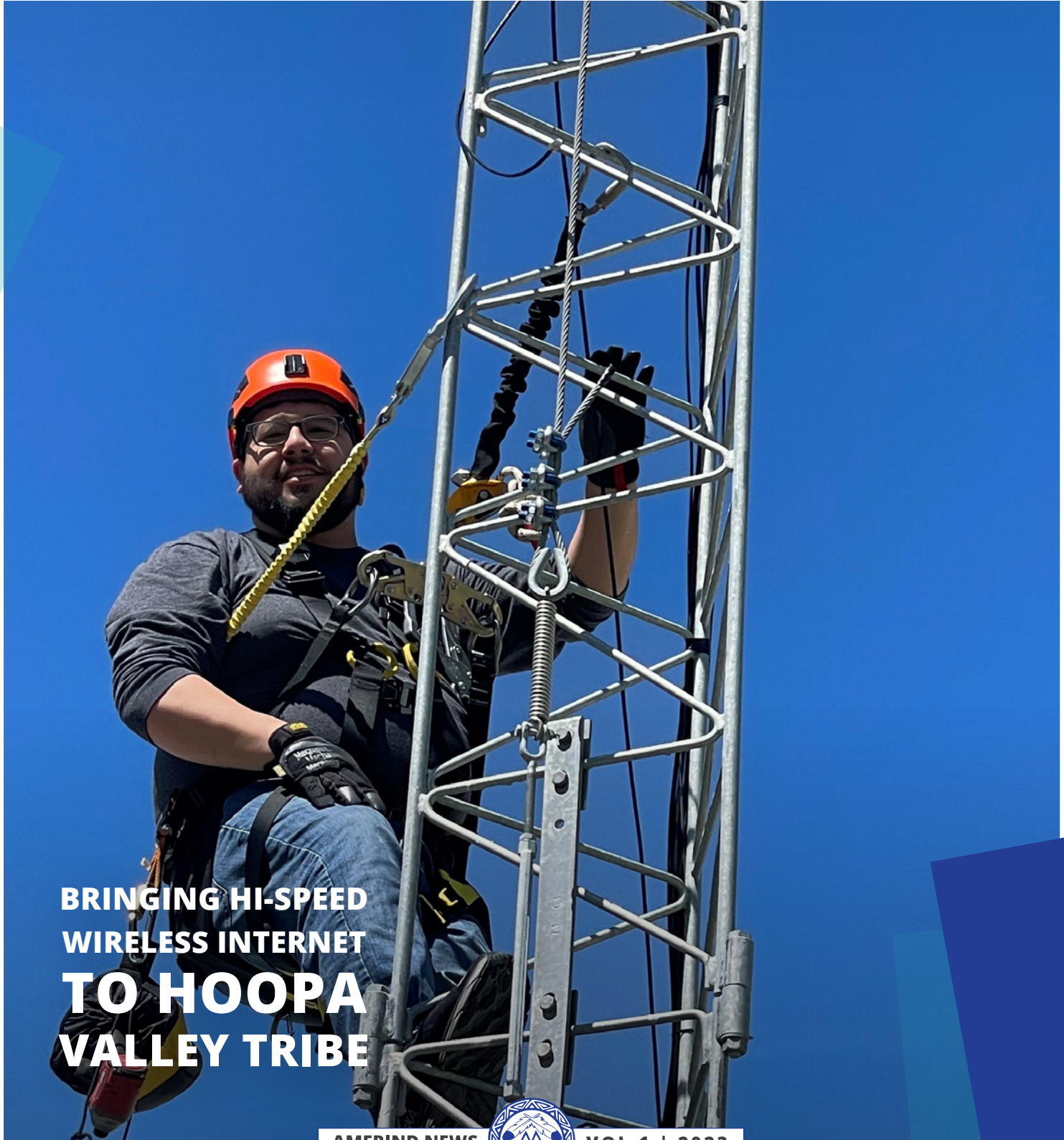




AMERIND

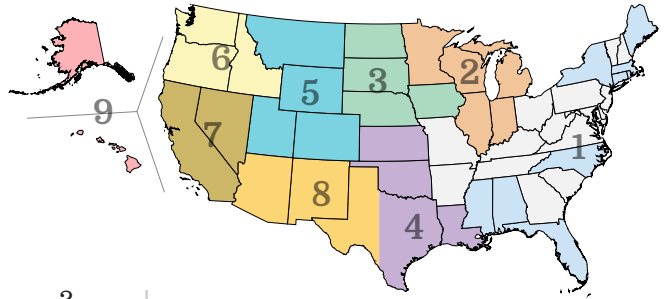
# ADVISOR



**BRINGING HI-SPEED  
WIRELESS INTERNET  
TO HOOPA  
VALLEY TRIBE**



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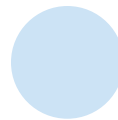
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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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*Chehalis Tribe*



