

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Elsa Johnson, Director
IINA Solutions
(602) 524-9464
Email: asdza_elsa@cox.net

Mark Snyder, owner
Mark Snyder Electric / Global Solar Water Power Systems
(858) 748-4618
E-Mail: info@marksnyderelectric.com

**A RESOLVE FOR THE OFF-GRID UNDERPRIVILEGED NATIVE ELDER:
THE PLATEAU SOLAR PROJECT**

Leupp, AZ – January 9, 2010 – Nowhere in America are there more people without electricity than on tribal lands. Despite the fact that the Navajo and Hopi tribes are the major electricity producers for the entire Southwest nearly 20,000 rural Navajo homes do not have electrification or basic human services. Moreover, a significant number of these homes are occupied by underprivileged elders with health issues or disabilities. And, for over 40 years approximately 8,000 Navajo residents in the Former Bennett Freeze Area of Western Navajo Nation were prevented from building new homes, improving roads and infrastructure or even repairing roofs or windows on their existing homes. These severe federal restrictions subjected thousands of Navajos to incomprehensible poverty rarely seen in modern times.

In response to this energy crisis, Navajo non-profit IINA Solutions and international solar specialist Mark Snyder Electric and Global Solar Water Power Systems established the Plateau Solar Project to bring solar electricity to rural Native elders and priority need residents in northern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico. With funds from Renewable Energy Investment Fund (REIF)¹ and Grand Canyon Trust, Phase One of the Plateau Solar Project commences on the evening of January 14, 2011 with a 2 kilowatt solar installation at the home of Paula Curtis. Mrs. Curtis, a single parent with six children lives in the rural Canyon Diablo area of Leupp Navajo Chapter, is one of two underprivileged Navajo residents who qualified for a demonstration solar unit fully funded by Renewable Energy Investment Fund.

¹REIF was established by an agreement between the owners of Springerville Generating Station and Grand Canyon Trust for the purpose of funding renewable energy, demand side management, and greenhouse gas sequestration projects. One of its focuses is funding renewable energy and efficiency projects that benefit Native American communities in northern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico.

The Plateau Solar Project takes an uncompromising approach to its solar installation program. “Our field assessment demonstrated the need for conscientious solar installation practices in Indian country, more so for unschooled elders living in rural areas. Paramount concerns in designing a robust solar system with a potential lifespan of 25 years include complying with safety principles even though the tribe has no safety and installation standards, proper wiring and re-wiring, training, regular maintenance, integrating sanitation features, and sustainable job creation”, said Elsa Johnson, Director of IINA Solutions.

To protect the solar units from harsh elements of the region, Mark Snyder Electric designed the Enertopia Multi-Purpose Utility Structure (EMPUS), patent pending. This insulated, climate-controlled structure will store a domestic water tank, solar batteries, and 2kw of solar PV electric with room for solar thermal and solar hot air space heating designed to reduce the amount of wood needed for home heating in the winter. This will also, provide year round hot water for domestic needs including a composting toilet, sink and shower and water catchment. The solar heating systems have a special ultra-low power wall heater providing space heating with water and hot air. The EMPUS is a solar device itself acting as a heating and cooling module with the home.

Each elder will be trained on proper use and care of their system. MidNite Solar invented a charge controller with Navajo voice-over for monitoring and alerting maintenance personnel. Two well-insulated ducts connect the self-contained EMPUS to the home of the elder.

Phase Two of Plateau Solar Project includes installations for 100 off grid elders with potential partial USDA Rural Development funds, a sustainable training and jobs program in addition to a solar maintenance program. It will also utilize the assistance of local high schools. With a limited license, thirteen EMPUS buildings will be constructed by the Tuba City High School carpentry students as a part of the spring curriculum. Another aspect will include a home weatherization program.

Mark Snyder, owner of Mark Snyder Electric said, “The Plateau Solar Project is very important and will bring essential electrical, water and sanitation services to off grid Native Americans who have been ignored for far too long.” IINA Solutions will continue to seek project funds and expand its outreach throughout the rest of Western Navajo and the Colorado Plateau for eligible no-or-low income elders.

IINA Solutions is a non-profit humanitarian organization established to help improve the quality of life (iina) for rural Navajos challenged by all forms of uranium contamination, and bring commerce to Dine’ bekeyah (Navajo land) through sustainable and holistic solutions.

###