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Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State awards 23rd Tribal broadband planning grant

Internet funding to help Pueblo of Zia expand digital infrastructure

SANTA FE – The Pueblo of Zia will use a newly-awarded broadband planning grant to support fiber connectivity to 193 unserved homes and 12 Tribal community institutions.

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has given the Pueblo in Sandoval County a $100,000 grant through OBAE's Grant Writing, Engineering, and Planning Program (GWEP). The state grant will help provide high-quality internet connectivity for the Pueblo of Zia's Tribal Administration and community, installing 12 miles of fiber and related infrastructure.

"This grant again exemplifies the state's commitment to deploy fiber broadband infrastructure in rural and Tribal areas," said OBAE's **State Grants Senior Program Manager Neala Krueger**. "The funding will steer Zia toward greater connectivity that will mean access to education, telehealth and economic growth."

The Pueblo will use about $81,000 of the GWEP grant to obtain professional services for an aerial survey and subsurface utility engineering. This will supplement Zia's grant through the federal Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP). The remaining $19,000 will go toward grant writing for federal funds. TBCP offers grants to help Tribal governments get broadband to provide access to telehealth, distance learning and broadband adoption initiatives.

This is the first GWEP award given to the Pueblo of Zia.

"The Pueblo of Zia looks forward to leveraging this opportunity to enhance connectivity for our residents and strengthen the infrastructure that will support future generations," said **Pueblo of Zia Governor Boyd Toribio**. "We are honored to receive this grant and appreciate the State's continued commitment to expanding broadband access. Reliable, high-speed internet access is essential for education, telehealth, public services, economic development, and quality of life."

OBAE allocated $5 million to the GWEP program to help Tribal communities, cooperatives and local governments get grants to help them provide broadband to unserved locations. All GWEP grants are specifically used for broadband deployment planning. The funding expires June 30, 2027.

OBAE has now awarded 45 GWEP grants, including awards to 23 Tribal communities, 17 local governments and five rural electric and telephone cooperatives.

There is still $455,000 available in GWEP grants, and OBAE encourages Tribal communities, local governments and rural cooperatives to apply. The maximum amount allowed for each award under this state program is $100,000. No matching funds are required.

GWEP awards must be used in the planning of infrastructure projects — internet service providers are not eligible. Furthermore, the grants are not competitive; they are considered assistance grants aimed at spurring broadband infrastructure projects.

For more information and to apply for a GWEP grant, visit here.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.

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