Joint Village Strategic Planning Initiative: Hopi Success Story Report

Major Achievements Supported by JVSP and Building Communities
December 2025

The Joint Village Strategic Planning (JVSP) Initiative, supported by Building Communities, is proud to highlight a series of significant accomplishments that are strengthening long-term wellbeing for Upper Moenkopi Village (UMV), the Village of Moencopi (Lower) (VML), and Yuwehloo Pahki Community (YPC). Through weekly coordination, dedicated project development, and persistent advocacy, JVSP has helped accelerate progress across water infrastructure, renewable energy, community services, governance, and economic development.

These success stories demonstrate how collaborative planning, community-driven priorities, and technical assistance can produce measurable improvements in Hopi communities—advancing both urgent needs and long-term strategic goals. JVSP and Building Communities have worked side by side with village leadership, Tribal programs, and federal partners to secure funding, design solutions, and move critical projects toward implementation.

What follows is a summary of key accomplishments supported, strengthened, or made possible through JVSP and Building Communities, reflecting real progress during a historic period of transition for the Hopi people.

Building Communities Impact
1. Conducted **village outreach** identifying priorities ahead of NGS closure
2. Advocated interagency solution **extending coal access** during mine transition
3. **Completed SAM registration** and **secured USDA RBDG** for YP entrepreneurship
4. **Supported strategic planning** underpinning CARES-funded Side Rock well development
5. Provided **planning support** enabling Hopi's $25 million ARPA water investment
6. **Supported federal advocacy securing $1.5 million** CDS water infrastructure funding
7. Coordinated advocacy securing ONHIR **firewood delivery** for Yuwehloo Pahki
8. **Finalized ADOH documentation** securing $2 million State Housing Trust Fund award for Tawa'ovi
9. Facilitated **grassroots convenings** strengthening three-tribe regional collaboration
10. **Supported establishment of a Hopi CDC** to build village-level capacity for grants and projects
11. Advanced coordination and planning to **improve water availability for VML**
12. Brokered partnership **connecting Hopi villages with renewable energy developer**
13. Supported documentation and coordination enabling **Hopi CEDS** adoption
14. Assisting **planning and grant preparation** to advance the VMV bath house project
15. Supported **equity-based advocacy** securing renewed funding recognition for YP

1. Comprehensive Hopi Village Outreach Prior to NGS Closure (2017)

In anticipation of the economic impacts from the closure of the Navajo Generating Station and Peabody Mine, the Hopi Office of Community Planning and Economic Development engaged Building Communities from 2017–2019 to conduct Village outreach and identify priority economic development projects.

More than 40 face-to-face meetings were held across the Hopi Villages, providing Tribal leadership with a clear understanding of community needs during a period of significant financial uncertainty.

This effort resulted in a detailed inventory of village-level project priorities and strengthened communication between Villages and the Tribal government. The outreach laid essential groundwork for subsequent development initiatives—helping the Tribe plan proactively for job creation, infrastructure needs, and community resilience during a historic budget transition.

2. Continued Coal Access for Hopi Households During the Kayenta Mine Transition (2019)

As the Peabody Kayenta Mine prepared for shutdown, Hopi families faced immediate uncertainty regarding winter heating resources. Through coordinated advocacy, Building Communities supported efforts that resulted in an additional year of coal access for Hopi households. This included securing continued deliveries, allowing Hopi communities to maintain heating stability during a critical transition period. The extended access provided time for families and villages to shift toward alternative heating sources, including firewood and nonprofit-supported split-unit electrical systems. This effort ensured that Hopi citizens were not left without essential resources during a vulnerable moment of regional energy change.

3. Yuwehloo Pahki SAM Registration and USDA RBDG Award (2019)

In 2019, Building Communities assisted the Yuwehloo Pahki Community (YPC) in completing its System for Award Management (SAM) registration—a requirement for eligibility to receive federal funding. With that foundation in place, Building Communities prepared a successful USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) application, which was awarded to support entrepreneurial development in YPC, a community created through the Navajo–Hopi land dispute resolution and long awaiting promised economic opportunity.

Yuwehloo Pahki was able to complete a business plan for the operation of a pumper truck and then utilized CARES Act funding to purchase it.

As part of the grant, Building Communities developed four business plans for local Hopi entrepreneurs, aligning with YPC's Transition Plan and its strategy to foster small business growth despite significant economic challenges, including the loss of coal-related revenue that had historically funded Hopi government operations. The grant resulted in concrete outcomes: funding for a mobile

laundromat, providing safe access to laundry services, and a 999-gallon pumper truck to safeguard community health.

