



Two local businesses receive Native American Venture Acceleration Fund awards

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If you've ever driven east on State Highway 75, past Dixon and just south of Taos, you've likely passed through [Picuris Pueblo](#). The small, Tiwa-speaking pueblo includes approximately 300 tribal members—and about 65 bison.

Those bison are part of the [Picuris Pueblo Bison Project](#), a business venture that works to restore bison as a both food source and traditional spiritual enhancement for the Picuris people.

The Bison Project was recently granted a [Native American Venture Acceleration Fund](#) (NAVAF) award—essentially money to “create jobs for pueblo-owned businesses and help strengthen the area’s economy,” according to Kathy Keith of the Laboratory’s Community Partnerships Office, which funds the awards.

The NAVAF money will provide a walk-in freezer for the pueblo that will allow bison meat to be hung and stored for longer periods of time than is currently possible. Various cuts of bison meat are available for purchase by the public at the pueblo.

Phoebe Suina co-founded High Water Mark, LLC, and currently manages emergency and disaster assistance projects for the company’s clients.

A second NAVAF was recently awarded to Cochiti Pueblo’s [High Water Mark, LLC](#). The environmental consulting company specializes in water resources engineering, science, planning, and management to New Mexico communities. The NAVAF money will be used to purchase software and equipment that will enable the company to competitively bid for national federal contracts.

“It’s always a pleasure to see the proposals from businesses that we have worked with,” says Val Alonzo, director of the Regional Development Corporation, which manages the NAVAF. “The growth this year’s winners are experiencing is very encouraging.”

To date, more than \$280,000 has been invested in the local economy through the NAVAF. [Learn more about the program here.](#)