



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 23, 2013

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Navajo Nation Council tables legislation seeking to obtain performance and reclamation bonds for the possible acquisition of BHP Navajo Mine

WINDOW ROCK – During a special session held on Monday, the Navajo Nation Council voted to table Legislation No. 0367-13, which seeks to grant a limited waiver of the Nation’s sovereign immunity to allow the Navajo Transitional Energy Company, LLC to obtain performance and reclamation bonds to bring the company a step closer to acquiring BHP Navajo Mine.

In his opening remarks to Council, legislation sponsor Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) urged the approval of the bill to allow Council to fulfill its “original intent” by allowing NTEC to move forward with the purchase of the mine and to make the Nation a “player” in the energy industry.

“It does not change the intent of what we as Council voted on and that was to gain control — to become a player in the energy field,” stated Delegate Bates. “For 54 years, this Nation has sat on the bench and collected [royalties] and has had no say in a resource that we have a hundred years’ worth of.”

NTEC board chairman Steve Gunderson, later explained that the legislation seeks the approval of two separate bonds or “insurance contracts”, which also require the First Judicial District Court of the State of New Mexico to enforce arbitration between the Nation and the insurers in the event of a dispute.

Gunderson said the reclamation bond, required by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining, insures that funding needs will be met to reclaim the mining site, in accordance with federal law.

The performance bond is required by the Four Corners Power Plant to insure a source of funding in case of an interruption in the coal supply such as flooding, according to Gunderson.

“NTEC does not have a track record today, and because NTEC does not have the assets is the reason we’re here today,” said Delegate Bates, explaining the need for the bonds on the basis that NTEC is a newly established company with no “track record” or current assets.

The majority of Monday’s discussion centered on a question raised by Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) over whether the legislation required a simple majority vote or two-thirds vote.

In accordance with Navajo Nation law, a limited waiver of sovereign immunity requires two-thirds approval of Council, or sixteen supporting votes.

Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) expressed strong opposition in regard to a memo from Navajo Nation Attorney General Harrison Tsosie addressed to members of the Council, in which he stated that the legislation only required a simple majority for passage.

Delegate Begaye also opposed the requirement to have the First Judicial District Court of the State of New Mexico serve as the enforcer in the event of arbitration, referring to the mandate as a breach of trust between the insurance companies and the Nation.

“These guys don’t trust our courts so that’s why they are wanting us to move out of Navajo Nation court and move it into Arizona or New Mexico,” said Delegate Begaye. “As I’ve said before, if they were doing business in a place like Thailand or Vietnam or China, they would not hesitate to use the courts of those countries because they respect it and so in this case, we’re not being respected by not utilizing our courts.”

After a lengthy discussion, Council members voted 10-7 to approve a motion made by Delegate Begaye to require a two-thirds majority approval for the proposed legislation.

Immediately following the approval of Delegate Begaye’s motion, Council members voted 10-7 to table Legislation No. 0367-13.

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Budget and Finance Committee approves the Navajo Nation Economic Development Fund Management Plan

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Budget and Finance Committee approved the Navajo Nation Economic Development fund management plan, which allocates one-half percent of the Navajo Nation sales tax for economic development purposes.

According to Legislation No. 0242-13, the fund management plan will be utilized towards stimulating economic development to improve the Nation’s economy through small business, commercial, industrial, and tourism sectors of the Navajo Nation.

Legislation co-sponsor and BFC vice chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) said the Division of Economic Development would execute the fund management plan for the economic development initiative.

“The half-percent of the one-percent sales tax will go towards infrastructure projects, feasibility studies, and other services that promote the sustainment of Navajo businesses,” said Delegate Nez.

In 2012, the Navajo Nation Council approved the one-percent sales tax increase from four-percent, in which one half-percent would go towards economic development and the other half-percent would go towards the Navajo Nation Scholarship Fund.

Delegate Nez proposed an amendment recommending that the sales tax allocated for economic development be distributed equitably among the Nation’s five agencies for future projects.

BFC voted 3-0 to pass the amendment.

At the conclusion of the meeting, BFC member Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaille/Wheatfields, Tse Ch’izhi) requested that the legislation sponsors provide an update after the funds have been expended to monitor the progress of the economic development initiative.

BFC voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0242-13. BFC serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie promotes domestic violence awareness

Thoreau, N.M. – Last Thursday, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) presented to a group of his constituents at a Domestic Violence Prevention Awareness Conference at the Thoreau Chapter House.

The event was part of a series of conferences hosted by Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services, focusing on the impacts of domestic violence on children, married couples, and families.

Delegate Yazzie shared his personal experiences with life choices, prayer, and family.

Speaking before a crowd of approximately 40 community members, Delegate Yazzie shared a story of his wife's pregnancy years ago which nearly resulted in the loss of her life due to complications during labor.

"That day to actually hear the doctor say 'do you have a pastor to be with you right now?' just killed me. My wife had a really slim chance of making it." said Delegate Yazzie.

Delegate Yazzie explained that the overall message of the story is the importance of prayer and human life.

"You have got to believe in your prayers and you have got to believe in your family. This is why I say pray in your own way. Believe in yourself and continue your prayers and be as strong as you can." said Yazzie.

