



SANDOVAL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

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2009 SEP 14 PM 3:31

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September 8, 2009

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary, Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Gary F. Locke
Secretary, Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

JUAN R. VIGIL
County Manager

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Secretary Locke:

This letter follows the request you recently received from Members of Congress Ben Ray Luján and Stephanie Sandlin requesting revisions in grant requirements under the Broadband Initiative Program (BIP) and Broadband Technologies Opportunities Program (BTOP). As currently written, those requirements place much of rural America at a great disadvantage.

Phase II of Sandoval County's already-launched and in-use Broadband Network is a needed, viable and shovel ready project that would further extend our Network into rural areas of our County. It is an essential step in our undertaking to enhance health care, public safety, education and business growth over much of our very rural, highly impoverished county – an area that exceeds 3,700 square miles.

Sandoval County includes all or portions of nine Indian pueblos, three Navajo Chapters and part of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation. It also includes six incorporated communities but only one, the City of Rio Rancho, has a population exceeding 50,000 people. Phase II of our project would serve an unincorporated area of 2,500 residents, predominately Tribal members of the Pueblo of Jemez, almost 30 percent of whom fall below Federal poverty levels. The enhanced services our Broadband Network Phase II would provide are summarized in the attached letter from Jemez Pueblo Governor David Toledo and in a one-paragraph project abstract.

In our discussions with Congressman Luján, we have become a poster child for needed revision of BIP's and BTOP's requirement that restricts funding to "remote" areas defined as those that are 50 miles away from a non-rural area. Our concern, however, as addressed in the letter from Congress Members Lujan and Sandlin, is that the Jemez Pueblo region does not satisfy the distinction as a "remote" location since it is located within a 50-mile radius of a non-rural area.

I'm also attaching two maps. The first visualizes the problem faced by Sandoval County and, I'm sure, much of rural America. While Jemez Pueblo is isolated, highly rural and

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Secretaries Vilsack & Locke

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remote, its location alone does not satisfy BIP's requirements since it is within a 50-mile radius of the City of Rio Rancho (pop. 67,536). It also is within the same radius of Albuquerque (pop. 504,949) and Santa Fe (pop. 72,056), both of which are located in neighboring counties.

The second map illustrates both how Sandoval County will extend service from our current Pajarito Peak microwave site into the Jemez Pueblo region and the specific broadband service sites that would benefit from the project. Once service is extended into Tribal Offices, the Pueblo will begin providing broadband services to its residents and businesses.

Sandoval County's application was prepared for submission for the first funding cycle consideration a few weeks ago. We withheld submission, however, pending a review of the 50-mile radius requirement. We now intend to submit our application for Round Two funding consideration in October and urge you to consider needed revision in the BIP and BTOP requirements so that our project can be fully reviewed for its tangible and evident benefits,

Sincerely,



Juan R Vigil
County Manager

cc: Congressman Ben R. Luján
Congresswoman Stephanie Sandlin
County Commission Chairman Don E. Leonard
County Commission Vice Chairman Orlando J. Lucero
County Commissioner David Bency, District 3
County Commissioner Glenn Walters, District 4
County Commissioner Darryl F. Madalena, District 5

Attachments (4)

SANDOVAL COUNTY'S MICROWAVE BACKBONE NETWORK – PHASE II

ABSTRACT

Broadband access has become increasingly essential to the successful growth of industry, healthcare, and educational systems. However, there is a distinct lack of reliable, high-speed access in the rural areas of Sandoval County, New Mexico. The expansion of an existing carrier-class, licensed microwave network backbone into the Jemez Pueblo area will provide direct and immediate benefits to the County schools, health facilities, government entities, libraries, and public safety organizations. This phase of the network deployment consist of any combination of Point-to-Point, Point-to-Multipoint, Fiber and Mesh Access technologies, and is defined by three milestones: distribution of access points and subscriber modules in areas proximal to the existing and planned backbone; extension of the wireless backbone with other wireless or fiber links; and the interconnection with the University of New Mexico's (UNM) new Rio Rancho campus, the UNM Hospital, CNM, and Intel. The implementation of a self-sustaining network that offers multi-megabit services at a fraction of the cost of currently available access promises increased economic development and job creation, enhanced market competition, improved delivery of e-government services, and accelerated and affordable broadband Internet access for the Jemez Pueblo region.



PUEBLO OF JEMEZ

August 4, 2009

Don Leonard
Chairman
Sandoval County Commission
County Administrative Office
711 Camino Del Pueblo
Bernalillo, New Mexico 87004

Dear Chairman Leonard:

Broadband access has become increasingly essential to economic growth of our nation, healthcare, and education. What electric power and telephones were to the 20th Century, broadband access will be to the 21st. American Indian Nations that don't have affordable broadband lose jobs. Their children suffer a serious disadvantage in college or in the workforce, where fluency with computers and the Internet is increasingly assumed as a matter of course.

