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Jemez Pueblo wins prestigious state infrastructure project award

ALBUQUERQUE — Today, Jemez Pueblo was honored with the *Project Excellence Award* at the New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference for its broadband project, which aims to deliver reliable fiber connectivity to more than 670 unserved or underserved households, Tribal departments, programs, and businesses.

Jeff Lopez, Director of the New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE), presented Jemez Pueblo leadership with the inaugural broadband award during the Department of Finance and Administration's (DFA) annual infrastructure conference. OBAE awarded Jemez an \$8.6 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant in November 2023 to help with the \$15 million project.

"Technology, like art, is a measure of our human advancement," said Governor **George Shendo Jr.** of Jemez Pueblo. "We are honored to be recognized by the Department of Finance and Administration for its inaugural broadband *Project Excellence Award*. We are excited to fully realize all the opportunities our broadband project will bring to current and future generations in Jemez and the surrounding communities."

"This is a tremendous achievement for Jemez and demonstrates the incredible importance of broadband in building infrastructure in New Mexico," said **Lopez**. "This award exemplifies the huge strides the state has made helping Tribal communities and delivering reliable and sustainable broadband to rural communities."

"This award was established by the conference committee to honor the dedication of organizations like Jemez Pueblo, whose efforts to expand broadband are vital to the state's overall infrastructure," said **Scott Wright**, deputy director of the Infrastructure Planning and Development Division at DFA.

JNET, the internet provider established and operated by Jemez Pueblo, has been constructing the current fiber-to-the home project since January 2024. JNET is currently building more than 45 miles of fiber to complete the broadband project.

More than 40 homes are already connected, and the project is expected to be finished in 2026.

The New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference is the state's leading venue for connecting communities with funding opportunities and technical expertise to develop essential infrastructure. Each year, the conference brings together hundreds of participants from across the state to share strategies, resources, and success stories that strengthen New Mexico's future.

OBAE has awarded \$117 million in ARPA broadband grants to more than 20 entities, including Tribal communities, internet service providers and cooperatives.

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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.