



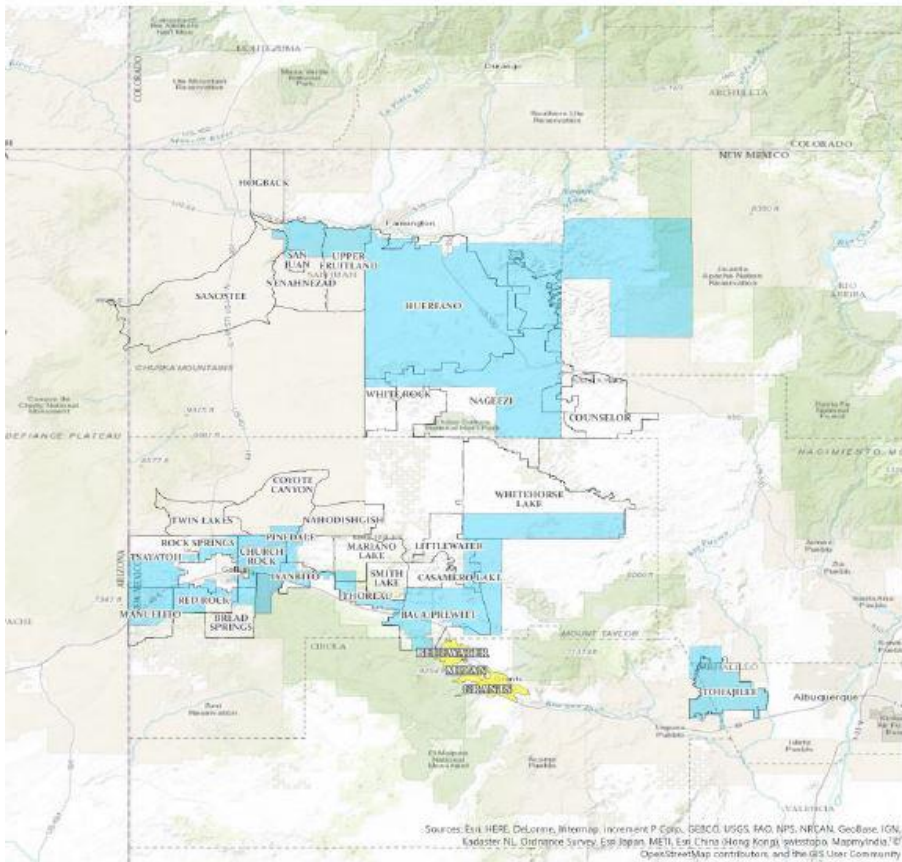
**OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:  
MAKING NEW MEXICO COMMUNITIES PANDEMIC READY**

# START UP – YOU WANT TO DO WHAT!

- Build a business plan where all others failed
- Design a system for the most remote, lowest income population in NM
  - Modify available technologies to suit Navajo area needs
- Spend 2 years on regulatory approvals
- Overcome “killer” right of way processes



## SWC service territory



# GEOGRAPHIC/ DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGES

- 3,200 square miles
- 2 households per square mile
- 49% poverty rate
- High youth & elderly population
- 120 miles between exchanges
- Excessive windshield time