**REGION 1**  
*Position Vacant-  
to be filled in 2023*



**REGION 2**  
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**REGION 4**  
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**REGION 5**  
**Rodney Trahan**  
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**Ron Ryan**  
*Metlakatla Indian Community*



**REGION 7**  
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*Pueblo of Acoma*



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## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

**Derek Valdo**  
Chief Executive Officer  
*Pueblo of Acoma*

**Robert Dahl**  
Chief Operating Officer



AMERIND Board of Directors

# Guuwaadzi' Haubaa (Hello to all!)



**DEREK VALDO**  
Chief Executive Officer

I am recharged and back at the helm of AMERIND after my spiritual sabbatical, during which I fulfilled a Tribal obligation at the Pueblo of Acoma for all people. I would like to express my heartfelt thankfulness to our board, staff, and members for their extra effort, understanding and continued commitment during my absence.

Upon my return, I was excited to see the diversification of projects and programs, Tribes using tax credits and local resources to build housing, and Tribes discovering new opportunities. This year marks my 23rd year at AMERIND, and I have been privileged to witness tremendous growth in our ability to protect Tribes.

I am proud to share that AMERIND remains in a strong financial position, despite the 20% market correction in 2022. Thanks to our focus on sustainability over the years, we were able to absorb those unrealized losses and maintain our ability to respond to catastrophic events and serve our members. However, as our elders have advised, we cannot take this for granted and must continue to prepare and be ready.

We understand that conditions back home are difficult, and resources are tight but there is a storm on the horizon. That storm is surging costs, delays and lack of supply. Therefore, we must ensure we have enough resources to pay for regular and catastrophic claims. Sustainability is our highest priority as we face even greater uncertainty and challenges ahead including inflation, supply chain and construction delays, the "great resignation", rising interest rates and a potential recession looming on the horizon. We will continue to improve performance, do more with less, and diversify to ensure we remain your most affordable coverage provider, our members should expect consecutive increases to your costs.

I understand the implications that can have on a Tribal community and its ability to provide essential and critical services its citizens depend on. I encourage members to take preventative and proactive measures with development projects and maintenance. Consider building products that can withstand harsh conditions and build your rainy-day fund. At AMERIND, we will build upon our programs and resources to spark a safety-first mindset across Indian Country. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

There is strength in numbers, and as some members choose to leave for lower premiums, remember, those lower costs come with higher deductibles. Currently, AMERIND's deductibles start at \$1,000 compared to some of our competitors at \$10,000. Additionally, as catastrophic events are on the rise, competitors are eliminating natural disaster coverage from policies in high-risk areas. At AMERIND, we are dedicated to Protecting our People, and despite external market pressures, we continue to offer that coverage. I believe that is a testament to our commitment to Indian Country.

News of increasing rates is not a message I enjoy sharing. However, these adjustments today are necessary to support our vision of serving as your Tribally owned insurance company for as long as we're needed. I hope you will continue to place your trust in us as we weather this storm together.

Sincerely,

**Derek Valdo**, Chief Executive Officer  
Pueblo of Acoma



## ABOUT US

An AM Best A- (Excellent) rated company, AMERIND is the only 100 percent Tribally owned insurance provider committed to Indian Country. More than 400 Tribes united and pooled resources to create AMERIND to keep money within Indian Country.

## INSURANCE PRODUCTS

- Tribal Governments and Businesses
- Tribal Workers' Compensation
- Tribal Commercial Auto Program
- Native American Homeowners and Renters Program

## SERVICES

- AMERIND Critical Infrastructure – Broadband Deployment Services

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## ON THE COVER!

Speygee Douglas (Hoopa)  
Broadband Manager at the  
Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District



#20751 A- Excellent

# Preventing Losses and Mitigating Risk in Indian Country

Catastrophic weather, wildfires, and common kitchen fire claims among AMERIND members/customers have been slowly increasing in costs each year. With replacement costs also increasing, it has become more and more expensive for Tribes and businesses to repair or replace lost property. The severity of loss has contributed to rising insurance costs across all insurance carriers and without any type of loss prevention, the risk of sustaining a costly or possible total loss is at an all-time high. AMERIND's Safety Services Team has improved our outreach to our members/customers who are experiencing higher than average losses by developing risk management and loss control plans. Identifying the risks and developing plans begin with analyzing the losses affecting our customers and finding the most effective plans and practices to recommend.

