



PRESS RELEASE

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Sacred Wind's Broadband Held Strong During Recent Area Outages

Internet Redundancy Key to Access to Internet, Emergency Services

Gallup, NM – During the recent CenturyLink Friday the 13th outage that left many without internet or phone service, Sacred Wind Communications and its affiliates' high-speed internet and emergency 911 customers remained unaffected, due to the company's investment in its own redundant fiber and network design.

“The recent outage wasn't due to Friday the 13th superstition, but instead due to lack of collaborative fiber use in the Gallup area,” said John Badal, CEO of Sacred Wind. “Internet and 911 providers, especially in underserved communities, cannot continue to work in silos. We all need to work together for the sake of businesses and customers in rural areas.”

Sacred Wind Communications and its affiliates provide high-speed internet within its regulated service territory, and, in the Gallup area, it serves city government offices, 23 Gallup McKinley County schools, a handful of residential and business customers, and it also carries over its fiber network redundant capacity to several telecom carriers all of whom were able to stay online during Friday's CenturyLink outage. Sacred Wind provides regular telephone service in its regulated service territory, which encompasses mostly Navajo land surrounding the Gallup area. Sacred Wind telephone customers retained their 911 service and were minimally impacted during Friday's outage because of the way the telephone network connects to the outside world via CenturyLink.

“We've built the redundant fiber line, and it's now up to providers to interconnect our networks and utilize it to safeguard our customers,” added Badal. “We've reached out to other telecom providers, in order to avoid such instances of outages; however, some have not chosen to connect to Sacred Wind's redundant route along I-40. The impact to Gallup's businesses and to surrounding Native American communities is especially egregious because those businesses have a tough enough time coping with pandemic-induced reductions and, on any given weekend, hundreds of Navajo families drive for hours to converge upon the city of Gallup. This weekend was no different, as it was a ceremonial weekend for many in the community. Debit cards transactions were declined for families, which negatively affects everyone.”

For businesses connected to Sacred Wind's high speed Internet network, outages were not an issue, and business was able to continue as normal.

For Ruth Carling, owner of Fratelli's Bistro in Gallup, although she experienced loss of personal cell phone service, she was able to run credit cards and continue business as normal all day, due to Sacred Wind's service. "We experienced no loss of business, when we would have been out several thousand dollars," said Carling. "It was definitely a blessing to have that backup, and we are incredibly grateful."

"We didn't skip a beat," added Donovan Ferrari, Owner of SilverDust Trading in Gallup. "Our Wi-Fi was working, thanks to Sacred Wind, and we were one of only a few businesses that had anything going on Friday. We were 100% up and running."

"Sacred Wind worked just as designed," said Greg McKim, Network Administrator for Amigo Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep and Ram. "One-third of our business was still operational—the third that's hooked up to Sacred Wind's service."

"We run a fire protection business and it was business as usual for us on Friday," said Stacey Guerrero, Administrative Secretary for Gallup Fire Extinguishers Sales & Service. "The internet, phones, and credit card machine worked. We love Sacred Wind's service."

"We're thrilled to hear our customers were able to continue serving the people of Gallup and continue bringing in revenue," added Badal. "We hope to work with additional providers in the area to ensure all businesses are able to experience the same reliable connectivity."

With the goal of serving rural areas of New Mexico, Sacred Wind has worked tirelessly to ensure their customers have reliable access to phone, Internet and emergency services. Providers wishing to connect and utilize Sacred Wind's fiber line can learn more at <https://sacredwindcommunications.com>.

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Sacred Wind is a certified employee-owned company with a payroll of about 59 people. The company and its affiliates, founded in 2006, has approximately 5,000 customers and over the past 16 years has expanded its network to reach thousands more.