This project demonstrated the power of practical economic development—helping Yuwehloo Pahki articulate its needs, secure federal resources, and convert planning into tangible assets that now serve one of Hopi's smallest but most resilient communities.

4. CARES Act Investment in Side Rock Wells #2 and #3 to Support Future Hopi Community Development (2020)

Through the CARES Act, the Hopi Tribe received $92.9 million in 2020, followed by an additional $86.2 million through ARPA in 2021. One of the Tribe's highest-priority CARES Act investments was the development of two new wells—Side Rock Wells #2 and #3—at Range Unit 251. This site was strategically selected by the Hopi Tribe and Upper Moenkopi Village as the future location of their Planned Community Development District, making early water development essential for long-term growth.

Well #2 was drilled in December 2020 and produces approximately 85 gallons per minute, while Well #3, drilled in December 2021, produces approximately 105 gallons per minute. The Hopi Utilities Corporation (HUC), which coordinated the project, has determined that these two wells can meet the medium-term water demand for Moenkopi. Additional wells—#4 and #5—remain under consideration to accommodate long-term, 50-year growth projections.

This strategic use of CARES Act funding created a critical foundation for future Hopi community expansion and ensured that major planning efforts, including the Moenkopi Planned Community Development District, will be supported by a reliable water source.

5. $25 Million ARPA Investment for the Side Rock Well Transmission Line (2021)

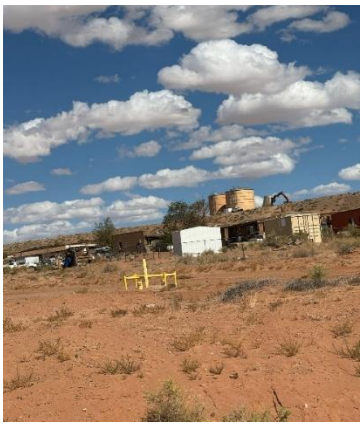
Construction of the new water storage tank at Side Rock (December 2025).

As part of its $86.2 million American Rescue Plan Act allocation, the Hopi Tribe dedicated $25 million to construct a major water transmission line from the Side Rock Well fields to Moenkopi along an existing right-of-way. This investment represents one of the largest single water-infrastructure commitments ever made by the Tribe and will also support future service to Poosiwlenena, the planned community development for the Village of Moencopi (Lower).

Construction has made significant progress, with 15 of the 22 miles of pipeline already installed and crews advancing installation at approximately two miles per week. Additional improvements—including the Side Rock water tank, the SCADA control building, and new Indian Health Service wells—are also moving forward. This project marks a historic step toward long-term water security and sustainable community growth for Moenkopi and surrounding Hopi villages.

6. Moenkopi Utility Authority Water Well #2 – $1.5 Million Congressionally Directed Spending Award (2022)

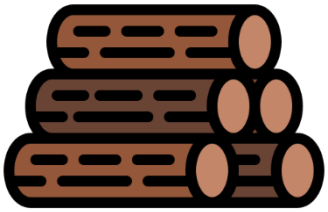
The Moenkopi Utility Authority (MUA), with strong support from JVSP and Building Communities,
secured a $1.5 million Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) award to advance critical water infrastructure improvements for the community. The funding supports the Pasture Canyon Water Development Project, which includes construction of a transmission line with tunneling beneath the highway, a new pump house, installation of a SCADA control system, security fencing, and a 230,000-gallon fiberglass storage tank.



Demolition work on old water tank at Moenkopi in 2025.

The project builds on the existing well—already drilled and capped—and will significantly expand system capacity alongside Well #1, which currently produces 45 gallons per minute for 210 residential customers and 10 local businesses. This achievement was made possible through coordinated advocacy by JVSP, collaboration with Hopi tribal leadership, and the support of Senator Mark Kelly, resulting in a major federal investment in long-term water reliability for Moenkopi.

7. Firewood Delivery to Yuwehloo Pahki Community (2023)



Through persistent outreach and coordinated advocacy, Building Communities supported the Yuwehloo Pahki Community in securing a direct commitment from the Office of Navajo and Hopi Indian Relocation (ONHIR) for the delivery of firewood to the Village. This effort ensured that elders and families received essential winter heating support, addressing an immediate need for a community historically impacted by federal relocation policies. The successful delivery marked a meaningful act of service and demonstrated how collaborative engagement can improve resources for remote Hopi villages.

