

From Huerfano to the world: E-commerce Business Center showcases Navajo talent

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Farmington Daily Times

Article Launched:

HUERFANO — Sacred Wind Communications Community Connect Inc. is inviting Navajo artists in the Huerfano community and surrounding areas to participate in the first free E-Commerce Business Center.

"This is an opportunity to help the Navajo artists and also pick up some beautiful Navajo arts and crafts," said Janice Badal, executive director of Sacred Winds.

The online business center is a Web site created for Navajo artists in Huerfano Chapter and the surrounding areas to showcase their work. Artists living in Huerfano Chapter, Upper Fruitland, Dziilth-na-o-dith-hle, Nageezi and Counselor Chapter are eligible to post their artwork.

The Web site also will allow artists to follow their sale by watching the bidding for their items. The business ensures consumers they're purchasing authentic, hand-made Navajo arts and crafts.

"What's so sad, is that Navajo artists are used to going to Gallup, selling these beautiful items, selling them for less than what they deserve. We're cutting the middle man out," said Badal. "Part of the training is to make sure they (artists) don't undercut themselves."

Although the Web site is under construction, approximately 30 artists already have expressed an interest in the online business center, said Badal.

"We sold our first rug and we got more than the artist had asked for," Badal said. "We were just thrilled."

The SWCCC was created exclusively for charitable and education purposes for the Navajo people. John Badal, CEO of Sacred Wind Communications, wants to make a difference for the Navajo people, Badal said.

"John is incredibly dedicated to helping the Navajo people," Badal said. "He did not want to be just a phone company for the Navajo. He wanted to make a difference, so he started the nonprofit organization, Sacred Wind Communication Connect."

The SWCCC is a non-profit organization of Sacred Winds Communication, Inc., a telecommunications company that serves portions of western and northwestern New Mexico.

A computer training center, located at the Huerfano Chapter, opened in February and the response from the community has been tremendous.

"We've had several thousand visitors since February," Badal said. "Twenty-five percent of them aren't signing in."

The computer center has attracted visitors as young as a 3-year-old to the elderly who have taken advantage of the computer center. The center has helped students with college applications, helps adults get their GED and teaches basic computer operations classes.

"We want to allow the Huerfano community to have an outreach to the dominant society," Badal said.

The center is in the process of writing a grant to open another computer training center in the Manuelito Chapter.