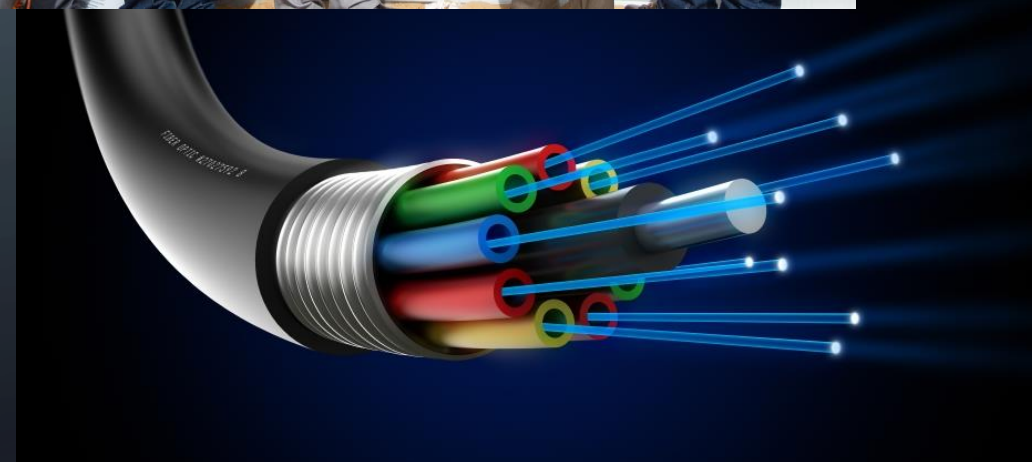
# ACHIEVEMENTS 14 YEARS LATER

- \$75M - infrastructure investment
- 48 employees
- 90% broadband coverage
- Highest broadband speeds
- Largest fixed wireless network
- 1<sup>st</sup> in many categories



# NM FIRSTS

- 1<sup>st</sup> Public computer training center on Navajo Lands
- Largest fixed MW system in rural U.S.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Broadband access on Navajo – NM
- 1<sup>st</sup> 25 Mbps service on Navajo Lands
- 1<sup>st</sup> 100 Mbps by wireless (fixed MW)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Fiber-to-the-home on Navajo



# SPREADING OUR WINGS

- 320 miles existing fiber optic routes
- 100 miles fiber installation in progress
- 400 miles fiber pending contract

## Fiber connectivity @ 1Gbps to:

- 30 GMCSD schools
- Laguna/Acoma School
- Hatch & TorC schools

- Sacred Wind built broadband systems in:
- Laguna Pueblo
- Acoma Pueblo (in progress)
- Grants/Milan
- Bluewater Village
- San Rafael
- Coming soon: Sierra County

# EXPANDING SERVICE TO MORE TRIBAL LANDS

- Only local telco in NM to participate in the 2018 FCC CAF II auction:
- Awarded \$2M to expand broadband service to over 1,000 tribal homes in an area of nearly 400 square miles. Projects to be completed 2020 & 2021 – 3yrs before required.
  - Chichiltah
  - Manuelito
  - Standing Rock
  - Nahodishgish
  - Pinedale
  - Smith Lake
  - Mariano Lake
  - Coyote Canyon
  - Tohatchi

# AND THEN COVID-19 .....

## SACRED WIND'S MISSION

Sacred Wind will provide customers on and off the Navajo reservation with the highest quality telecommunications services, taking advantage of the most appropriate technologies, and we will be diligent in pursuing the most affordable alternatives for our customers.

Sacred Wind will develop, operate, and continually improve upon telecommunications and Broadband systems in rural New Mexico for the personal and professional development of its customers. Its underlying objective is to offer Equality of Opportunity for all of its customers, enabling students to access education remotely, families to access health services, and households to seek the same economic opportunities as available to others in urban areas via state-of-the-art information technologies. Our motto – To Serve the Unserved – is lived out daily by our dedicated employees.





# COVID STATISTICS OF THE NAVAJO NATION (LAST UPDATED AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2020)

- 9,486 Positive Cases of COVID-19
- Total Confirmed Deaths: 484
- Using 2010 Census data and current data, Navajo Department of Health determined an infection rate of 2.34%, significantly higher than even New York's present per-capita infection rate.



<https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>

<https://www.fox10phoenix.com/news/navajo-nation-reports-highest-per-capita-covid-19-infection-rate-in-us>



## WORKER SAFETY

- Required 70% of our employees to work from home while customer service & field techs work in protected areas.
- Provided all field workers with disposable masks, gloves, protective clothing, and digital forehead thermometers.
- Sanitized our offices and customer service center and limit the number of customers at any one time.
- Restricted travel between offices.





