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## **President Obama Orders Interagency Work Group to Improve Internet to Rural Areas Sacred Wind selected to represent rural telecom companies**

**ALBUQUERQUE, NM** – December 12, 2012 - Sacred Wind Communications has been selected to speak today to a gathering of federal agencies in Washington, DC on ways to accelerate the deployment of high speed Internet in rural areas. The federal agencies are part of a Broadband Deployment on Federal Property Working Group, created by an Executive Order of the President signed on June 14, 2012.

The intent of the Executive Order is to develop uniform policies and procedures among federal government agencies that would accelerate the deployment of high speed Internet (Broadband) mainly in rural areas by providing consistent, improved and streamlined access to federal property and federally managed rights of way.

Every federal agency that “has significant ownership of, or responsibility for managing, federal lands, buildings, and rights of way, federally assisted highways, and tribal lands” is a member of the working group, which includes the U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Transportation, Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Postal Service. Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission, the Council on Environmental Quality, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Security Staff have been assigned an advisory and assistance role. Indian tribes have also been consulted.

Sacred Wind, a New Mexico company that operates mainly on tribal lands in the state, has been active at the national and local levels in promoting improved rights of way procedures. The formation of such federal working group, in fact, was a recommendation made by Sacred Wind in its comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of July 2011, as a response to the FCC’s request for comments on the deployment of broadband in rural areas.

Sacred Wind has built a landline and fixed wireless telecommunications infrastructure on Navajo lands in New Mexico and will be assisting the Laguna Pueblo in their development of a similar network for broadband services to the Laguna people. Eventhough having developed a system that encroaches less on tribal lands than traditional telecommunications systems, Sacred Wind has experienced frequent delays due to governmental rights of way procedures.

“Our network could have been finished two years earlier, but for the years-long rights of way procedures even for the smallest of jobs,” said John Badal, CEO of Sacred Wind.

Sacred Wind has expended over \$45 Million in its network, building infrastructure where none existed. Some of that expense was incurred in complying with different federal and tribal agency rights of way rules, including conducting archaeological and environmental surveys to attach fiber optic or copper landline on an existing electric pole.

Sacred Wind has become an expert on rights of way policies and procedures on federal lands and has spoken at several national forums on the subject.

“This is the first time that any rural company has had a chance to address such a gathering of federal agencies,” Badal said. “We are optimistic that, under the President’s Executive Order, a reform of federal rights of way policies is within reach.”

**About Sacred Wind Communications**

Sacred Wind Communications is a privately owned, FCC recognized rural telecommunications and New Mexico-based company. We are dedicated to improving telecommunications services to rural areas within New Mexico. Focused primarily on introducing basic telephone and advanced Internet services to the thousands of underserved homes on Navajo lands, Sacred Wind also offers advanced services to remote non-Navajo communities, governmental entities and businesses in its territory. Sacred Wind was voted "**The Most Inspiring Small Business in America**" in 2009 in a national American Express/NBC Universal *Shine A Light* contest. For more information, please visit [www.sacredwindcommunications.com](http://www.sacredwindcommunications.com).

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