

## **Kayenta Operational August 24, 2017**

Good afternoon!

Thank you for having me here as we celebrate the Kayenta Solar Facility.

We are living in an exciting era of the energy industry. The changes in technology, the innovation in markets and the shifting sands of electricity production present us with challenges and opportunities not seen in the last 50 years.

Today marks an important step forward in those opportunities. This new facility promotes grid modernization, inclusion of renewables, and the creation of new economic opportunities by a tribal utility. I was excited to be here as we broke ground last year in April, and I am honored to stand with you today and celebrate the operational facility today.

At Western Area Power Administration, an important part of delivering on our mission is our relationship with our tribal customers. We recognize our trust responsibilities with Tribal Sovereign Nations and are committed to our government-to-government relationship.

The Navajo Nation is our largest tribal customer, and #23 out of 681 customers in long-term power sales. Our powerful partnership with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority is long-standing. We have worked together with a strong and cooperative partnership for more than 50 years, accomplishing many good things.

For example, in October 1992 before the advent of state renewable portfolio standards—before ‘solar’ was a household word—WAPA was assisting NTUA with a plan to deliver solar energy to remote off-grid Navajo Tribal families. The goal of the pilot project was two-fold: first, to electrify about 80 remote sites throughout the Navajo Nation; and second, to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a long-term, sustainable photovoltaic option to serve potential remote customers in the future. That effort was about 25 years ahead of its time. Today, solar energy systems are more reliable, durable and cost effective.



More recently, NTUA General Manager Walter Haase reached out to WAPA in January to discuss joining the Western Area Colorado Missouri Balancing Authority to avoid a potential 400-percent rate increase. WAPA employees in our Colorado River Storage Project Management Center, Desert Southwest region and Rocky Mountain region worked quickly—creating and executing contracts, testing, training and making transmission reservation adjustments—to bring NTUA into the balancing authority by March 1.

And today's event is another great example! We are proud to assist this innovative utility-scale solar farm by connecting it to the larger grid through our Kayenta substation. We hope to continue building this kind of mutually beneficial partnership well into the future, especially with our Native American customers. Changes in the electric industry are occurring rapidly and WAPA stands ready to continue providing technical assistance in power marketing, resource management and transmission services for the Navajo Nation.

From the inception of this solar facility, NTUA worked closely with WAPA to identify solutions to the significant obstacles the project faced. We were eager to provide the flexibility needed to support this solar facility, and we continue the effort today by monitoring the output of the facility and working closely with NTUA to ensure this solar power is an integral part of the grid.

By working closely with customers, truly understanding their needs and responding to their challenges, WAPA is positioned to continue delivering on its mission now and well into the future. We are committed to serving communities across the West.

Together, this is how we continue to power the energy frontier.