8. Tawa'ovi Project State Grant Assistance (2023)

In May 2023, the Hopi Tribe submitted a proposal to the Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) to develop four rental housing units—two 1-bedroom, one 2-bedroom, and one 3-bedroom—at the Tawa'ovi Community Development site across from the Turquoise Well Tribal Complex. The site builds on years of prior investment, including the 2005 Tawa'ovi Community Development Project Final Report, a completed NEPA Environmental Assessment, and just over $3 million in CARES Act–funded well, water storage, and primary water and sewer infrastructure. The proposal estimated the total project cost at $2,000,000, covering design and engineering, construction, sitework and road access, secondary infrastructure, and landscaping, fencing, and street lighting.

On June 21, 2023, ADOH issued a conditional reservation of $2,000,000 in FY2023 State Housing Trust Funds for the project—up to $200,000 for administration and $1,800,000 for project implementation—to serve households at or below 80% of Area Median Income. The reservation was contingent on the Tribe submitting, by July 14, 2023, a detailed development schedule, evidence of leverage funding, proposed rent schedules by unit size, a five-year operating and maintenance budget, contracting entity and authorized signatory information, DUNS and UEI numbers, and State vendor forms.

Building Communities worked with the Tribe to finalize the documentation package submitted to ADOH to satisfy these conditions. With the conditions addressed and the acceptance executed by Chairman Timothy L. Nuvangyaoma, the Hopi Tribe secured the $2 million award—bringing State housing investment to Tawa'ovi and moving the community's long-planned residential development toward construction of affordable rental homes for Hopi families.

9. Three-Tribe Grassroots Collaboration Strengthened Through JVSP Leadership (2024)

JVSP continued to foster regional collaboration by hosting a July 2024 grassroots meeting at Yuwehloo Pahki Community, bringing together leaders and advocates from the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, and San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe. This gathering—one of five in-person convenings over three years—highlighted shared priorities related to the Bennett Freeze and Forced Relocation and showcased each Tribe's progress in planning and project development.

Participants from three Tribes hosted by Yuwehloo Pahki in July 2024.

The event featured presentations of Hopi and Navajo plans, traditional meals prepared by YPC, and discussions on building a united advocacy strategy. JVSP's ongoing leadership has helped strengthen intertribal relationships and create a foundation for coordinated solutions to long-standing regional challenges.

10. Establishing a Hopi Community Development Corporation (CDC) to Build Village Capacity (2024)

Under the leadership of Andrew Gashwazra and the Hopi Office of Community Planning Economic Development (OCPED), a contract was issued to Nez Consulting to support the establishment of a Hopi Community Development Corporation (CDC). The CDC is intended to increase village-level capacity by creating an entity able to pursue grants, manage projects, and advance community and economic development initiatives that are difficult for individual villages to undertake alone.

Through leadership and community meetings, Yuwehloo Pahki Community expressed the strongest interest in moving forward with the CDC. Based on recommendations from Nez Consulting, Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were completed, with a proposed board structure aligned with the existing Yuwehloo Pahki Board. With governance documents now in place, the next steps include incorporation with the State of Arizona and initiating formal operations to begin supporting village-led development efforts.

11. Improving Water Availability for the Village of Moencopi (Lower) (2024)

In early 2024, the Village of Moencopi (Lower) took decisive action to address long-standing water supply challenges affecting residents and community facilities. The Village initiated efforts to stabilize and improve water availability, recognizing that reliable access to water is essential for daily household use, ceremonies, and emergency response.

Village of Moencopi (Lower) Vice President Leonard Selestewa flanked by staff from IHS in 2024.

Through coordination with JVSP partners, Indian Health Service, and Hopi planning staff, Village leadership advanced practical solutions to strengthen the local water system, helping reduce vulnerability during high-demand periods and system disruptions. This work reflects strong village-level leadership and proactive problem-solving, resulting in improved water reliability for the Lower Village and reinforcing the importance of local action in addressing critical infrastructure needs.

