

LANS' Fund Gives Native American Businesses Traction for Growth

By Kathy Keith, Director, Los Alamos National Laboratory Community Relations and Partnerships Office

After a successful trial run of its new arts and farmers market last October, Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council Inc. (ENIPC) solidified plans to make the markets a weekly event each Saturday this year from July 9 through the Columbus Day weekend. To maximize the economic benefits to market vendors — Native and non-Native farmers and artists from Northern New Mexico ENIPC — knew it needed to expand marketing to reach potential customers during the busy tourist season.

So ENIPC applied for — and received — funding from the Native American Venture Acceleration Fund (NAVAF), a pool of money distributed by Los Alamos National Security, LLC, and the Regional Development Corporation to help Native enterprises create jobs, increase their revenue base and diversify the Northern New Mexico economy.

That money will be used to develop a marketing strategy and brand for the art and farmers market and to hire an artist to design and produce a poster to use in advertising, according to ENIPC executive assistant Jovanna Archuleta. The markets, held behind the Ohkay Casino Resort Hotel, “bring the community together to sell their products” — and produce.

“We’re going to open the market to 50 vendors,” Archuleta said. “We already have 40 signed up. We could eventually help 100 (community entrepreneurs).”

Eight Northern Indian Pueblo Council is one of four Northern New Mexico-based Native American-owned and -operated businesses to receive a total of \$60,000 in grants through the NAVAF this year.

High Water Mark, LLC, at Cochiti Pueblo received money to buy software with which it can compete for federal contracts. R&M Construction at Santa Clara Pueblo is using its grant to purchase equipment and estimating software for its construction projects, and Poeh Cultural Center and Museum at Pojoaque Pueblo will use its award to develop training programs for area artists and entrepreneurs.



LANS, the company that manages Los Alamos National Laboratory, created the NAVAF fund in partnership with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department. The Regional Development Corporation of Española manages the fund.

Eligible applicants compete for the awards each year; the maximum grant amount is \$25,000. To date, the NAVAF has invested more than \$250,000 in the Northern New Mexico economy and results through 2014 show that 22 jobs were created or retained by Native-owned companies. NAVAF recipients attracted additional funding of \$2.7 million and grew revenues by \$692,500.

To be eligible for an NAVAF grant, applicants must be a Native American-owned business: The tribe or tribal members must have a minimum 51 percent stake in the enterprise. Business principals must be affiliated with the pueblos of Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh, Picuris, Santa Clara, Pojoaque, Taos, San Ildefonso, Tesuque, Cochiti or Jemez and be based in Sandoval, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, San Miguel, Mora, Rio Arriba or Taos county.

To invest in the Native American Venture Acceleration fund or for more information, contact Liddie Martinez (Liddie@rdcnm.org), executive director of the Regional Development Corporation, or Vangie Trujillo (vangie@lanl.gov) of the LANL Community Relations and Partnerships Office.

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