

Sacred Wind gets \$13.8M loan for internet improvements

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ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — A New Mexico telecommunications company is getting a \$13.8 million loan from the federal government to improve internet service.

Members of the state's congressional delegation announced the loan for Sacred Wind Communications on Thursday.

The low-interest loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service is being awarded under a program that aims to improve infrastructure in underserved tribal communities.

With the money, Sacred Wind plans to extend fiber optic cable from Gallup to the Navajo community of To'hajiilee west of Albuquerque.

The project will take three years to complete.

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall said extending the cable will open new opportunities for education, health care and business. Right now, he says only one in five people living on tribal land in New Mexico have access to wired broadband.