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Arizona—Rural Utilities Service

Community Building

San Carlos Apache Town of Bylas Flooded With Help to Relocate

Outline Of Need:

The town of Bylas on the San Carlos Apache Reservation was originally settled on a flood plain. After rebuilding numerous times, they decided to move the entire town to a new location, but needed help to relocate basic infrastructure.

How Rural Development Helped:

Rural Development made a \$2,768,000 water/waste water grant, a \$1 million 306C Native American grant and a regular 306C grant for an additional \$3,054,660 to be able to build water and wastewater facilities for the “new” town.

The Results:

Work has begun on modern water and wastewater facilities to serve the new Bylas and grant funding means that this community, with a 68% unemployment rate, will be able to break the cycle of having to re-build after every flood.

It’s no easy decision to move a family...even harder when you talk about moving an entire community.

Bylas, Arizona, on the San Carlos Apache Reservation, was built on a flood plain and for generations tribal families have dealt with the frustrating cycle of building, flooding, re-building.



Work beginning on the “new” town of Bylas’ water and wastewater systems.

The Apaches are descendants of the Athabascan family who migrated to the Southwest in the 10th century. The San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation was established in 1871, originally as a reservation for the Chiricahua Apache tribe. It was referred to by some as “Hell’s Forty Acres,” due to horrific environmental and health conditions.

At nearly 3,000 square miles, the San Carlos Reservation is the tenth-largest reservation in land area. The land is varied, with forests, rivers, mountains and high desert. The diverse topography is a haven for elk, mule deer, turkeys, black bear and mountain lions.

The Apaches have had a history of forced relocation. In the late 1800s, many bands of Apaches were moved to the San Carlos Reservation from their traditional homelands throughout Arizona and New Mexico.

The move this time for the residents of Bylas was initiated by the tribal members...and facilitated by USDA Rural Development. A video by the tribe on the “master plan” for Bylas can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9yCovnfLWc>.

Fast Facts

Program: Water and Environmental Programs

Investment: \$1,000,000 306C Native American set-aside grant; \$2,768,000 water/wastewater grant; \$3,054,660 regular 306C grant.

Partners: Town of Bylas

Congressional District: AZ-01

Demographics

- Rural Population—9,000

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