As a former police officer, Yazzie dealt with a lot of situations involving domestic violence and said he understands the negative impacts it has on children and their families.

"I've seen firsthand the detrimental affects of domestic violence and I felt it was important to share my experiences with my community to tell them that they can overcome adversity and live a positive life," Delegate Yazzie said.

Also in attendance was Davina Segay with the Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services, who serves as the coordinator for the Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative.

"What we are trying to do is go into the communities and put up Domestic Violence Prevention activities and conferences for the awareness and self-prevention education. A lot of times we have community members who do not know that they are in a domestic violence relationship because it may be considered normal behavior to them and something that they grew up in their own homes," said Segay.

DVPI has previously hosted domestic violence conferences in Sanders, Luepp, Thoreau, and Crownpoint. The next scheduled conference will be held in Tuba City, on Feb. 4.

DVPI works with domestic violence shelters within the Navajo Nation at sites located in Chinle, Keyenta, Shiprock and Gallup.

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Law and Order Committee receives report regarding the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act on the Navajo Nation

WINDOW ROCK – The Law and Order Committee, on Monday, received a report from the Navajo Department of Public Safety regarding the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act that was implemented on the Navajo Nation in 2012.

SORNA is Title I of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 that aims to enforce minimum standards for sex offender registration while extending jurisdiction of the registrations across the 50 states, District of Columbia, principal U.S. territories, and federally recognized tribes.

“Currently, we require all sex offenders, Navajo and non-Navajo, that choose to live on the Navajo reservation to register with NDPS,” said NDPS police officer Pamela Hurley.

Hurley said that for the past one and a half years, the Navajo Nation has implemented its version of SORNA, which is the Navajo Nation Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act of 2012 to better serve the safety and protection of Navajo people, especially children.

LOC members expressed their support for the initiative and inquired as to why the Navajo Nation has yet to implement some of SORNA’s key principles.

“What is holding the Nation back from using all the latest technologies to register and maintain up-to-date data on sex offenders?” asked LOC member Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K’ai’bii’tó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake).

In response, Hurley said the lack of implementation is due to the shortage of funding and resources of NDPS. She further explained that NDPS plans to seek additional funding from the Navajo Nation and future grants, adding that NDPS is in the process of drafting legislation to amend the NNSORNA to strengthen the law.

Important amendments in the proposed legislation would allow for the immediate apprehension of sex offenders that fail to register or abscond, require registration of all sex offenders that were convicted prior to 2006, extend all sex offender requirements to apply to all convicted sex

offenders regardless of where they were convicted, and more stringent penalties for sex offenders that fail to register.

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) said he is in support of the proposed amendments to the 2012 Act and offered to sponsor the legislation.

“I think it is important that we strengthen the NNSORNA of 2012 to protect our people and children, so I am in support of the proposed legislation for the added amendments,” said Delegate Begaye.

At the end of the discussion, Delegate Begaye suggested that the proposed legislation should also address non-Navajos to ensure that it applies to all sex offenders residing on the Navajo Nation.

LOC voted 3-0 to approve the report.

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**Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves
legislation to amend policy manual for Low Income Energy Assistance Program**

LEUPP, Ariz. - Last Wednesday, the Health, Education and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0358-13, amending the policy manual for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, housed under the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services.

The purpose of LIHEAP is to provide assistance to low income households by assisting with the cost of heating and cooling in their homes to meet their home energy needs. In order to help those in need, major adjustments to the financial process were necessary, according to the DSS.

“What we are trying to do is consolidate all the financial opponents. One of the things we did is, we took out any financial assistance out of Public Family Services and put it under the Program for Self Reliance,” said legislative analyst with the DSS, Thomas Cody.

Under the Program of Self Reliance, clients are ensured that the managing of funds and customer due of process is fairly regulated, added Cody.

In response to complaints over the delay in receiving checks, the Program of Self Reliance has implemented the use of debit cards in place of financial services and plans are underway to use this type of method for LIHEAP.

“So, in this process, do you keep [the Office of the Controller and the Office of Management and Budget] in the loop because this will relate back to the subcommittee on external funds?” asked legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels).

Cody said that all financial entities are well aware of these changes.

“Are applicants provided summary sheets that outline their qualifications? Are they provided information that is simple for the clientele to understand?” Delegate Hale questioned.

According to the LIHEAP policy manual, it is the responsibility of eligible clients to understand program requirements in order to receive sufficient assistance in a timely manner.

Also, it is the responsibility of clients to attend a mandated two-hour orientation to determine eligibility requirements as well to discuss energy conservation.

Orientations will be conducted at various sites, including chapter houses, throughout Navajo Nation.

HEHSC voted 3-0 to approve Legislation 0358-13. The HEHSC serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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Navajo Nation prevails in bankruptcy court case

Anadarko Petroleum and Kerr-McGee Corporation to repay billions in settlement



On Dec. 12, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly listened to a report from Stephen Etsitty on uranium cleanup efforts on the Navajo Nation. Etsitty is the executive director of Navajo Environmental Protection Agency. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Navajo Nation Attorney General Harrison Tsosie announced on Dec. 13, 2013 that the Nation has prevailed in its claims against Anadarko Petroleum Corporation and Kerr-McGee Corporation involving a number of former uranium mines and one former Kerr-McGee uranium processing site. These sites were located in Cove, Ariz. and Shiprock, N.M.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said, “Our work in this bankruptcy case began when I was vice president and Louis Denetsosie was attorney general. The Shelly-Jim Administration has made mine cleanup a priority. In April, we met with Allison Macfarlane, chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission about prioritizing cleanups on the Navajo Nation.”