## QUICK RESPONSE FOR CUSTOMERS

- 500% increase in new requests – March – July
- 300% increase in new installs vs 2019
- 40% increase in higher speeds
- 1 200 hours overtime
- Hired 4 new employees

# AVAILABILITY OF BROADBAND

- Increased consumer broadband speeds to 25 Mbps, at no additional charges to improve online education and/or remote work.
- Reduced the price of 25 Mbps broadband service for households with students.
- Purchased 100Gig “middle mile” for greater system capacity

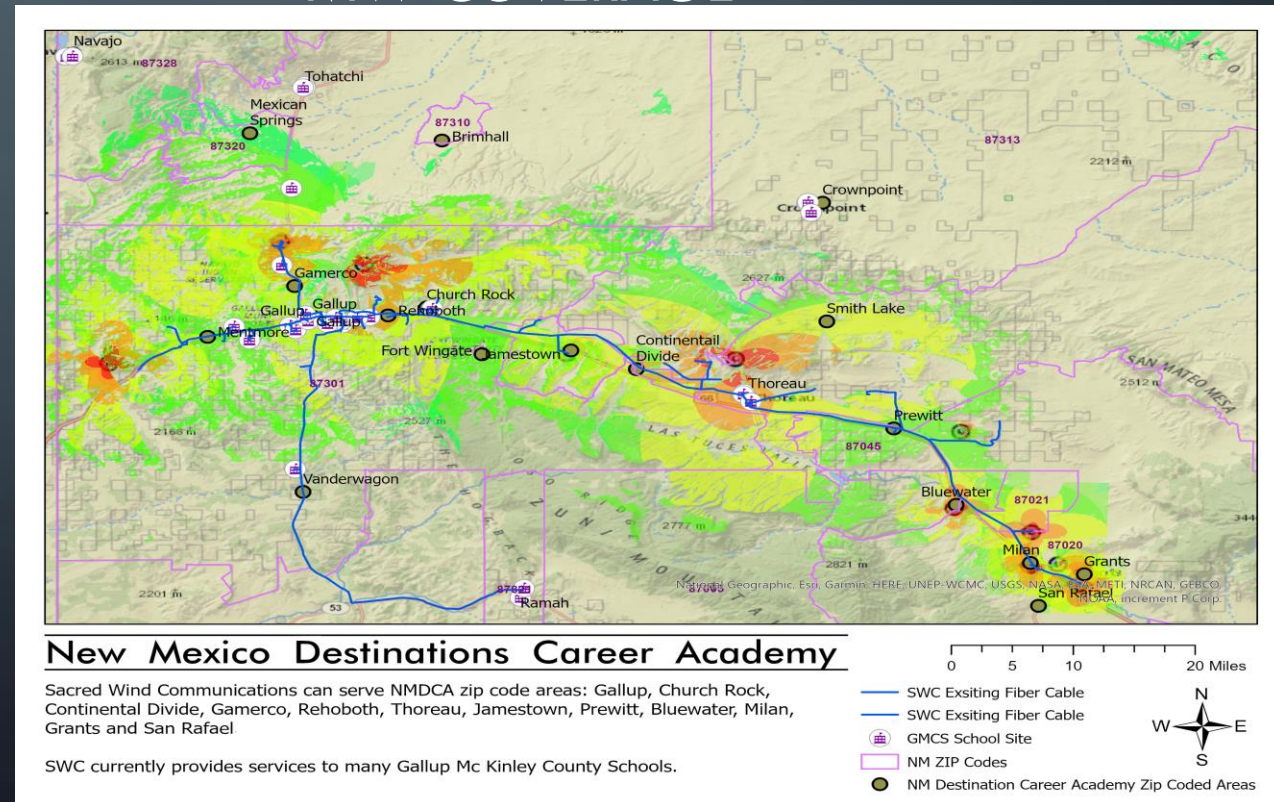


# STUDENTS NEED BROADBAND FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

## SCHOOLS CALLING US

- Grants/Cibola County District
- Gallup/McKinley County District
- Farmington Municipal District
- BIE School- Tohajiilee
- NMSU-Grants
- Navajo Tech University (NTU)

## MW COVERAGE



# WiFi & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Installed free WiFi hotspots at 8 locations in our service territory to accommodate students and teachers who may not have broadband service at their homes.
- Partnered with the Tohajiilee BIE school and the Farmington Municipal School to provide free broadband to families that have none.
- Working with NTU on wider broadband demonstrations.





