Enhancement of the Pueblo of Acoma Utility Authority

Presented by:
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Pueblo of Acoma Utility Authority
Pueblo of Acoma

- One of nineteen Pueblos in New Mexico
- 6,344 enrolled tribal members, about 3,500 are on Acoma Tribal Lands
- Tribal Leadership is appointed annually by traditional leaders of the Pueblo.
- “Oldest continuously inhabited village in North America”
Location

- 55 miles west of Albuquerque in west central NM
- 800,000 acres of trust/fee land, but the vast majority of this land is considered open range.
- 5,612 – 7068 ft above sea level, high mountain desert
- Tribal Boundaries are contiguous, few checkerboard areas.
Acoma has been pursuing energy alternatives since 2006

- Establishment of the Utility Authority (2011)
- Preliminary Feasibility Study Wind/Solar/Natural Gas (2013 YESCO)
- Market Evaluation Options Analysis (2016 WAPA)
- Strategic Energy Plan and Energy Efficiency Update (2018 DOE & Sandia NL)

- Acoma Natural Gas Connectivity Study and Deployment Assessment (2011 NM & POA)
- Electric Utility Business Plan (2017 POA UA)
- Electric Utility Energization (2020 March)
Project Background

Solar Projects at the Pueblo of Acoma

13 unit off-grid waterless composting restroom buildings atop Old Acoma

Off-grid pv system for running track lighting
In 2016, Acoma prioritized electric utility formation.

**Why?**

- Reinvest Utility Revenues
- Enhance Sovereignty
- Support Economic Development
- Control Energy Decisions
- Expand on existing Utility Authority
- Deliver Quality Service
- Create Tribal Jobs
- Manage Reliability
- Protect & Control Natural Resources
- Pursue Renewable Power
- Unique Opportunity to acquire infrastructure

This slide illustrates the reasons behind Acoma's decision to prioritize electric utility formation, focusing on various benefits such as economic development, control over energy decisions, and the potential for renewable power sources.
Project Background

ROW Dispute and Settlement Agreement

- Based on a dispute between the Pueblo and our local incumbent coop over an expired ROW agreement, Acoma filed, in Tribal Court, a trespass and damages case.
- After a two year process a settlement agreement was reached in 2014 where Acoma would dismiss the trespass damages and the coop would transfer all electrical facilities within the exterior boundaries of the Pueblo.
- In 2016, Acoma Pueblo performed an electric utility formation assessment – high level feasibility study.

Acoma’s Average Retail Payment 10.3 Cents per kWh

10.0

9.0

8.0

7.0

6.0

5.0

4.0

3.0

2.0

1.0

0.0

Net Income
Other
Depreciation
Admin & Customer Distribution
Power Supply
Next, we completed a business plan looking at anticipated revenues, formation and operational expenses:

- 10 yr financial statement
- RFP for wholesale power
- RFP for outage restoration support
- Deferred maintenance
- Operations expenses (prior outage restoration & maintenance)
- Capital improvement plan

Originally our plan looked at wheeling power through the incumbent coop’s substation but their fee pushed us to build a substation and feeder line to become completely independent.
Project Background

• In 2017 and 2018 the Pueblo and our incumbent coop negotiated the Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA)
  • Severance plan and cost
  • Title transfer
  • Records transfer (mapping, customer account information, deposits, liabilities, etc...)
  • On-going grant of ROW
  • Mutual emergency backup provisions and switching procedures
• The Pueblo and coop is preparing for a joint presentation of the PSA to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission to approve the transfer
• Utility Authority internal efforts:
  • NEPA and ROW - Complete
  • Construction of a 20 MVA substation and 14.4 kV distribution line to interconnect to the transmission system – In Progress
  • Hiring staff – In Progress
  • Operation and maintenance plan – In Progress
  • Capital improvement plan – In Progress
  • Electric Utility Policies and Procedures (utility and customer obligations) - Complete
  • Rate structure - Complete
  • Interconnection agreement with Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) - Complete
  • Wholesale PPA with Guzman Energy - Complete
  • Initial inventory (poles, transformers, conductor, etc...) - Complete
  • Equipment, vehicles, tools, safety supplies etc... - Complete
  • Integrate the electric rate/billing into our existing utility billing services - Complete
• Start date for the Acoma Tribal Electric Utility – March 2020
Acoma Has a Unique Opportunity to Expand POAUA to Include Electric

Project Background

Pueblo of Acoma Electrical System Interconnection and Pathway
Location of POA McCarty’s Substation and Distribution Line Installation

[Map showing the Pueblo of Acoma Electrical System Interconnection and Pathway]
Acoma Has a Unique Opportunity to Expand POAUA to Include Electric Project Funding

Early Stage Equity Financing

Working Capital Loan

Capacity and Organizational Development

Engineering, Construction and other cap costs

- Due Diligence - $560,000
- Capitalized Costs - $5,190,000
- Non Capitalized Costs - $500,000

Overall Project Cost for Establishment of the Acoma Electric Utility - $6.25 Million
Project Stakeholders

PUEBLO OF ACOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL, GOVERNOR’S OFFICE AND THE UTILITY AUTHORITY BOARD

Utility Authority - Water/Wastewater & Solid Waste

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Office of Indian Energy

STELZNER • WINTER • WARBURTON
FLORES • SANCHEZ • DAWES P.A.

Western Area Power Administration

PNM
Future Plans

With technical assistance from NREL, we are developing a RFQ/RFP to be able to vet a partner for a utility scale solar project (50+ MW)
Special thank you to the DOE Office of Indian Energy!

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