

CRITICAL NEED STATEMENT

Rural Digital Translator for Shiprock, New Mexico

Submitted by:

KNME-TV

Albuquerque ~ Santa Fe

Critical Need Statement - Navajo Nation – Translator Digital Translator Project – Shiprock, NM August 2, 2013

General Statement

The Navajo Nation, or Dine Bikeyah (Land of the People), sprawls across the Four Corners region of the southwest, covering 27,000 square miles or 17.1 million acres over thirteen counties in Colorado, Utah, Arizona and New Mexico. It is home to the second largest federally recognized Native American tribal grouping in the United States, representing more than a quarter of a million people.

Dine Bikeyah's spectacular mountain desert landscapes act as beautiful natural barriers that protect the Navajo inhabitants, but also serve as significant obstacles to the creation and maintenance of a stable infrastructure to support their daily life. An over-the-air public television service offers a non-intrusive and unique way to improve their quality of life, nurture their heritage, and help their culture thrive on its own terms.

The proposed Digital Translator, will re-transmit KNME-DT over the Navajo city of Shiprock, New Mexico, which currently has *no terrestrial* Public Television service. The city has 8,295 inhabitants and is 96% Native American (Navajo).

KNME-TV requests permission to begin broadcasting from Roof Butte, Arizona as soon as possible under an STA (Special Temporary Authority), and consideration for an eventual permanently licensed digital translator to serve this un-served community.

Navajo Nation Statistics

According to the 2000/2001 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report, more than 56 percent of the Navajo Nation live under third world conditions. Nearly 32 percent of houses lack complete plumbing, 23 percent lack kitchen facilities, 60 percent lack telephone service, and 36 percent are without electricity. Where electricity is lacking, televisions are powered by alternate means such as generators or vehicle batteries. Often families travel to Chapter houses, schools, or Indian Health Service clinics to view programs of interest.

While more than half the Navajo population is under the age of 20, their nine percent infant mortality rate is almost three percent higher than that of the rest of the United States. Navajos have less of a chance of surviving childhood, die younger (especially from accidents), live significantly below the poverty line, and experience higher than average incidence of heart disease, malignant neoplasm, alcoholism, tuberculosis and diabetes.

SOURCES: Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development Census 2000 Indian
Health Service

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The high school dropout rate among the Navajo is nearly 50 percent. Less than six percent have a college degree. Unemployment among the Navajo is greater than 42 percent and the average per capita income is less than \$7,000.

Complicating these daily challenges, the Navajo people must rely on a third world road system in their efforts to access education, training, medical services, emergency services, food and other necessities. While the Navajo Nation is the size of West Virginia, that state has 18,000 miles of paved roads, while the Navajo Nation has less than 2,000. The remaining network of unimproved dirt roads is often rutted and un-navigable, isolating tribal residents from each other and the outside world, and limiting their access to education, healthcare, economic development, and basic government services critical to maintaining the fabric of their society.

These conditions represent a significant threat to the Navajo people and their culture.

Conclusion

Extending the KNME-TV public television network service to the Navajo city of Shiprock, New Mexico will greatly enhance the community's ability to receive free over-the-air educational and cultural programming from one of America's premier public television providers.

Based on our experience, we know that this service will help strengthen and educate the citizens of Shiprock, New Mexico and the surrounding areas. Over time, these services will help improve the quality of life and standard of living in this area of great need in the "Land of Enchantment".

KNME looks forward to implementing this project, and thanks members of the FCC staff for their consideration.