Rural pueblos without broadband cannot take advantage of new breakthroughs in telemedicine or the economic opportunities created by telecommuting. Even in crowded urban areas, the availability of broadband can vary from one neighborhood to another, stranding one neighborhood on the wrong side of the "digital divide" while two, three or even four broadband providers serve their neighbors. Sandoval County has a valuable role to play in filling this gap for the Pueblo of Jemez.

Sandoval County Phase 2 Broadband network will offer the promise of increased economic development and jobs, enhanced market competition, improved delivery of e-government services, and accelerated and affordable Internet access for Pueblo of Jemez.

Jemez Tribal Council is ready and eager to bring the economic and social benefits of broadband access to its independent sovereign nation. Jemez Tribal Council fully supports Sandoval County's Wireless Broadband Phase 2 Initiative.

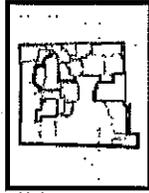
Sincerely,

David M. Toledo
Governor

Office of the Governor

4471 Highway 4, Box 100 • Jemez Pueblo • New Mexico • 87024
(575) 834-7359 • Fax (575) 834-7331

Sandoval County Broadband Project Jemez Pueblo Area Population Map

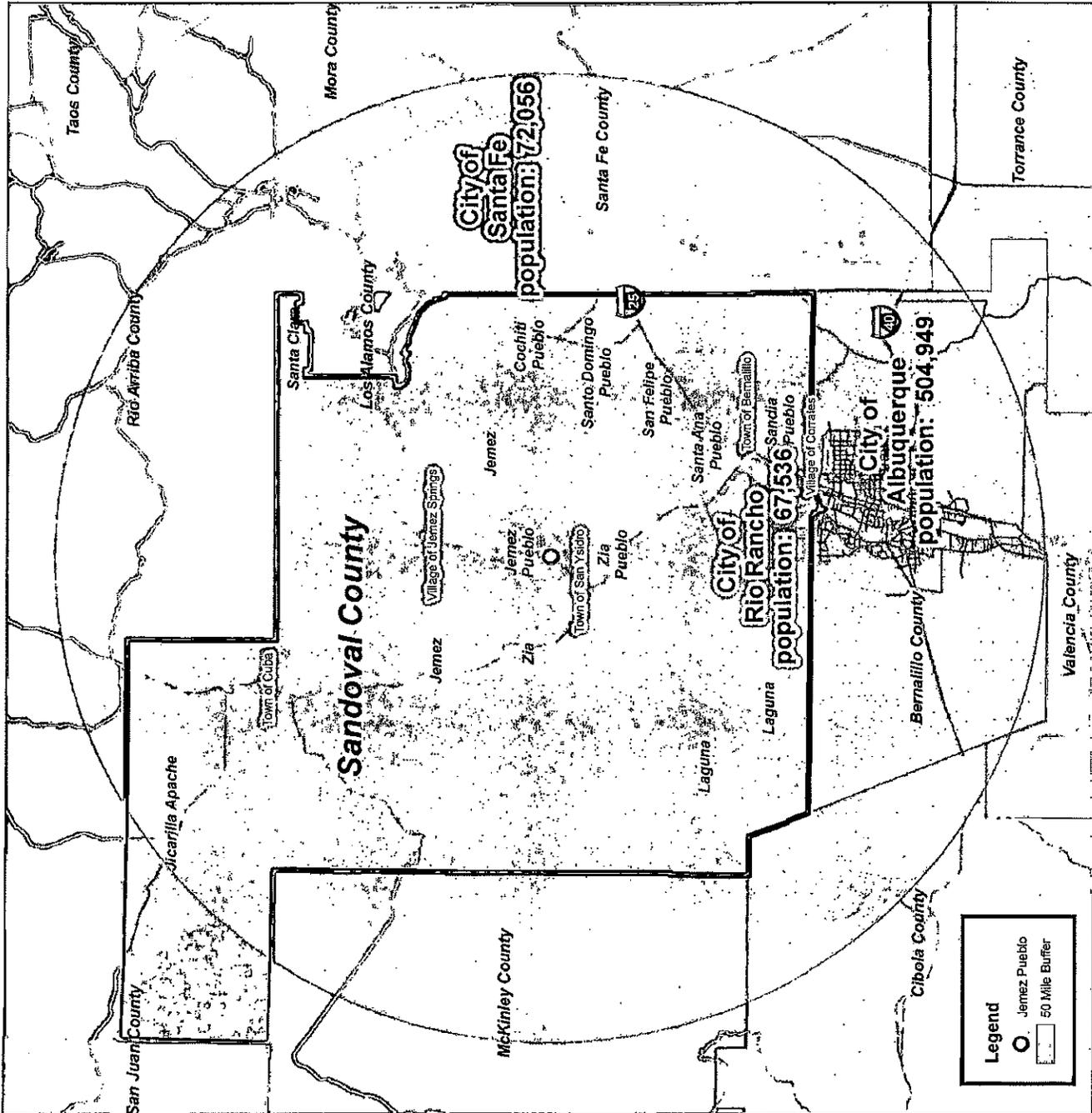
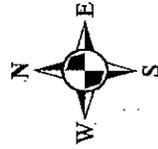