## INCREASE IN FIRE LOSSES

From 2019-2021, AMERIND has seen \$49M in fire losses across all lines of business. With wildfires leading in severity, kitchen and electrical fires have been the most frequent fire claims reported while arson remains an issue among Tribal communities. Below outlines the fire losses from 2019-2021 and 2022-2023:

### 2019-2021 Fire Losses- \$49M

Total Loss to Dwellings- \$18M

Wildfires- \$6.6M

Cooking/ Kitchen- \$3.4M

Electrical- \$3M

Arson- \$2M

### 2022-2023 Fire Losses- \$6.1M

Total Loss to Dwellings- \$2.2M

Electrical- \$800K

Cooking/ Kitchen- \$400K

Arson- \$300K



The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) published a report in 2021 with the following statistics:

- ▶ More than one-quarter (26%) of reported fires in 2015-2019 occurred in homes. Even worse, three-quarters (75%) of civilian fire deaths and almost three-quarters (72%) of all reported injuries were caused by home fires.
- ▶ During this five-year period, US fire departments responded to an estimated average of 346,800 home structure fires per year. These fires caused an annual average of 2,620 civilian deaths; 11,070 civilian fire injuries; and \$7.3 billion in direct property damage.
- ▶ Most home fires and fire casualties resulted from five causes: cooking, heating, electrical distribution and lighting equipment, intentional fire setting, and smoking materials.
- ▶ From 2015–2019, cooking was the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries, while smoking was the leading cause of home fire deaths.

The similarities between AMERIND's losses and NFPA's reported fires are similar with kitchen/cooking fires leading the way for home structure fire losses. Wildfires were not calculated as part of the NFPA report but accounted for 32% of AMERIND's fire losses.

While fire loss accounts for over 70% of all losses for AMERIND customers, our goal is to prevent and mitigate all types of loss. Although we realize all perils are not preventable, we hope to help our members and customers reduce the risk of sustaining severe or total losses. AMERIND's Safety Services Team is increasing our outreach to our members and customers by identifying risks and hazards that could cause loss. We will assist in the development and implementation of a risk management/loss control plan in hopes of improving loss performance.

## RISK MANAGEMENT/ LOSS CONTROL PLAN

With our mission of Tribes Protecting Tribes, AMERIND's Safety Services Team is creating risk management plans for our members and customers to mitigate future losses. The Safety Services Team will first analyze all loss data to identify loss trends that contribute to a high loss ratio. Next, an onsite visit will be scheduled to allow a Safety Services Team member to gain a better understanding of the Tribe's and housing authority's situation to tailor a risk management plan specific to their needs. During the onsite visit, the Safety Services Team will first meet with the Tribe and/or housing authority to present our loss analysis and interview our members/customers to gain an understanding of operations. Our team will inspect office buildings, community centers, elderly facilities and housing units for life safety and building conditions. Once the inspection has been completed, a comprehensive report is put together to highlight any hazards found and make recommendations on how to improve upon them. With the report completed, the Safety Services Team will have a greater knowledge of each individual situation and can focus training on the needs of the Tribe and the housing authority.



# Shannon Lastyona, Underwriting Manager



Shannon is no stranger to AMERIND, having worked with the organization for 20 years and counting. What started as a temporary position for the company turned into an internship opportunity while attending New Mexico State University.

In 2003, Shannon was offered a permanent position with AMERIND as a Claims Technician. Growing up in the tribal community of Zuni, the job was eye-opening as she learned about all the tribes AMERIND served throughout Indian Country.

"Throughout my internship, I dabbled in many different areas and got to see what each department did. There was always something new to learn," she explained. "I had to learn a lot from a business aspect because I had never worked within an organization before."

Working in the claims department for 14 years as a Claims Technician and Claims Representative, Shannon had to acquire the ability to balance the emotional strain of her work as she handled customer claims and collected necessary information from individuals who were experiencing considerable loss and hardship.

"Anytime someone is filing a claim, something unfortunate has happened," she explains. "Someone's calling because their house burnt down, and they've lost everything they own. I had to develop communication

skills that showed empathy and compassion for our customers when taking those types of calls."