## SERVICE IN A PINCH

- Installed a temporary Tower on Wheels (TOW) in north Tohajiilee to reach homes waiting for service pending rights-of-way approvals for a permanent tower.
- Petitioned Governor for additional TOWs to reach unserved areas.



## FOCUS ON STUDENTS FOR PANDEMIC READINESS

- 196,000 NM premises lack broadband
- Over 40% of tribal homes have no broadband
  - Some Pueblos and Tribal areas have no broadband
- THERE IS NO SHORT TERM SOLUTION FOR UNIVERSAL BROADBAND ACCESS IN NM.
- WE MUST GUARANTEE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL OF OUR CHILDREN



# SACRED WIND'S PANDEMIC-READINESS PROJECTS

- SWC/NTU 2.5 Ghz broadband demo
- SWC/NTU (in progress) for larger Fiber to Fixed Wireless projects
- Microsoft contract for broadband expansion outside SWC's service area.
- Research alternative technologies



# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 1



- Funding for a DoIT broadband fund of no less than \$25 million annually to cover the matching requirement of federal broadband grants for improvements to broadband services in rural areas and to cover the costs of DoIT grant proposals to improve broadband infrastructure in rural New Mexico.

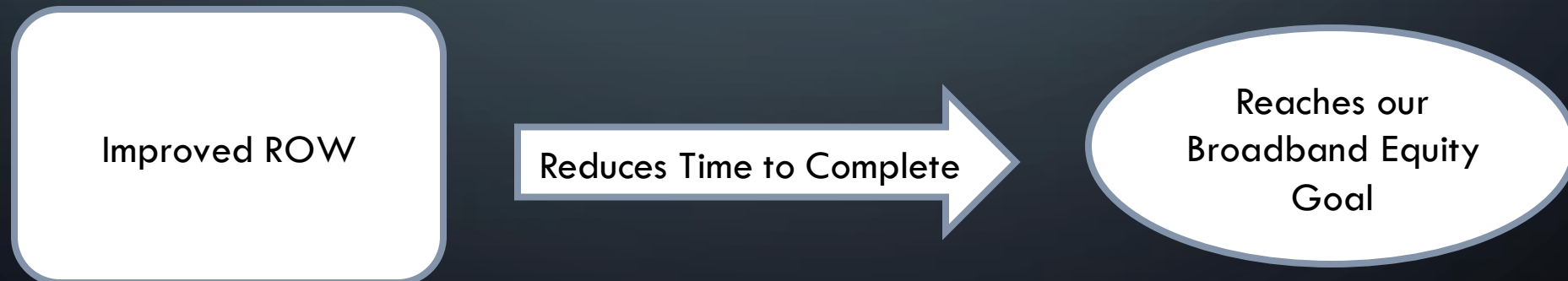
# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 2

- Enable & Incentivize Public Private Partnerships
- Every Local Government & Tribe Has Skin in the Game



# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 3

- Uniform rights of way and easement policies and practices throughout all agencies to expedite and facilitate broadband in low income and rural areas.



# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 4

- Refocus intern and employee training programs at technical and vocational schools for the acquisition of broadband skills needed in times of emergencies.



# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 5

- Establish a 3-year plan for 100% rural Broadband connectivity.
  - Inventory NM's telecom assets, including state-owned microwave towers and spectrum, and identify all broadband gaps.
  - Band Aid & Permanent Solutions
  - Incentivize alternative technologies



# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 6



- Develop distance learning plans by school districts to include teacher training, parental guidelines, and identify broadband gaps by district.
  - Devise “band aid” plan for 2021
  - Devise permanent plan for 2023

# FOR JANUARY 2021 SESSION: TOPIC 7



- Work with all tribes to develop a functional rights-of-way (ROW) process to enable and expedite the expansion of broadband services on tribal lands and other rural areas. (Federal funding possible to enable tribes to conduct their own ROW assessments, replacing the BIA.)





# QUESTIONS?

John Badal

CEO

[jbadal@sacredwindnm.com](mailto:jbadal@sacredwindnm.com)

Catherine Nicolaou

External Affairs Manger

[cnicolaou@sacredwindnm.com](mailto:cnicolaou@sacredwindnm.com)

# THANK YOU!