“Any funds resulting from this lawsuit are welcomed and long overdue. The Navajo

Nation Department of Justice and Navajo EPA worked together to bring this effort to finality,” President Shelly added.

A decision released December 12 from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York stated Judge Allan L. Gropper found that the defendants Anadarko and Kerr-McGee acted to “hinder and delay” certain creditors, including the Navajo Nation,

The Navajo Nation is one of a number of claimants in the case. Other claimants include the U.S., 22 states, four environmental response trusts and a trust for the benefit of certain tort plaintiffs. Prior to the trial this group of environmental and tort claimants reached an agreement on how they would allocate any recovery in the lawsuit.

While the proceeds distribution formula is rather complicated, Tsosie noted that 88 percent of all proceeds go to the group of environmental creditors, including the Navajo Nation. The remaining 12 percent will go to private tort creditors and for administrative expenses. Of the 88 percent distributed to environmental creditors, 23 percent will be available for use in cleaning up former Kerr-McGee abandoned uranium mines located on the Navajo Nation and the former Shiprock Mill site.

Judge Gropper’s decision finds that Anadarko and Kerr-McGee are liable to the plaintiffs for damages, setting a range for

recognize the uncertainties of the appeal process and the long road that may be ahead of us, this is still a day of celebration for the Navajo Nation. A federal judge has issued a ruling that could result in over a billion dollars being made available for cleaning up some of the uranium contamination from past uranium mining and processing on the Navajo Nation. We want to thank our outstanding litigation team, which included attorneys from the Chicago-based firm of Kirkland & Ellis, John Hueston of the Irell and Manella Firm from Los Angeles, the Office of the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York and representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.”

Other recognition for the court case included David Taylor, Navajo DOJ attorney; Navajo trial witnesses, Navajo EPA; Perry Charley, an instructor at Diné College Shiprock Campus; and the U.S. EPA Region 9 San Francisco Office of Regional Counsel.

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“The Shelly-Jim Administration has made mine cleanup a priority.”

when Kerr-McGee “transferred out and then spun off” oil and gas assets, leaving the spin off companies “insolvent and undercapitalized.”

such damages between \$5.1 and \$14.1 billion. The exact amount of damages will be determined after briefing by the parties.

Tsosie stated, “While we





Administrative leave, early payroll release for Navajo Nation

WINDOW ROCK-Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has authorized early payroll release on Dec. 23, 2013 for tribal employees. Additionally, he has authorized early release on Dec 24 and 31 for the holiday season.

“In recognition of the Christmas and New Year’s Day holidays, I hereby authorize early payroll and early release for all Navajo Nation employees,” President Shelly said.

Executive Branch employees are authorized four hours of administrative leave from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Dec. 24 and 31. Emergency personnel and essential on-call personnel are exempt, unless authorized by immediate supervisors.

The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President wishes all employees and families a happy holiday season. We thank you for your dedicated service to the Navajo Nation.

“Be safe and remember your elders during this time of caring and giving in respect of K’é. Ahéhee,” President Shelly said.



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Diné Bizaad Yee Atah Naayéé' Yik'eh Deesdlíí'

The Navajo Language assisted the military forces to defeat the enemy



Top, the late Navajo Code Talker Wilfred Billie stands proudly before American flags. Billie returned to Japan to pay his respects to his fallen comrades and traveled the globe extensively, including a visit to South Korea. Above, the communications group Billie was attached to during his service in the Battle of Saipan. Billie passed at the age on 90 on Dec. 12, 2013. (Courtesy photos)

The Navajo Nation mourns the loss of the late Navajo Code Talker Wilfred E. Billey.

Billey left us on Dec. 12, 2013. His funeral is scheduled for Dec. 21, at the First United Methodist Church in Farmington, N.M.

Billey was 90 years old

and lived in Farmington, N.M. His clans are Táchii'nii (Red Running Into the Water) and Tl'aashchi'i (Red Cheek People). His maternal grandfathers are Naasht'ézhí Dine'é (Zuni) and his paternal grandfathers are Hooghan lání (Many Hogans).

On Dec. 13, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed a

proclamation to have all flags on the Nation to be flown at half-mast in honor of Billey's passing, from Dec. 13 to 20.

"The Navajo Nation is greatly saddened by the loss of the late Wilfred E. Billey, who served in the U.S. Marine Corps," President Shelly said. "The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers for his family and friends during this time of grief."

Billey's daughter, Barbara, said she was working on a biography of her father before his passing.

"My dad was an educator and assisted educating the Elderhostel, Inc. Road Scholar program from around the world. He really pushed for education, especially for scholarships for the children of Navajo Code Talkers," she said.

