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For downloadable images, visit pbs.org/pressroom

For the program companion website, visit pbs.org/independentlens/power-paths

**POWER PATHS TO AIR NATIONALLY ON THE PBS SERIES INDEPENDENT LENS
ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2009 AT 10 PM**

*Documentary Chronicles Effects as Activists and Native American Tribes'
Search for Renewable Energy*

(San Francisco, CA)—**POWER PATHS** follows the efforts of American Indian tribes as they explore ways to bring renewable energy projects into their communities. From the Sioux tribes of the Great Plains in the Midwest to the Navajo and Hopi of the Southwest, tribes are fighting to protect their land, air and water from the harmful impacts of mining and coal burning and lead the nation in transitioning to renewable energy sources like wind and solar power. Directed by Bo Boudart and narrated by Peter Coyote, **POWER PATHS** will air on the Emmy® Award-winning PBS series *Independent Lens* on Tuesday, November 3, 2009 at 10 PM (check local listings).

POWER PATHS explores the heated and complex debate over energy that is taking place in the halls of Congress, corporate boardrooms and American Indian communities across the Southwest and other parts of the country. Ten percent of America's energy comes from Native American lands, including a third of the U.S. coal deposits and hydroelectric dams that feed the grid. These mines and plants brought jobs to the region, but they also brought pollution, cancer and environmental destruction. **POWER PATHS** chronicles the efforts of activists from several tribes as they search for ways to bring clean, renewable energy projects into their communities.



Scenes from POWER PATHS, coming to Independent Lens November 2009.

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In the 1960s, both the Hopi and the Navajo tribal governments signed coal leases with Peabody Coal, and the area soon became the largest coal strip-mining complex in the world. While these coal-fired plants provided electricity to the growing cities of the Southwest, ironically an estimated 18,000 Navajo families still live without electricity today. After years of pressuring their tribal governments to not renew the leases, tribal grassroots leaders convinced the Navajo and Hopi governments to pass resolutions demanding an end to the destructive mining practices. In 2005, The Sierra Club, Grand Canyon Trust and National Parks and Conservation Association won a court-approved settlement with the owners of the huge Mohave Generating station. It stated: either shut down or put pollution controls in place. The owners declined to add the controls and the plant was closed. It was a bittersweet victory, with miners losing their jobs and tribal royalties ended.

The Just Transition Coalition (the grassroots movement responsible for shutting down Mohave) seeks to reclaim the destiny of their tribes and defend the air and water from further degradation. The film follows their efforts to prevent further coal mining—while bringing a greener economy and new green jobs to Indian Lands—by installing solar energy and large wind turbines on their lands.

While many Americans agree there is a need to embark on a new energy path, they often lack a clear understanding of how U.S. energy systems work and what can be done to change them. As **POWER PATHS** reveals, many Native American tribes are not waiting for the government to act. Instead, they are actively seeking investors and a way to control their own energy and sell the rest to the power companies. The film concludes with an unprecedented and ongoing decision by the California public utilities commission who take the Just Transition plan seriously. For the first time, Native Americans may receive some economic justice for the harm caused to natural resources on tribal lands and could lead the nation to a new energy path.

To learn more about the film and the issues involved with it, visit the companion website for **POWER PATHS** at www.pbs.org/independentlens/power-paths. Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read an interview with the filmmaker and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.

Featured Participants (in Alphabetical Order)

Enei Begaye—a Navajo mother and co-director of the Black Mesa Water Coalition. She helps organize a grassroots coalition to bring renewable energy to reservation lands for a sustainable economy.

Andy Bessler—a southwestern representative of the Sierra Club's Tribal Partnerships Program, Bessler creates an alliance with tribal grassroots groups to stop coal-fired pollution and to lobby for more renewable energy projects in the Southwest.

Nicole Horseherder—a Navajo mother and director of the Navajo Grassroots organization, To' Nizhoni Ani (Beautiful Water Speaks) advocates for protecting traditional Navajo values as well as land and water conservation.

Winona LaDuke—a political and environmental leader who calls attention to Native Americans and the ways their resources could contribute significantly to solving the national energy crisis, using new legislation to increase renewable energy.

Preben Maegaard—a Danish activist who has led his country towards replacing fossil fuel dependence with wind and solar energy since the 1980s.

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Vernon Masayesva—a longtime Hopi activist who protested the burning of coal on Hopi tribal lands and who fought to protect their precious aquifers from depletion by the coal companies.

Hermann Scheer—a politician internationally known for his efforts to pass legislation in the German Parliament. This legislation resulted in a doubling the amount of renewable energy produced in Germany and guaranteed feed-in energy tariffs for those who generate more electricity than they consume.

Leonard Selestewa—a Hopi farmer who fights coal to preserve the Hopi way of life and who was instrumental in leading the Just Transition Coalition towards that achievement.

About the Filmmaker

Bo Boudart (producer/director) has written, produced and directed documentaries that have aired on PBS, the Discovery Channel, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and other networks. His most recent project was the one-hour documentary feature *Oil on Ice*, which explored the issues of energy policy, Alaska Native human rights and conservation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Other documentary projects include *Umealit: The Whale Hunters* for PBS's *Nova* and *The Sea Is Our Life*, about environmental risks of offshore oil drilling in the Arctic. Boudart continues to produce documentaries about endangered ecosystems and indigenous cultures worldwide.

About *Independent Lens*

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award-winning weekly series airing Tuesday nights at 10 PM on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries and a limited number of fiction films united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement and unflinching visions of their independent producers. *Independent Lens* features unforgettable stories about a unique individual, community or moment in history. Presented by the Independent Television Service (ITVS), the series is supported by interactive companion websites, and national publicity and community engagement campaigns. Further information about the series is available at www.pbs.org/independentlens. *Independent Lens* is jointly curated by ITVS and PBS, and is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS and the National Endowment for the Arts. The series producer is Lois Vossen.

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