

**USDA Rural Development
Telecommunications Program
Success Story: Community Connect Grant
Supai, Havasupai Reservation, Arizona**

Need:

The Havasupai Reservation (Supai Village) is located at the bottom of the Grand Canyon. The only way to reach this remote tribe is an eight mile hike, a mule ride or by helicopter, so there was no broadband service available to the Tribe. There was very little chance that the private sector would invest telecommunications infrastructure in such a remote, geographically challenging area. However, there was a need for broadband to enable the Tribe to better communicate outside the Grand Canyon, as well as enhance the Tribal tourist business.

How Rural Development Helped:

Through a 2004 USDA Rural Development Community Connect grant for \$1,247,705, the Havasupai Reservation was able to utilize the four Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) towers located on the Havasupai and Hualapai Reservations to provide broadband service to the tribe. The system has been implemented with backup satellite internet which provides basic internet connectivity to the Tribal System.

Results:

In addition to hooking up Havasupai Tribal and non-tribal community critical facilities, elementary school, and businesses, there is now a community center with 10 public computers. Today the internet allows Tribal members to take distance learning college courses from their homes. Most Tribal residents can't afford long distance calls and cellular service isn't available in Supai Village, so the deployment of internet in the community has allowed Tribal members to stay in contact with children and other family members off the reservation. Most importantly, the internet improves the communication ability of Supai Village during natural disaster when the phone service goes out. During the last flood, for the first time, the Tribe was able to communicate with emergency responders and ask for assistance using the internet.

The tribe will also benefit from the USDA Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) award received by J.C. Cullen, Inc., DBA Niles Radio. This award will be used to install a new tower on the border of Havasupai/Grand Canyon National Park. This will lower their internet connectivity costs. In the future it will allow the Tribe to extend broadband services to Supai Camp inside the Grand Canyon National Park, which will further strengthen the Tribe's communication system. Supai Camp is occupied by Havasupai Tribal members working at the national park and is also occupied by Tribal members requiring long-term off- reservation medical services.