Currently, Shannon serves as the Underwriting Manager, responsible for overseeing the department and the pricing of commercial, workers comp, and homeowners' insurance policies. She says the transition from distributing insurance proceeds in claims to collecting premiums in underwriting and managing a team has pushed her outside her comfort zone, but she's risen to the challenge.

As Shannon reflected on her years at AMERIND, she says another challenge has been the company's rapid growth, often exceeding expectations. AMERIND has had to quickly adapt and expand product offerings, services, and coverage, to meet the increasing needs of Indian Country over the years.

"We were expected to grow at a certain rate each year," she explains, "But we exceeded expectations and grew faster than anticipated. That's good, however one of the challenges was making sure we continued to adequately service every account by leaning on the team, our operating systems, and procedures through those transitions."

Shannon says one of the best aspects of working for AMERIND has been the opportunity to visit almost every Tribal community they serve. She's experienced many Native cultures and homelands. "One trip that stands out is when I saw the Northern Lights as I was arriving in Montana late one night, during my four-hour drive from the airport to the hotel," she shared. "The experience was even more memorable when I learned the next day, that in some cultures, the lights represent past ancestors dancing in the sky and that to look at them directly is taboo. This is related to our cultural beliefs in Zuni as well."

Shannon says the past two decades with AMERIND have been an incredible journey that has provided her the ability to immerse herself in Indian Country, an opportunity she knows wouldn't be available elsewhere. She looks forward to what's yet to come.

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# Bringing Hi-Speed Wireless Internet to Hoopa Valley Tribe

When the pandemic started, Tribal citizens of the Hoopa Valley Tribe (HVT) in Northern California struggled to access fast reliable internet. Students were sent home with worksheet packets or gathered in parking lots of local businesses that provided limited Wi-Fi. A spotlight on the digital divide was evident on their reservation, like with many other Tribal communities. Satellite internet providers do offer service in the area, but because of the dense vegetation and changing weather patterns, the service is often unreliable. Other major internet providers had skipped over the Hoopa Reservation and showed no interest in building out the area to provide critical internet needed for the area to be part of the 21st century.

But Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District (HVPUD), a Tribally run entity of the HVT, with 40 years of experience, decided to step in and solve the problem. In 2019, with funding from Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funding (CARES), the Tribe started Acorn Wireless. The Wireless Internet Service Provider (WISP) serves most of the reservation utilizing wireless spectrum to bring customers internet service.

“Acorn Wireless was created out a dire necessity to improve connectivity within the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation. The pandemic escalated the timeline of receiving funding for the Tribe to invest in communications infrastructure for our Tribal people,” explains Linnea Jackson, General Manager HVPUD. “There is a long-standing lack of connectivity in rural and Tribal regions and finally there are opportunities for Tribes to seek funding and improve conditions on our own, train our own people to manage and operate critical infrastructure.”

On any given day, employees of the Utility and Acorn Wireless can be found crimping cables, installing equipment in Hoopa Valley Tribal members homes, or climbing towers to repair infrastructure.

“The Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District has taken on the Broadband initiatives due to the lack of investment from our local telco. We have had to rapidly deploy wireless while simultaneously developing plans to take advantage of funding availability for fiber infrastructure,” stated Matthew ‘Speygee’ Douglas. “It has been an incredibly stressful and rewarding journey and we have learned many lessons along the way. We are focused on continually improving our approach and clarity of deliverables to be the foundation of change for our community.”

The area is prone to wildfires during the summer months, which makes having reliable connectivity throughout the reservation particularly critical.

In 2020, the federal government announced a new grant program with \$2 billion available for Tribes to improve digital equity on reservations. With the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, another \$1 billion was added to provide Tribes with a small slice of the billions of dollars available to improve internet access in the United States.

Director of AMERIND Critical Infrastructure, Felix McGowan, views the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Tribes. “The program not only helps to build critical broadband infrastructure but also to secure a place within the internet service provider ecosystem. It will be essential to shore



up additional funding to run these types of operations in order to make high speed broadband available to all Tribal citizens.”

