (PV) panel modules. The power will offset the cost of the entire energy load of Picuris Pueblo.

Picuris Pueblo encompasses nearly 17,000 acres of forested land in a scenic valley within the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range, in an isolated area located between Santa Fe and Taos. The Pueblo is home to about 300 tribal members with 86 living at the Pueblo proper.

KCEC, the power utility for Picuris Pueblo, signed a purchase power agreement to acquire all of the power generated by the facility for a period of 25 years, and will provide the pueblo with interconnection to the grid. This will help stabilize energy costs, provide ongoing income for the pueblo, and offset carbon emissions.

A virtual ribbon cutting will be held at the KTAO Solar Center in Taos on Saturday, May 6, 2017, for the remaining six solar arrays to be built this year.

“I am thrilled to see Picuris Pueblo tribal leaders and Kit Carson collaborating to work on solar and broadband projects,” Commissioner Espinoza stated after the event. “Solar is the future, and it’s fitting that Picuris Pueblo – a serene sanctuary of timeless, geographical beauty – is working to harness the natural energy of the sun, surrounded by the pristine forests of northern New Mexico. I invite and encourage the public to join me, KCEC, community members and partners on May 6 to celebrate the power of the sun.”

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