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MAR 19 2001

FCC MAIL ROOM

In the Matter of Nomination for Universal Service Administrative Company
Board of Directors

FCC Docket Nos. 97-21 and 96-45

I am pleased to nominate Karen Buller for a Board member position on the Board of Directors of the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC). Ms. Buller would fill the Board position recently vacated by Mr. John Anthony Butler. This Board position represents low-income consumers.

Ms. Buller, a member of the Comanche Nation, is the founder, President, and CEO. Buller is a nationally recognized expert and leader in the area of Native Americans and telecommunications. Ms. Buller has demonstrated her interest in Universal Service by testifying on April 12, 1996 before the FCC on Universal Service (see text of testimony at <http://numa.niti.org/policy.htm>). Ms. Buller knows and understands the telecommunications interests of Native Americans who are the most underserved group of Americans in terms of Universal Service. She also understands the issues of other underserved minority groups. I am confident that Ms. Buller's expertise and knowledge can only serve to strengthen the Universal Service Administrative Company's Mission.

As the only Native American member of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, I am proud to nominate Karen Buller.

Submitted by:

Lynda Lovejoy

Commissioner Lynda Lovejoy
New Mexico Public Regulation Commission

Karen Radney Buller Bio

Karen Radney Buller is a member of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma. She is the President and CEO of the National Indian Telecommunications Institute (NITI), a non-profit organization dedicated to employing advanced technology to serve American Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians in the areas of education, economic development, language and cultural preservation, tribal policy issues and self-determination. Ms. Buller is an advocate for education, telecommunications, and Indian issues.

She began her teaching career at Haskell College (now Haskell Indian Nations University). In 1982 Haskell students voted for Buller to receive Haskell's outstanding faculty award for her teaching excellence and commitment to Indian students. She has served on many parent and teacher boards in her current home city Santa Fe, NM and is well known by New Mexico legislators for her work towards education reform for Santa Fe Public Schools.

Buller is a recognized telecommunications expert in Indian Country. She has testified before both houses of the U.S. Congress and the FCC on the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Universal Service Fund and its impact on Indian communities. Buller, "an early adopter" of the Internet, saw the potential of using the Internet to improve education for all students, but especially for Indian children. Her work at NITI ties together her passions for advancing Indian communities using the power of telecommunications to its fullest potential, and improving education for all children.

From 1995 to 1998 NITI trained teachers at tribal schools to create culturally appropriate web-based lesson plans and to perform basic networking and troubleshooting of computers through its basic technical training and computer-building workshop. This project was supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation and NASAs Minority University-Space Interdisciplinary Network (MU-SPIN).

NITIs on-going projects continue Buller's efforts to support Indians through the use of advanced technology. These projects are as follows:

- A partnership with the Navajo Education Technology Consortium on a five-year project to provide web-based cultural curriculum training to school districts with high Navajo enrollment in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. This project is funded by a 1998 U.S. Department of Education Technology Education Challenge Grant and a Star Schools Grant.
- NITI is creating an electronic language preservation model based on the Comanche language which will serve as a model for other tribes. Funding for this project is provided by the Fund of the Four Directions, a private foundation.
- NITI created a virtual web museum for the New Mexico State Museum of Indian Arts and Culture based on their *Here, Now, and Always* exhibit (<http://www.herenowalways.org>) that was created and curated by Native Americans. NITI will train members of New Mexico's 22 tribes using the *Here, Now and Always* virtual museum model. Funding for this two-year project is provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Technology Innovation and

Infrastructure Assistance (TIIAP) Program with matching funds from the Rockefeller Foundation and Native American Systems, Inc.

- NITI hosted *Digital Council Fires: A Native American Telecommunications Conference*, May 13-16, 1999 in Albuquerque, NM. The conference provided a forum for tribal people to discuss telecommunications access and content issues in Indian Country. Support for the conference was provided by the Ford Foundation.
- NITI's Legal Education & Assistance Program for Indian Telecommunications (LEAP IT) provides legal advice and consultation to Indians on a variety of telecommunications issues. This program is supported by the Ford Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation.
- NITI's Toward Affordable Connectivity in Indian Country project seeks to gather and disseminate information that will assist Tribes to make informed decisions about telecommunications issues. This project is supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- The Open Society Institute of the Soros Foundation is providing organizational support for the following NITI initiatives: *Digital Council Fires*, cultural curriculum, and outreach to the Tribal Colleges
- The W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the List Foundation both provide funds to ensure that NITI staff and equipment remain at the cutting-edge of technology