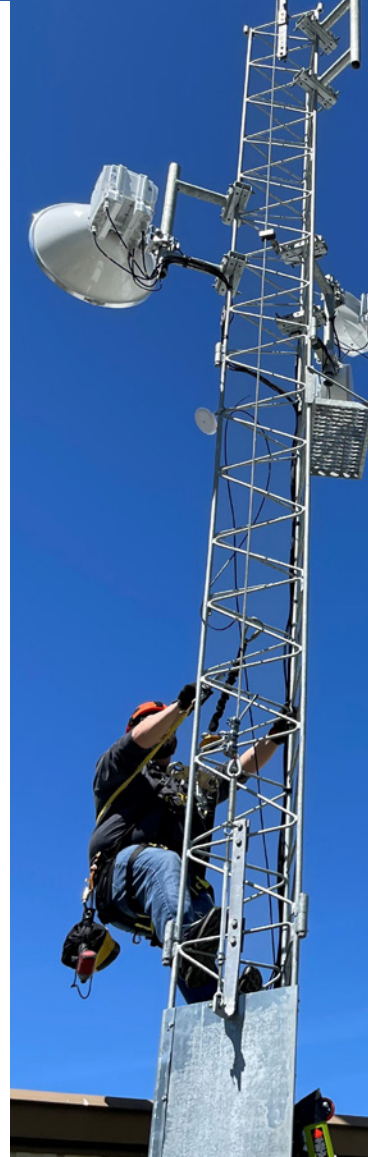
While starting a WISP was a good start for the Tribe, it soon became evident that a more robust infrastructure was needed to bring higher speed internet access to the entire community. HVPUD, with the support of the HVPUD Board of Directors, began working with AMERIND Critical Infrastructure to apply for a grant from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). After a year of revisions, waiting and anticipation, NTIA informed the Tribe they were awarded over \$65 million to build out their network and bring fiber to the citizens of the Hoopa Valley Tribe.

“The Hoopa Valley Tribe has needed improved connectivity for governmental services, telehealth, education, cultural preservation, and economic development activities. We are proud of our Tribal entity for providing internet service to

our Tribal community,” stated Hoopa Valley Tribal Chairman, Joe Davis. “With the successful grant award provided by the National Telecommunication and Information Administration and partnership with the California Department of Technology, we will achieve our Tribal connectivity goals over the next several years. These infrastructure investments will provide major improvements to the Hoopa Valley Tribe’s sovereignty goals.”

Today HVPUD is busier than ever, preparing to take on a tremendous project.

“The most rewarding part of this journey is to build a grow a Tribal network that is managed and operated by Tribal people,” Jackson said. “We are collectively learning and improving each day. We have learned from our mistakes, improved processes and as a result will make more informed decisions because of those lessons learned. She concluded, “I feel blessed to be a part of the Hoopa Tribal Telcom journey. Great things will be achieved in the next few years.”



## ABOUT AMERIND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

AMERIND Critical Infrastructure (ACI) helps Tribal Nations develop and deploy the most important 21st Century critical infrastructure, high-speed “broadband” internet, and supports project management and access to federal funding and programs.

### ACI RECENT SUCCESSES

- Supported four Tribal clients in receiving \$192 million in broadband funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce

### ACI CAPABILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Project management and accessing federal funding
- Expert project development and management – from concept to application, from engineering to deployment, and ultimately from reporting and long-term sustainability
- Comprehensive grant management, delivery, and fiscal sponsorship services
- Feasibility planning & federal funding applications support and advisory services

### TRIBAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

- Building modern broadband 21st Century networks – Fiber, Wireless, Media
- Building adjacent additional critical infrastructures – energy, buildings, utilities, etc.
- Federal Contracting Advisory – 8(a)'s, Section 17's, Tribal corporations, and businesses
- Economic development and internal business operations support
- Digital Inclusion training and outreach on adoption uses



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# Making Informed Decisions in a Hard Market

The market is ever-changing and can have significant impacts on insurance pricing and terms of coverage. The insurance industry is in a hard market – understanding what this means as you navigate the renewal process is critical to making informed decisions.

A hard market is a term used in the insurance industry to describe a period when insurance premiums increase, coverage becomes more restrictive, and insurers are less willing to take on risks.

The change in the insurance cycle occurs due to a combination of factors such as reduced competition, increased claims, and higher underwriting and investment losses.

During a hard market, policyholders may find it more difficult to obtain affordable insurance coverage and could struggle to manage their risk exposure effectively. Today, property insurance rates are certainly on the rise due to several factors:

## HARD VS. SOFT MARKET CHARACTERISTICS



### CATASTROPHE

- ▶ Increased frequency and severity of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, etc.
- ▶ Increased severity of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, etc.

