

Up To Speed

Thursday, December 19, 2024

Hi, My name's George Barela. I've been with Verizon now for going on 18 years.

I live in the Temecula Valley, which is also known by the indigenous people as Land of the Mist. I am a Native American, part of the Piro-Manso-Tiwa tribe out of the Guadalupe Pueblos in New Mexico.

The tribe dates back to the 16th century.

When I joined Verizon, I saw this as an opportunity to reach out and to share my knowledge in regards to technology, communications, etc.

There's a specific American Indian Chamber of Commerce that I'm on the advisory council for, and we support more than 110 different tribes that are federally recognized here in the state of California.

I look at myself as that trusted advisor to help them identify best practices that are being used across communities, across states, etc, help them understand exactly what is available to them.

Many of us, we've got technology in front of us.

These reservations or nations are going to be in very rural areas.

Connectivity, whether it be something as simple as voice connectivity is going to be a challenge.

When you stop and think about the indigenous people, culture is everything.

They are going to retain that as much as they possibly can, but they want to see their people grow. The younger generations, there's that desire to learn.

We want to make sure that we can create that virtual classroom so that they too can share the same advantages that anyone else would have.

We're here to help the community that has a need.

The Verizon Frontline Crisis Response Team is a community partner first.

We will respond to the community to either restore service or create service as needed.

We also took part in supplying comms during a search and rescue event. That brought some credibility into our overall discussion.

Let's make sure that we're putting our best foot forward in regards to getting our name out there and letting them know that, Hey, we are community partner here.

I joined now probably about six years ago.

Last year I participated as regional point of contact for the West in regards to different types of events and or projects that were going underway.

The fact that there is a group within such a large organization that not only brings these folks together, but to understand exactly, you know, what some of the cultures might be.

It makes me feel invigorated, but more importantly, it shows that we matter.