Billey also worked for the Navajo Methodist Mission School, Central Consolidated School District and Farmington municipal schools. He informed the youth and world about the role the Navajo Code Talkers played in the fight for freedom during World War II.

The following account is from Barbara Billey's conversations with her father on his memories of the war.

Born on Dec. 28, 1922, Wilfred E. Billey was raised by his grandparents and lived a simple life. They spent their summers in the Chuska Mountains above Sanostee, N.M., herding sheep and farming. The family lived in a

traditional forked stick hogan.

Billey attended Toadlena Boarding School and was taken to school on horseback by his grandfather. For junior high, he attended school at Shiprock. Eventually, he became friends with William Yazzie, who later changed his name to William Dean Wilson, one of the Original 29 Code Talkers.

In 1941, Billey was enrolled at Navajo Methodist Mission School in Farmington, a boarding school providing a strong Methodist background for young Navajos.

One day, the school superintendent informed students that the U.S. Marine Corps was looking for a few good men fluent in Navajo and English. He asked for volunteers and 11 students stepped forward, including Billey.

Of the 11 men, eight passed their physical examinations and were inducted into the Marine Corps. Billie's daughter said military records state he was drafted, but that was untrue because he volunteered for service.

The young recruits were sent to Camp Elliot, north of present-day Camp Pendleton, to undergo 13-weeks of basic training. They coalesced into USMC Platoon 297, the second all-Navajo platoon, comprised of 56 men.

The Navajos were trained as radiomen and Platoon 297 was shipped out to New Calendonía, aboard the USS

Mount Vernon. Howard Billiman, a member of the original 29 Code Talkers, accompanied the men and served as code instructor.

While aboard the ship, the platoon was split up and radiomen were sent to various Marine divisions in the Pacific. Billey was sent to the 2nd Marine Division at Wellington, New Zealand with eight others, including David Tsosie.

The men shipped out with their new division and began practicing island hopping. This involved the landing of amphibious landing tractors, or amtracs, on island beaches in preparation for the battles to come.

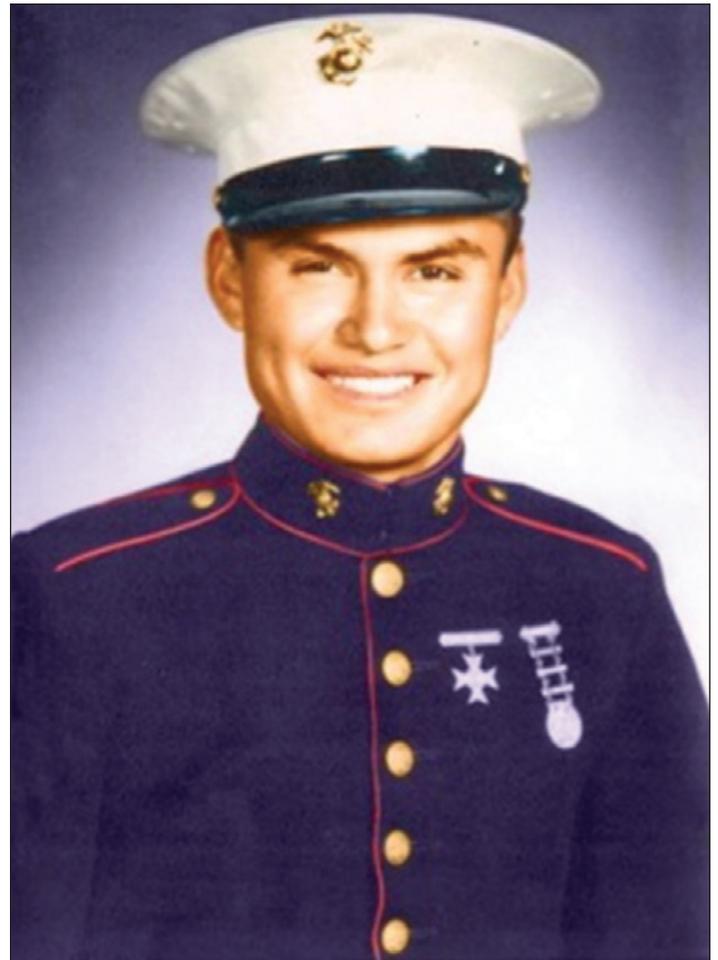
On Nov. 19, 1943, around 10 p.m., the Marines were fed steaks and ice cream. Several

Saipan in the Mariana Islands. Billey and the rest of his communications group made it to the jungle and radioed U.S. ships to fire upon enemy locations.

The island was covered with caves and the Japanese hid inside them. Billey said many of the Japanese soldiers committed suicide in the face of defeat, either by gunshot or jumping off Suicide Cliff or Banzai Cliff.

During the Battle of Saipan, Billey communicated with Howard Billiman and called in artillery strikes upon the enemy. Billey fought again on the island of Okinawa, where ships were under constant attack by Kamikaze pilots.

Billey's daughter said her father would recall these



Corporal Wilfred Billey proudly served as a Navajo Code Talker in the United States Marine Corps. He fought in the Battle of Tarawa, the Battle of Saipan, Tinian and Okinawa in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He also served in the Marine occupation of Nagasaki after Japan surrendered. (Courtesy photo)

“I’m not a hero. The heroes are the ones we left behind.”

hours later, on Nov. 20, at 4:30 a.m., the men invaded the island of Tarawa, the site of one of the bloodiest battles in the Pacific Theater.