### REINSURANCE

- ▶ Increased premiums
- ▶ Restricted coverage
- ▶ Reduced capacity

### INFLATION

- ▶ Increased cost of material
- ▶ Increased cost of labor
- ▶ Shortage of labor
- ▶ Increased claims costs

Being well-informed will help you make the most of your coverage and ensure you get the protection you require. At AMERIND, we are taking the necessary steps to remain your most affordable coverage provider as we ride out this hard market together. Reach out with any questions or concerns as you review your policies and consider your options.

# AMERIND Announces Safety Poster Contest Winners

We are excited to announce the winners of the 2023 Safety Poster Contest. AMERIND's annual poster contest is open to Native American artists in kindergarten through eighth grade and promotes safety throughout Indian Country. Housing authorities collect entries at the local level and submit them to their regional housing authority. Regional voting takes place and the winning entries from each age category are sent to the Safety Services Team at AMERIND for national voting.

Congratulations to Ava, Athan and Malaya, all representing the Jemez Pueblo Housing Authority. Each will receive \$1,000.

- ▶ Grades K-3: Ava Toya
- ▶ Grades 4-6: Athan Toya
- ▶ Grades 7-8: Malaya Toya



By Ava Toya, K-3



By Athan Toya, 4-6



By Malaya Toya, 7-8

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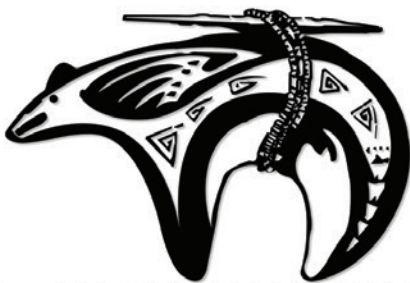
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# AMERIND's Annual Charity Golf Tournament Raises Over \$40k

## 18th Annual Protecting Tribal Families Golf Fundraiser benefits uninsured Tribal families and Native Youth programs

Helping families without homeowners' insurance suffering from catastrophic events and the wellbeing of Native youth, AMERIND hosted the 18th Annual Protecting Tribal Families Golf Fundraiser on April 26.

AMERIND, the nation's only 100 percent Tribally owned insurance company, created the AMERIND Protecting Tribal Families Fund to help uninsured Tribal homeowners rebuild or repair after a fire, flood or other catastrophic event. The tournament has raised more than \$200,000 for numerous families and invited beneficiaries in Indian Country since its inception. This year's honorary beneficiary was the Pueblo of Santa Ana Youth Program. "AMERIND is proud of our continued commitment to give back to Indian Country and protect our people through this fundraiser," said Derek Valdo, AMERIND CEO.

### CLOSET TO THE PIN (MEN)

Dan Bauer  
*Guy Carpenter & Company LLC Team*

### CLOSET TO THE PIN (WOMEN)

Alyssa Rodriguez  
*McCann Risk Solutions Team*

### LONGEST DRIVE (MEN)

Kaelan Brennan  
*Berger Briggs Insurance Team*

### LONGEST DRIVE (WOMEN)

Michelle Palmer  
*Gallagher Team*

The event was held at the highly ranked Golf Week and Golf Digest Santa Ana Golf Club.  
The tournament winners included:



**1ST PLACE:**

Bob Dahl  
*AMERIND Team*

Ryan Bradley  
*AMERIND Team*

Marlo Hunte-Beaubrun  
*AMERIND Team*

Bryan Yates  
*AMERIND Team*



**2ND PLACE:**

Mario Torres  
*Legacy Financial Team*

Moses Perez  
*Legacy Financial Team*

Cris Giron  
*Legacy Financial Team*

Michael Parish  
*Legacy Financial Team*



**3RD PLACE:**

Derek Valdo  
*AMERIND Team*

Felix McGowan  
*AMERIND Team*

Phil Bush  
*AMERIND Team (Missing from Photo)*

J.R. Felipe  
*AMERIND Team*



**HARD LUCK TEAM:**

Aaron Archuleta  
*Subtle Tech Solutions Inc. Team*

Tiffany Weaver  
*Griston Claim Services Team*

Jay Vatassery  
*Subtle Tech Solutions Inc. Team*

James Fenn  
*Griston Claim Services Team*



502 Cedar Drive  
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## Save the Date!

### 19th Annual Protecting Tribal Families Golf Fundraiser

Santa Ana Golf Club | Santa Ana Pueblo, NM  
April 25, 2024

*AMERIND appreciates your continued support  
in our vision of Tribes Protecting Tribes!*