



NAPT

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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ECONOMIC SURVIVAL THROUGH NAVAJO WEAVING FEATURED IN NEW DOCUMENTARY, *WEAVING WORLDS*

LINCOLN, Neb.—Oct. 14, 2008—Helen Bedonie weaves rugs full-time for her income, using brush and roots outside her home to dye the wool taken from her sheep herd on the Navajo Nation. Nicole Horseherder, a 35-year-old Navajo from Black Mesa, Ariz., who has a master's degree in linguistics, chooses to raise her family on the reservation and continues to practice the art of weaving as taught by her grandmother rather than live in a crowded city. Gilbert Begay, a rare male weaver, looks forward to passing on the traditional Navajo art being threatened by capitalism and changing lifestyles.

The three are among several artisans who share their stories of cultural continuity and pride in a new documentary, *Weaving Worlds*, presented by **Trickster Films** and the **Independent Television Service (ITVS)**, in association with **American Public Television (APT)** and **Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT)**. Exploring sustainability through art, *Weaving Worlds* also reveals the often controversial relationship with Anglo traders and the challenges of maintaining aspects of a traditional lifestyle.

The documentary is being released to **public television stations across the nation** starting in **November** for **Native American Heritage Month**. Check your local PBS station for air dates and times.

"While there have been, and continue to be problems in the Navajo rug marketplace, the community of Navajo weavers—especially the ones we worked with on the film—continue to thrive and become savvier in their business," said Director and Writer Bennie Klain, who witnessed the business first-hand, often going with his grandmothers to the local trading post to sell their rugs. "Through this film, I wanted to revisit that family history. I also hope that Navajo artisans will become even more proactive in sharing the true value of their work, thus ensuring economic and cultural survival."

Arriving by RV to the site of his former trading post in Hard Rock, Ariz., Anglo trader Elijah Blair is like a rock star. Community members, many of them weavers, gather around Blair shaking his hand and speaking to him in Navajo. But Blair represents the trader of the past. Flying in by airplane to buy rugs and organically-dyed wool, Blair brought the Navajo culture to the East Coast and Europe. Now tourists come to the Navajo by the busload.

Perry Null represents the trader of the present, buying rugs both made with natural dyes and store-bought wool, but acknowledging that cheap, mass-produced replicas hurt the traditional art.

And then there is the independent buyer. At a rug auction on the reservation in Crownpoint, N.M., visitors from miles around come to poke, prod, twist and critique a single product that has taken months to produce, only to barter and dislike the price and move on.

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“This is a third world country,” says Nicole Horseherder about the Navajo Nation, “and we have people coming into this little country, setting up and doing business with us, like the way every other third world country is treated all around the globe. Right here in the United States...What people on the outside are doing to us is they're forcing us to change in ways that we don't want to change. They're forcing us to abandon that that with which we're making a very basic living. And it's very hard to describe to people who are just here to make money.”

Weaving Worlds, funded in part by grants from the **Arizona Humanities Council** and Humanities Texas, state partners of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the City of Austin Cultural Arts Division, with major funding from the Texas Commission for the Arts.

This documentary has received the Award of Commendation from the Society for Visual Anthropology, a branch of American Anthropological Society, and the Rigoberta Menchu Award at the 2007 Montreal First People's Festival. The film has also been nominated for Best Documentary at the 2007 American Indian Film Festival.

To see a trailer and more information about *Weaving Worlds*, go to **NAPT's program pages** at www.nativetelecom.org.

About NAPT:

Native American Public Telecommunications shares Native stories with the world through support of the creation, promotion and distribution of Native media with offices in Lincoln, Neb., and Albuquerque, N.M. **NAPT** support makes it possible for public television audiences to view such quality programs as *Way of the Warrior* and the upcoming documentary about the aftermath of a \$294 million damming project that submerged the Fort Berthold Reservation, *Waterbuster*. Other NAPT products include **AIROS.org**, and **VisionMaker Video**, a distributor of *Waterbuster*, *Weaving Worlds* and other documentaries by and about Native Americans.

NAPT is one of five members of the **National Minority Consortia** chartered by the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** to provide diverse programming to **PBS** and other public broadcasting systems.

For more information on NAPT, go to www.nativetelecom.org.



About ITVS:

The **Independent Television Service** brings local, national and international audiences high-quality, content-rich programs created by a diverse body of independent producers. Since its inception in 1991, *ITVS* seeks to expand cultural and global awareness, advance civic participation, and creatively engage audiences as it brings new and diverse voices into the public discourse through programming.

ITVS programs take creative risks, explore complex issues, and express points of view seldom seen on commercial or public television. **ITVS** programming reflects voices and visions of underrepresented communities and addresses the needs of underserved audiences, particularly minorities and children. **ITVS** is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people. For more information about **ITVS**, go to: www.itvs.org.

About APT:

With more than 10,000 hours of programming in its library, **American Public Television** (APT) has been a prime source of programming for the nation's public television stations for 47 years, distributing more than 300 new program titles per year. In 2006, **APT** launched **Create**—the TV channel featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming. Known for its leadership in identifying innovative, worthwhile and viewer-friendly programming, **APT** has established a tradition of providing public television stations with program choices that strengthen and customize their schedules, such as *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Worldfocus*, *Globe Trekker*, *Simply Ming*, *Sara's Weeknight Meals*, *America's Test Kitchen From Cook's Illustrated*, *Doc Martin*, *Broadway: The Golden Age*, *Lidia's Family Table*, *Rosemary and Thyme*, *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home*, *The Big Comfy Couch*, *Celine Dion: A New Day*, *Queen Rock Montreal*, *Monarchy With David Starkey*, *Spain...on the Road Again*, and other prominent documentaries, dramatic series, how-to programs, children's series and classic movies.



For more information about APT's programs and services, visit www.APTonline.org.

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