The Marines needed to secure the airport on the island. The Japanese were prepared for the invasion and fired at amtrac engines, resulting in countless explosions and loss of life.

Billey would later say he never saw so many dead men. The 6th Marine Division landed on the southeast portion of the island to flank the enemy and met up with the men of the 2nd Marine Division. As the island was secured, Billey would see and talk to his friend Billiman, who had arrived from the Battle of Guadalcanal.

On June 15, 1944, the 2nd Marine Division invaded

experiences during World War II with humility and said, “I’m not a hero. The heroes are the ones we left behind.”

Billey leaves behind six children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. His legacy as a Navajo Code Talker will live on for the generations to come.

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Navajo Nation Council votes down bond financing bill

WINDOW ROCK – During a special session held on Tuesday, the Navajo Nation Council voted down Legislation No. 0213-13, which would have allowed the Navajo Nation to issue bonds in the form of long-term fixed rate bonds and in the form of bank loans, to finance various projects totaling approximately \$220 million.

The bill aimed to finance certain infrastructure projects in each of the Nation’s five agencies, outlined in the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development’s five-year economic development plan.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) urged approval of the bill to promote economic development and employment for communities throughout the Nation.

“It provides the opportunity to the small business people, entrepreneurs, and even bigger entities and enterprises a chance to make a difference in our Navajo Nation economy,” stated Delegate Benally to her Council colleagues. “As we provide the entrepreneurs the opportunity, they in turn will provide yours and my constituents the opportunity to gain full employment.”

Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) expressed concern over the impacts of the proposed projects on existing small businesses while referring to development within Dilkon, a community represented by Delegate Begay.

“At one time, the people wanted a shopping center there and when we developed it, there was no study done on how it impacted the small stores that were there since my grandma and grandpa’s time,” said Delegate Begay. “So with this bond financing we’re overlooking these people who have been providing goods and services for a long time.”

Although Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreón, Whitehorse Lake) said he supports economic development, he urged his colleagues to seek alternative methods of economic development that do not require the Nation to waive its sovereign immunity, referring to a portion of the bill that would have required the Nation to be subject to New York laws in order to issue bonds in the State of New York.

“Wall street doesn’t respect Navajo sovereignty,” Delegate Tsosie stated. “These are the people that want us to expose ourselves to New York law and I really continue to believe today that we shouldn’t do that.”

Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) said that certain chapters have been very proactive in planning for economic development in their communities and encouraged all chapters to continue planning at the local level, noting that many were not included in the DED's five-year plan due to lack of planning at the chapter level.

"The list highlights many of the proactive chapters throughout the Nation. I see many of the chapters that have been doing much of the groundwork and developing their projects to this level," said Delegate Nez.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Council members voted down the legislation with nine supporting and seven opposing. The legislation required a two-thirds vote, or sixteen votes of approval.

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Law and Order Committee receives report on proposed Navajo Nation Alcohol Sales Tax

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report regarding a proposed alcohol sales tax that would help fund the Navajo Nation’s public safety and social services programs.

According to the Office of the Navajo Tax Commission executive director Martin Ashley, the proposed alcohol tax would be an additional tax on top of the five-percent sales tax currently implemented on the Navajo Nation. The alcohol tax would only apply to alcoholic beverages served in the Nation’s casinos.

“ONTC is presently charged with regulating liquor licensing to the casinos and alcohol distributors, but we are finding that it is costly and we need additional funding to carry out these responsibilities efficiently,” said Ashley.

Ashley stated that ONTC’s duty is to regulate taxes on the Navajo Nation and that the responsibility of regulating liquor licensing should be separate from their original entity obligations.

Ashley suggested that two offices should be created to alleviate the burden on ONTC by designating one office for regulation of liquor licensing/sales, and the other for collecting alcohol sales taxes.

LOC committee members posed questions to Ashley regarding the management of liquor taxing and licensing at the state level.

“Do the states [AZ and NM] have their own alcohol tax?” asked LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau).

In response to Delegate Yazzie’s question, Ashley said that alcohol taxation occurs at the distributor level and is paid to the states. He added that distributors sell to the Navajo casinos, but conduct business off-reservation to avoid buying a Navajo Nation liquor license and only pay license fees to the states.

ONTC's staff attorney Chad Yazzie, informed the committee that an intergovernmental agreement between the Navajo Nation and the states could be drafted to cover the loopholes that distributors are taking advantage of through off-reservation sales.

"Does the Navajo Nation have a liquor sales permit already in place?" asked LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock).

Ashley said the Commission currently has seven approved statutes already in place since the opening of the Nation's first casino five years ago, which regulate liquor licensing and sales in casinos.

At the closing of the discussion, Delegate Yazzie suggested that legislation be drafted soon to allow Council members the opportunity to contribute input and advice on the proposed alcohol sales tax.

LOC voted 3-0 to accept the report.