New Mexico
County Map

Disclaimer:
The information on this map
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and is not an official document.
All users should be
independently verified.
For more information
please visit our website:
sandovalcounty.nm.gov



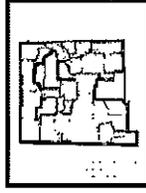
Prepared by the
Sandoval County
GIS Section



Legend

- Jemez Pueblo
- 50 Mile Buffer

Sandoval County
Broadband Project
Jemez Pueblo
Location Map

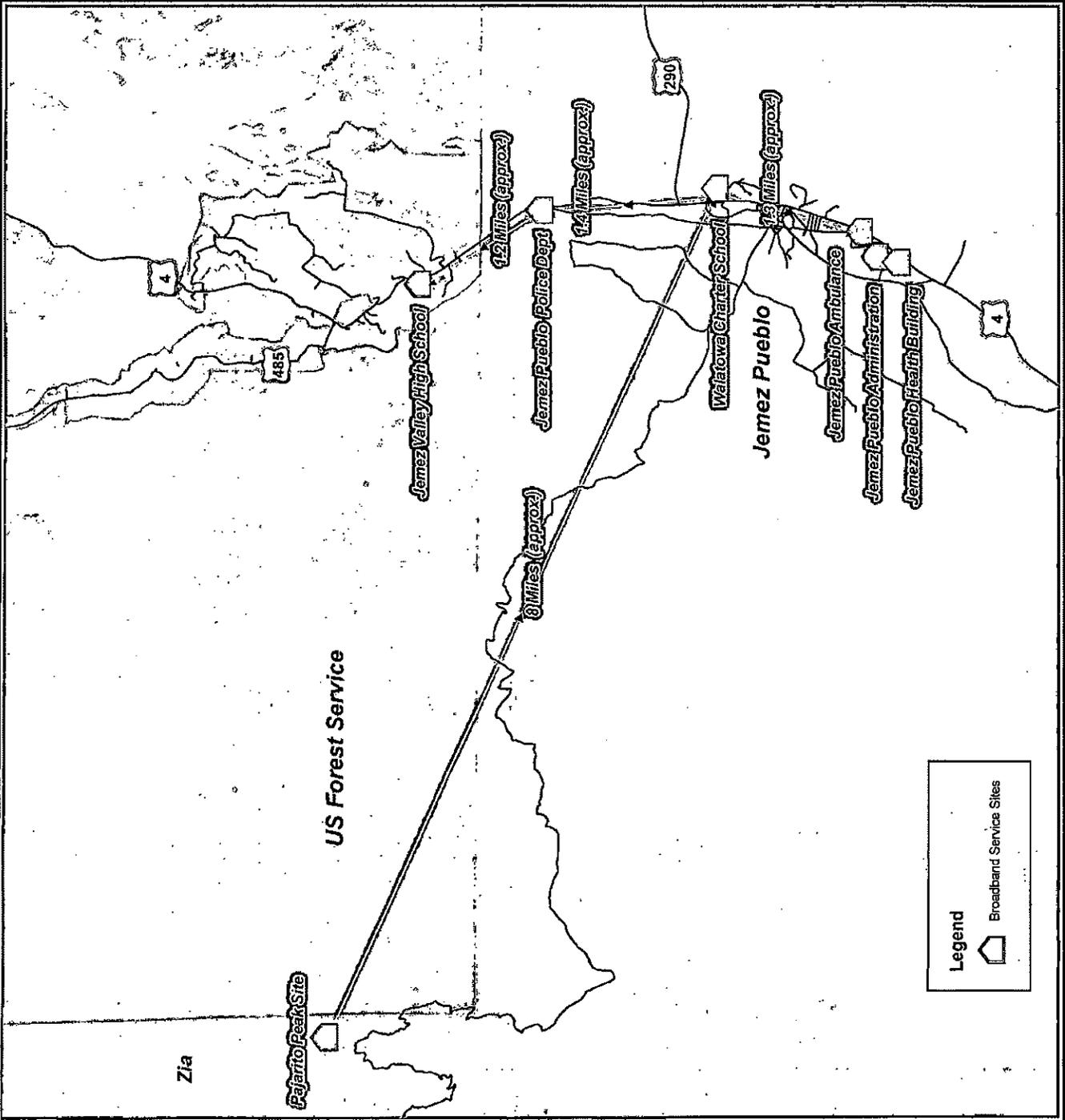
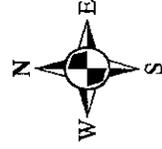


New Mexico
County Map

The information on this map is for reference purposes only and is not an official document. All information should be independently verified. For more information please visit our website: sandovalcountynm.gov



Prepared by the
Sandoval County
GIS Section



Legend

Broadband Service Sites