

## **"Overcoming Obstacles to Telephone Service for Indians on Reservations"**

**January 29, 1999**

Hello and welcome, my name is Arnold Cassadore. On January 8, I was installed as President of the Jicarilla Apache Tribe. I would like to thank you for inviting me here today to give you a broad general picture about the availability, affordability, and quality of phone service on the Jicarilla Apache Tribe Reservation. The Jicarilla Apache's population is 3200 on a 870,000 acre reservation.

The abundant natural resources that lie within the reservation have proven to be both our economic staple, and the source of our greatest challenges. Hunting and fishing, livestock production, and most importantly oil and gas reserves provide economic revenue. In 1977 the Jicarilla Apache was the first tribe in the country to simultaneously own and operate oil and gas wells. Receiving and maintaining phone services is essential to continue our tribal economic growth and maintain a good quality of life for our people. Due to the remote location of the Jicarilla Reservation, accessibility to communications networks is vital to our tribe.

The Jicarilla Apache have two development projects, The Integrated Resource Management Plan and Committee and the Jicarilla Economic and Industrial Commission. These groups aid with economic advice, sustaining our natural resources, identifying start-up businesses, and relocating businesses to the reservation. Pushing forward with phone services throughout the reservation will guarantee economic vitality, and assure our ability to compete in a rapidly growing technological world.

The Jicarilla Apache Tribe is entrepreneurial in nature and places heavy emphasis on family and education. In my administration as president I plan to take the Jicarilla Apache people into the next millennium with full access to technology and communication services. These services are non-negotiable we must have the ability to compete in the business market, provide high quality health care for ourselves, and link our children academically to the rest of the world. With the onset of the global economy, Jicarilla Apache children must have access to the internet and it's unbelievable wealth of resources.

As president I am well aware of the challenges that young Jicarilla Apache students face when competing with other students across America. I am also aware of the difficulties that Jicarilla Apache people face when competing for jobs which require computer skills, and internet knowledge.

Another point that must be stressed is health care and the availability of home services to patients suffering from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hypertension, substance abuse, physical disabilities, diabetes, and those that are elderly. Proper communication networks are necessary for the well being of these tribal members and to assure their ability to receive proper diagnosis, treatment, and care.

I deeply appreciate the opportunity to lend my support to you and President Clinton in overcoming telephone communication barriers the Jicarilla Apache tribe as a government and as individuals face today.

Thank you for your time, and I reserve the right to submit written testimony