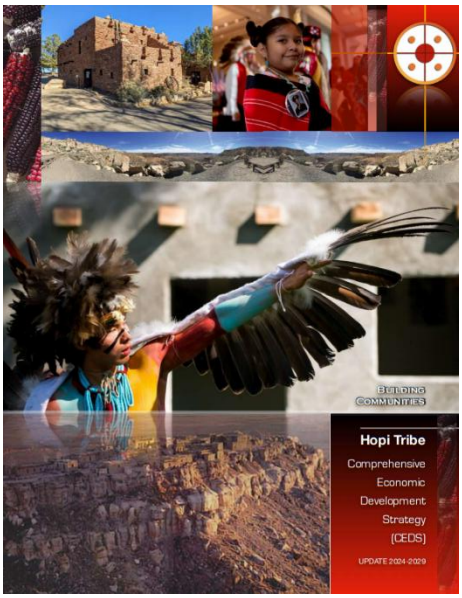
12. Advancing Renewable Energy Through Partnership with NeRD Power (2025)

In 2025, Building Communities connected NeRD Power to the JVSP group. The Upper Village of Moenkopi formally recognized NeRD Power for its role in expanding renewable energy opportunities across the community. NeRD Power is collaborating with Village leadership to design solar installations for key UMV facilities and to evaluate similar opportunities for Lower Village buildings. The partnership also supports progress on the Side Rock microgrid, with equipment delivery anticipated by the end of the year and full project completion expected within 18 months.

NeRD Power utilizes federal investment tax credits to finance these systems, enabling participating facilities and qualified homes to receive solar installations at no upfront cost. Monthly power bills are replaced with lower-cost solar service, providing both immediate savings and long-term energy resilience for Hopi communities.

13. Advancing and Securing Adoption of the Hopi Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) (2025)

JVSP played a key supportive role in advancing the 2025–2030 Hopi Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a federally recognized plan designed to strengthen Hopi self-sufficiency, economic opportunity, and community resilience. The CEDS articulates the Tribe's mission to build a self-sustaining economy grounded in Hopi cultural, community, and environmental values.



JVSP contributed to the CEDS update by documenting emerging success stories, coordinating with Tribal departments, and supporting the Office of Community Planning & Economic Development (OCPED). In 2025, the Hopi Tribal Council unanimously approved the CEDS and authorized fast-track approval of funding applications tied to its priority projects. This adoption positions the Tribe to secure continued EDA support and implement high-impact initiatives identified by leadership and the Villages.

14. Bath House Project for the Village of Moencopi (Lower) (2025)

Existing bath house at the Village of Moencopi (Lower).

The Village of Moencopi (Lower) is advancing a critical community health initiative to repair or replace its existing bath house, a facility that provides essential bathing services for residents. Recognizing the importance of maintaining and modernizing this infrastructure, Village leadership initiated planning to pursue funding through the Hopi Abandoned Mine Lands (AML) and Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) programs.

Building Communities will be assisting the Village with AML grant writing and project coordination, including the development of a formal Request for Proposals for an Environmental Assessment. This work positions the Village to compete effectively for AML funding and move the bath house project toward implementation, improving public health, sanitation, and quality of life for the Lower Village community.

15. Securing Funding Recognition for Yuwehloo Pahki Community (2026)

In advance of the 2026 fiscal year, Yuwehloo Pahki Community faced a critical funding challenge after being notified that it would not receive administrative funding in 2025 and beyond. In response, the Community made a formal equity-based case to Hopi leadership, demonstrating that its residents are consistently counted when the federal government allocates funding to the Hopi Tribe on a per-capita basis, yet Yuwehloo Pahki has historically received few of the corresponding benefits.

Through coordinated advocacy and clear documentation of its history, legal standing, and contributions, Yuwehloo Pahki advanced a compelling argument for fair treatment. The resulting commitment to fund the Community for 2026 represents an important acknowledgment of this imbalance and a meaningful

step toward aligning federal population counts with actual community benefit. This outcome helps stabilize basic governance functions while allowing the Community to continue pursuing long-term self-sufficiency and development.

Conclusion – Strengthening Hopi Communities Through Partnership, Planning, and Action
The success stories in this report reflect years of collaboration among Hopi Villages, Tribal programs, community organizations, and federal partners. Whether securing critical water investments, supporting renewable energy development, advancing the Hopi CEDS, or assisting vulnerable communities such as Yuwehloo Pahki, each accomplishment demonstrates what can be achieved when strategic planning is paired with consistent community engagement and persistent advocacy.

Building Communities is honored to support the Hopi Tribe's long-term goals of economic resilience, cultural preservation, and improved quality of life. The work described here represents meaningful progress—much of it foundational—and establishes clear pathways for future development across energy, water, housing, entrepreneurship, and intertribal cooperation.

As Hopi continues to navigate historic transitions and new opportunities, these achievements show that thoughtful planning and strong partnerships can help bring long-standing community visions to reality. Building Communities remains committed to supporting Hopi leadership and Villages as they strengthen their governance capacity, secure new resources, and build a more self-sustaining future for the Hopi people.