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Budget and Finance Committee receives report on Indirect Cost Training

WINDOW ROCK – The Budget and Finance Committee received a report on Friday regarding indirect cost training that will be provided to Navajo Nation division directors and program managers that receive grants and awards from federal funding.

According to Office of Management and Budget executive director Dominic Beyal, the training is intended to educate upper management personnel the purpose and function of IDC.

“The IDC is to reimburse the [Navajo Nation] General Fund for costs supporting a program’s activity, such as OMB, Office of the Controller, personnel, Department of Justice, etc. and this training will reinforce the IDC policies we currently use,” said Beyal.

The IDC rate for FY2013 was established by the Navajo Nation at 16.95 percent and has yet to be determined for FY2014. The Nation is entitled to collect IDC recovery costs from the federal government, which applies to federal grants, contracts, and agreements.

In agreement with the IDC training, BFC vice chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) said it is time to clear the confusion regarding IDC’s.

“It is very important to get all the programs on the same page that deal with IDC’s and convey the responsibilities they should be adhering to, and this training is a step towards that goal,” said Delegate Nez.

BFC chair Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) said the BFC would do everything within their authority to assist with the training and hope that its potential success will be a model for future IDC trainings.

At the conclusion of the BFC meeting, Beyal said there has been no date set for the training, but they intend to have it in the latter part of Jan. 2014. The training would be about 1-2 days and the venue is still to be decided, however Beyal said the training would take place within Window Rock.

BFC Voted 4-0 to accept the report.

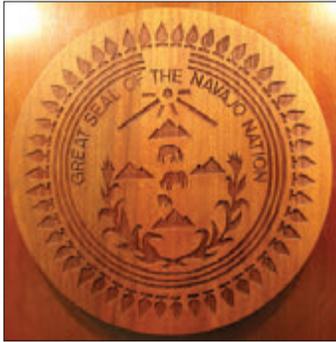
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 December 6, 2013

President Shelly offers families statement of condolence



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President send their sincere condolences to the families of Dr. Guy Gorman, Sr. and Harry Tome, two influential Navajo leaders that recently passed. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly respectfully offered condolences to the family of Dr. Guy Gorman, Sr., on his recent passing on Dec. 4, 2013. Gorman was 91.

“We extend our sincere condolences to the family of Dr. Guy Gorman, Sr. The Navajo Nation mourns the loss of a great leader and statesman. We appreciate Gorman’s dedication and service to our Nation and to the community of Chinle, which he served,” President Shelly said.

Gorman was recently honored at a dinner hosted by the Chinle Chapter. He served the chapter for many years.

“We joked about the days in office and involvement we both had in the organization called Diné Bidziil,” said the president.

A former delegate of the Navajo Nation Council, Gorman served 20 years on the Council and served the Advisory Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Education Committee and others.

Gorman was also a veteran and

proudly served in the U.S. Army during World War II, where he spent the majority of his service in the European Theatre.

A proponent of education, he assisted in the formation of the first community-controlled schools on the Navajo Nation, focused on Navajo language, culture and history.

Through his efforts, the Rough Rock Demonstration School was established in 1969, through an incorporation process with the state of Arizona. Additionally, he testified in Congress with others for the creation of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC).

AIHEC was crucial component for the creation of tribally owned and operated institutions in the country. The consortium cleared the way for the creation of Diné College, formerly Navajo Community College, as the first tribal college in the country. Gorman is known as one of the founding fathers of tribal colleges. Diné College subsequently bestowed an honorary doctorate upon Gorman for his service to higher education.

Earlier in the same week, the Navajo Nation lost another influential leader and statesman who stood up to the federal government and protected the Navajo Nation. Former Navajo Nation Council Delegate Harry Tome passed on Nov. 30.

Tome served on the Navajo Nation Council for 16 years, from 1971 to 1987, representing the Red Valley (formerly Red Rock) and Cove Chapters. He served on the Advisory Committee and Resources Committee.

“The Navajo Nation is indebted to Mr. Tome, whose leadership a generation ago remains a part of us today,” President Shelly said. “His contributions to the Navajo Nation Council were given in an era of unprecedented growth.

“For 16 years, he gave to the growth and development of the Navajo Nation in the beginning years of a new U.S. Indian policy

brother Marshall Tome, worked with the National Academy of Science and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission to bring awareness to the reclamation of uranium mines in Cove and Red Valley.

Subsequently, these efforts unspooled a string of mine clean ups on the Navajo Nation, eventually leading to the creation

“The First Lady and I, along with Vice President Rex Lee Jim, bestow the honor of the Navajo Nation upon these great leaders - Naat’áaniis.”

period of self-determination,” he added.

A man of integrity, Tome, a Native American Church Roadman, labored in prayer for the people, their wellness and advancement, sacrificing and always putting others first. He was a former uranium miner and shed light on the plight of Navajo uranium miners and brought these issues to the national stage. His work resulted in changes to national policy regarding compensation for miners and families exposed to the harmful impacts of radium and uranium.

Tome, working along with the late Dr. Fred Begay and his late

of the Radiation Exposure and Compensation Act, which began compensating miners and their families suffering from the effects of radiation exposure.

