



Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Receives \$26.2 Million in Grants and Loans to Expand Broadband Offerings

TAOS, NM – Feb. 2, 2021 – Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) has received three grants and loans totaling \$26 million to deploy and expand high speed fiber-optic internet access for its rural broadband customers. These grants will help ensure critical broadband connection to those within the KCEC territory that need it most, as well as support the cooperative’s smart grid initiatives.

An \$18 million grant from the FCC is part of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) program and was granted to KCEC for expanded broadband delivery, helping to connect nearly 100% of its entire membership throughout rural northern New Mexico, including the two pueblos KCEC serves – the Taos Pueblo and Picuris Pueblo – with more than 1,200 potential high-speed, 1 GB internet connections. These connections are critical to support distance learning, remote work, telehealth and other crucial services. The \$18 million grant will be distributed to KCEC over the next ten years.

The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is part of a broader effort to close the digital divide in rural America.

KCEC was also awarded \$634,687 by the New Mexico Public Regulatory Commission (NMPRC) to support high-speed internet service for low-income residents, students, and tribal members. This award will connect 550 locations to broadband services. KCEC will complete this grant in a strategic, 12-month timeframe. NMPRC awards multiple ISPs annually with funding to help build or upgrade networks around New Mexico.

Finally, KCEC was awarded a \$7.5 million Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan to invest in fiber communications and establish 7,497 network drops in the cooperative’s service area. These drops will be used to bolster the cooperative’s modern, smart grid applications, including smart meter reading and backhaul, real-time monitoring, and smart switched and smart devices at the home and in the system.

KCEC has installed 30 free Wi-Fi hotspots in primary locations throughout its territory to support members during the COVID -19 Pandemic. These funds will allow KCEC to continue to enhance coverage and installation of these free Wi-Fi networks.

This initiative will further progress the deployment of their free wi-fi hot spot

“Helping to improve broadband access to all KCEC members and providing all of our school children with access to Giga-bit high-speed internet are critical initiatives for KCEC, and these funds will help make that possible,” said Luis Reyes Jr., CEO of KCEC. “In addition, this additional funding will help monitor and operate our 100% daytime solar network. All of these initiatives come together to help us provide a high-speed, multipurpose communications network of carrier-class in a very rural part of New Mexico.”



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About Kit Carson Electric Cooperative

Formed in 1944, Kit Carson is a member-owned electric distribution cooperative in northern New Mexico and is the second largest cooperative in the state. Kit Carson is one of 16 electric cooperatives that serve rural New Mexico communities, serving nearly 30,000 members in Taos, Colfax and Rio Arriba counties. To learn more about Kit Carson, visit www.kitcarson.com.