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Governor Bill Richardson Applauds Navajo Nation \$32 Million Broadband Award

SANTA FE — Governor Bill Richardson today congratulated the Navajo Nation on a \$32 million award to expand broadband, or high-speed Internet services throughout rural New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.

The \$32,190,067 award was announced by the U.S. Department of Commerce earlier today. The award is a competitive grant funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and was supported by Governor Richardson, the New Mexico Office of Recovery and Reinvestment, and the New Mexico Department of Information Technology.

The Navajo Tribal Utility Authority plans to use the money to expand affordable high-speed Internet on the country's largest reservation. Currently, about 60 percent of households on the Navajo Nation do not have basic telephone service.

"This is a tremendous investment in the Navajo Nation and its people," Governor Richardson said. "This project will bring new opportunities for students, healthcare providers, and small businesses, among others."

Today's award will contribute to a project that calls for 530 miles of aerial fiber, 20 miles of connections into buildings and 59 new or modified microwave tower sites. The project aims to cover more than 30,000 homes and other buildings over 15,000 square miles.

"The Recovery Act has again delivered for rural New Mexico, and I am especially pleased by the new opportunities for students and teachers that stand to benefit from new or improved broadband connections," said former Governor Toney Anaya, who oversees the stimulus effort in New Mexico. "This project will both put people to work and improve our country's infrastructure for future generations."

Today's announcement is among several awards, totaling millions, to come to New Mexico for expanded broadband services.

New Mexico is expected to receive more than \$3.3 billion via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, plus additional tax breaks and bonding authority. Visit www.recovery.state.nm.us for more information.