“Both of these distinguished leaders’ spirit shall forever endure through their children and grandchildren, and their names added to the annals of history of the Navajo Nation, and for future generations to come,” President Shelly said. “The First Lady and I, along with Vice President Rex Lee Jim, bestow the honor of the Navajo Nation upon these great leaders – Naat’áaniis.”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 5, 2013

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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives report on overall progress of Navajo Nation Head Start

WINDOW ROCK – On Wednesday, the Health Education and Human Services Committee received a report on the progress of the Navajo Nation Head Start program.

“We have spent the last nine months working diligently to restructure this multi-million dollar program and improve the quality of it for our Nation’s youngest children,” said Navajo Nation Head Start assistant superintendent Sharon Singer.

According to the report, Navajo Head Start has been working to correct deficiencies that have been identified, such as lack of certified staff, restructuring of the program, curriculum improvement, building maintenance, transportation, and other related issues that once plagued the program.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi) expressed his support for the efforts the Head Start program is currently undertaking and stressed the importance of their services to the Navajo Nation.

“I believe that Head Start is finally back on track and the leadership has demonstrated their capabilities of the program,” said Delegate Butler. “The people you serve are the children and you have given them a voice.”

Singer stated that in conjunction with the overhaul of the Head Start program, it has allowed for the expansion of 20 additional service centers by the end of next week. McKinley County Schools also gave the program 90 modular buildings for additional classrooms and teacher housing.

The written report also includes the current data for the program, which includes: 69 service centers currently open, 1,703 enrolled students, 439 total staff members, 70 percent of the teachers are certified as “high-quality” in their teaching abilities, according to Head Start Performance Standards, and the remaining 30 percent of the teachers hold a bachelor’s degree.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To’ii) said he was elated at the continued improvements of the program, and asked Singer what protocols the program follows when there has been a declaration of emergency.

“Our program is unique because the location of our schools is very rural and a large majority of our transportation is on dirt roads. We have an internal alert system that our staff uses that provides recommendations so we can get approval to close centers, if need be,” said Singer.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Delegate Butler said the Navajo Head Start program has strong support from tribal leaders and are eager to see the fruition of the program’s enhancements that will benefit Navajo children.

HEHSC voted 3-0 to accept the report.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 December 3, 2013

President Shelly speaks at International Uranium Film Festival



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly addressed the audience of the International Uranium Film Festival on Dec. 2, 2013. President Shelly gave an update on the Five-Year plan and current remediation efforts. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Panelists for the International Uranium Film Festival listen to remarks by President Shelly at the Navajo Nation Museum on Monday. The three-day festival featured screenings of 40 films from 15 countries. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK—On Monday, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly addressed the audience at the International Uranium Film Festival (IUFF) at the Navajo Nation Museum. The Navajo Nation banned uranium in 2005. In March 2013, President Shelly signed into law the Uranium Ore Transportation Protection Act, which banned

transportation of uranium on the Navajo Nation. In its third year, the IUFF was the brainchild of founder Norbert Suchanek and executive director Marcia Gomes de Oliveira. Forty documentaries from 15 countries were screened, exploring both the uranium and nuclear industries impact on the global community. “This year, there are

at least 10 films about the Navajo Nation and uranium, including some films by Navajo filmmakers,” President Shelly said.

Films depicting uranium mining on the Navajo Nation include “Dii’go To’ Baahaane: Four Stories About Water,” “Poison Wind” and “The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?”

President noted that sharing the Navajo story on uranium was critical and that books like “If You Poison Us” and “Yellow

On July 16, 1979, an earthen dam at the United Nuclear Corporation uranium mill tailings facility collapsed, releasing 1,100 tons of radioactive tailings and 94 million gallons of toxic wastewater into the Puerco River.

The spill is the largest release of radioactive waste by volume in U.S. history and ranks second only to the Chernobyl nuclear reactor accident in total radiation release. It contaminated the river for 80 miles, affecting Navajo

“The Northeast Church Rock Mine is the largest abandoned uranium mine on the Navajo Nation. It is approximately 145 acres.”

Dirt” brought awareness of the uranium legacy on the Navajo Nation to the forefront of the national consciousness.

In Navajo, uranium is referred to as “łeezh litso,” or yellow dirt.

President Shelly said, “The Northeast Church Rock Mine is the largest abandoned uranium mine on the Navajo Nation. It is approximately 145 acres.”

communities like Church Rock, Pinedale, Tseyatoh, and Ariz. communities as far away as Chambers.

Initial cleanup of the mine began in 2006. Residents living near the mine had their homes and yards screened and cleaned up. Additionally, contaminated soils were reconsolidated back to the former mine site. Land areas in the drainages east and north

of the site were also screened and cleaned up.

On Sept. 29, 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced its commitment to transport one million cubic yards of radium and uranium contaminated soil and waste from Church Rock to the nearby UNC mill site. The cost of the cleanup was \$44 million.

The mill site land is owned by the UNC and General Electric. It is a Superfund site undergoing remediation and will eventually be turned over to the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Legacy Management for long-term surveillance and remediation.

The U.S. EPA warned that exposure to elevated levels of radium over a long period of time can result in anemia, cataracts, and cancer, especially bone cancer.

"The Navajo Nation and the people living closest to this former uranium mine are resolved to see this clean up action completed," Shelly said. "Since 1985, we have been building our own technical capacity."

