



# Mesa Hill Bridge and Road Extension



*Acoma Pueblo - "Haaku - a place prepared"*



**Imagine**...you have just been in a critical car accident on New Mexico Interstate 40 north of BNSF Railway and your passengers – all family members – are in various stages of shock and injury. You've called 911...and now, you must wait.

A mile from your location, a train is racing down the track, on its way to deliver freight to its next destination. With your head resting against the glass of your shattered drivers' side window and between the blurred train cars, you see the flashing lights of an ambulance. And you must wait.

Although this is a fictitious account of a situation that may occur on the Pueblo of Acoma, it is the very stark reality of the current transportation conditions on the Pueblo. Travelers in this area, both residents and visitors, must factor in the potential delays that occur with the BNSF railroad that cuts through the heart of the Pueblo. There is currently no connection between SP36 and SP30 which equates to no connection to the south end of the Pueblo, Tribal headquarters, Acoma Business Enterprises, medical facilities, and emergency services.

### Project Overview

This is a multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional project to improve national road safety, economic competitiveness in alternative energy development, create diversity in the work force and grow jobs while supporting national priorities to security and sustainability.

Acoma Pueblo's Mesa Hill Bridge and Road project creates access to a remote, sequestered area of the country that is barricaded with at least 96 trains a day with the passage of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) through Acoma Pueblo Indian lands in west central New Mexico. These barricades consist of dozens of either moving or stopped rail cars sometimes carrying toxic waste and hazardous materials. Making this even more of a potential

catastrophe, the rail lines are located close to Kinder Morgan natural gas.

Acoma Pueblo's Mesa Hill Bridge and Road project constructs a new 1100-foot bridge over BNSF Railway, Rio San Jose River valley, farming land and the Kinder Morgan gas line and builds a 0.5 mile connecting road, which will reduce daily travel by eight miles from the main existing route in and out of Acoma Pueblo lands from Interstate 40 providing unobstructed access to alternative energy development in solar, wind and LED technology.

This project calls for immediate attention to prevent a potential national catastrophe, unforeseen medical emergencies and costs. As a federal/tribal alliance, nation-to-nation, the project will demonstrate national construction job growth in a rural area, workplace diversity, unobstructed access to a national historic site, while stimulating global competition in the steel fabrication industry.



### Benefit Cost Analysis (BCA) Disaster Prevention

Given the Graniteville disaster, it is estimated that the cost of recovery of a hazardous material rail accident is at the minimum, \$40,000,000. In the event of a hazardous material train accident, the costs could be astronomical. The Graniteville Train Disaster on January 6, 2005 occurred because of an incorrectly aligned railway switch, as a result of the collision, 90 tons of chlorine ruptured releasing 60 tons of gas, 5400 people were evacuated, 9 people died, 250 people were injured, and 4,000 people were put out of work at the mill where the incident happened. The disaster cost the Norfolk Southern Railway at

least \$40 million, which does not include costs for lawsuits. There is no monetary value that can be placed on loss of lives. In the Graniteville event HAZMAT teams responded immediately by first responders. Under the current situation, the Acoma Pueblo Public Safety Department would not be able to respond in a timely manner.



### Acoma Pueblo Community Facts

- Federally recognized tribal entity
- Occupied land for more than 800 years
- Oldest continuously inhabited community in the United States

### The Acoma Bridge provides these significant benefits to the Pueblo:

- Dramatically improve Pueblo safety and accessibility by connecting SP36 to SP30 and onto Interstate 40
- Build road to cross BNSF railroad, farm land and connect to south end of Pueblo
- Connects the hospital, dialysis clinic, the Sunrise Regional Treatment Center, and emergency services to Pueblo and non Pueblo citizens
- Essential shortcut connection to Tribal headquarters and Acoma Business Enterprises
- Land under the bridge will be available for agriculture and access to right-of-way easements and other uses to benefit the Acoma Pueblo
- Proposed project is construction ready
- Construction cost \$28,000,000