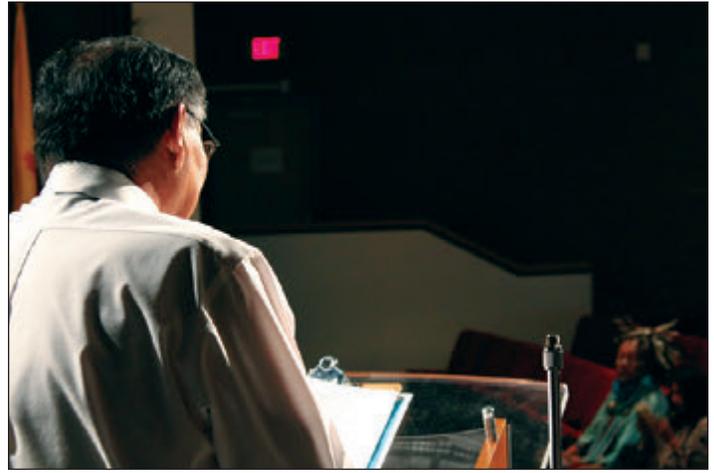
The Navajo Nation argued its case before Congress in 1993 and 2007, requesting resources for the Nation and federal agencies involved in the clean up effort. Congressional support came from Rep. Henry Waxman (Calif.) and Sen. Tom Udall (N.M.).

In April 2013, the

Navajo Nation expressed appreciation for the completion of the first multiagency Five-Year Plan from 2008 to 2012. President Shelly met with the U.S. EPA and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission in Feb., April and August 2013 for the timely approval of the final remedy for clean up of the Church Rock mine site.

President Shelly said the Navajo Nation received word in 2012 that the federal government would commit to a second Five-Year Plan to span from 2013 to 2017. The Navajo Nation submitted eight objectives and three recommendations for the new plan in April 2013, at the Uranium Stakeholders Workshop.

President formed a Uranium Task Force in 2012 to establish an advisory board or commission to assist the Navajo Nation in developing recommendation for disposal options and other policy issues.



President Shelly said the second Five-Year Plan will span from 2013 to 2017. He explained the Navajo Nation submitted eight objectives and three recommendations for the multiagency effort. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Robert Tohe from the Sierra Club addressed the audience as well and spoke of the need to educate the public on the repercussions of uranium mining on the Navajo Nation. He said coordinators envisioned the film festival to allow for dialogue with the public through a question and answer session. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



The negative impact of uranium mining has effects native tribes from across the globe. The International Uranium Film Festival originally began in Brazil over three years ago. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 02, 2013

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Division of Community Development Task Group ended weeklong public meetings on decentralizing Local Government Support Centers

Window Rock, AZ - The Division of Community Development Decentralization Task Group ended a weeklong series of public meetings on the proposed decentralization plan. This proposed plans will transition the 5 Agency Local Government Support Center (LGSC) into 15 regionalized service support centers by FY' 2014.

Leonard Chee, Division Director of Community Development and the task group members presented the plans at Smith Lake, N.M., White Cone, Ariz., Tuba City, Chinle and Nenahnezad, N.M. during the week of November 18-22, 2013.

On average, approximately 100 individuals attended each meeting. A diverse group of community members, chapter officials and staff offered their recommendations.

The task group accepted oral and written comments. The comments were recorded and transcribed for a summary report to be provided to the Navajo Nation Budget and Finance Committee and the general public.

These comments reflected the strong public support, practically from the youth, who were pleased with the proposed jobs and economic opportunities.

These meeting were intended to provide information on the proposed plan and offer the public a forum for individuals in each Agency, to offer their recommendation and concerns.

The support for this plan was not evident at first, however as questions were asked and answered, the support increased. "The first misconception of the effort, was that this was government reform, this is only the

establishment of the proposed 15 services center, staff and their administrative functions,” said Leonard Chee.

“This proposal would streamline the administrative functions and bring much needed technical support closer to chapters, practically those 22 chapters who are in the process of LGA certification,” said Mr. Chee. “Finally, I would like to thank all those who participated and offered their recommendations, these comments will be shared at the highest level.

These meetings are a result of a B&F Committee directive issued on July 05, 2013, to Division of Community Development to develop decentralization plans. The B&F allocated funds in the amount of 3.0 million dollars to establish regional service centers by fiscal year 2014.

Public comments will be accepted until December 06, 2013. They can be made by phone, 505-371-8466 or 8464; by email: lchee@nndcd.org or infor@nndcd.org; by mail to Division of Community Development, P.O. Box 1904, Window Rock, AZ 86515.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2, 2013

President Shelly appoints new communications director

WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ.—Today, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly appointed Rick Abasta to communications director, a role vacated by Erny Zah. Abasta begins today.

Abasta previously worked as public information officer for the Navajo Division of Transportation.

“The Navajo Nation has challenges facing us on many fronts and I have appointed Rick Abasta as our spokesperson, in whom I have confidence to bring our message to the Navajo people,” President Shelly said this morning from his office.

“The Navajo people need to know what projects we are working to bring to completion. Rick is that person to do so,” President Shelly said.