



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 31, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

**Resources and Development Committee receives report
regarding the proposed Navajo Rangeland Improvement Act**

WINDOW ROCK – Last Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report regarding the draft of the Navajo Rangeland Improvement Act from the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture.

In 2012, the Resources and Development Committee directed the Department of Agriculture to initiate solutions to address the long-debated issues surrounding grazing regulation.

“There are a lot of misconceptions of this process that we are undertaking and it does complement a lot of concerns in our culture and Navajo way of life. The purpose of this legislation is trying to provide Navajo grazing codes to address drought,” stated Leo Watchman, Jr., director of the Department of Agriculture.

The Naabik’iyati Committee recently held a meeting in regards to the proposed Navajo Rangeland Improvement Act. In addition, a total of six public hearings were conducted across the Nation to gain input and to address questions from the public.

“All of these comments, suggestions, recommendations that were made at all of the six public hearings, were held in regards to the existing Navajo Grazing Act. We wanted to share with the full council what the draft was so that we can have an impact on why those changes were recommended,” stated RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

The proposed act will apply to all of Navajo Nation and the new grazing permits will be issued solely by the Navajo Nation. This will have no impact on current valid grazing permits, according to the report.

However, grazing permits will no longer be renewed automatically and will require the permittee to apply to have their permit renewed, if the proposed changes are implemented.

“There was a discussion pertaining to grazing fees. It was recommended that there needs to be some kind of fee imposed. The general public said they are willing to pay a grazing fee as long as they know where the money is going and it goes back to the improvement of the land. Currently, Eastern Navajos pay a grazing fee,” stated Watchman.

The proposed Navajo Rangeland Improvement Act also proposes to end permit probate which means that grazing permits will no longer be eligible for probate in a Navajo Nation court. For example, if a permittee is deceased, their grazing permit reverts back to the Nation upon co-permittee designation.

According to Watchman, there are approximately 11,000 grazing permits within the Navajo reservation and roughly only 3,000 of those grazing permits are active.

“There is a concern that what we have is inactive permits that should be probated but haven’t been probated for whatever reason. If a permit has not been probated, there should be no activity but as we know our Navajo people continue to raise livestock,” stated Watchman.

Changes to the proposed Navajo Rangeland Improvement Act drew skepticism from RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) regarding the probate issue.

“Every probate of grazing permits has ended up in dismantle. Every one of them. In some cases, relatives do not talk to each other anymore because of it. Which is the better thing to do? Do you want Navajo K’é to be lost? Or should we do away with the probate issue?” asked Delegate Tsosie.

Delegate Benally added that stronger enforcement by grazing officials needed to be implemented as well as making them full-time employees, rather than elected officials.

“The problem is enforcement. We do not have proper enforcement and the grazing officials are the enforcers of all of the grazing laws. Make them full-time employees. It is because they are part-time the services are not adequately provided,” stated Delegate Benally.

According to the report, it proposes that the Navajo Rangeland Improvement Act will hire qualified range technicians that will be responsible for helping permittees to manage stocking rates, improve grazing practices, and to mediate grazing disputes.

“We need to know the number of misleads that are happening out there. This is why we need to seriously reexamine the whole system. We should be telling the Navajo people that this is why we are changing the system so we can do better. Also, bringing to attention that grazing permits is not a feasible land ownership,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

RDC members voted 3-0 to accept the report.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 31, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Budget and Finance Committee receives report on external funds for the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Program

WINDOW ROCK – The Budget and Finance Committee received a report last Wednesday, regarding external fund carryovers and reversions for the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Program, which is under the Navajo Nation Division of Health.

NNSDP director Betty Delrow said the special diabetes program received approval in March 2013 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to carry forward unused grant funding for approximately \$3.5 million.

“The \$3.5 million carryover from FY2013 to FY2014 was approved, however we did not have access to the funds until late September 2013,” said Delrow. “The process to finally release these funds to our program is a concern for our department.”

According to the report, Delrow explained to the committee that her department waited nearly six months before the carry forward was released to their program, and added that after the funds were received, her program had utilized approximately 25% of the carryover to date.

BFC member Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaille/Wheatfields, Tsé Chizhí) observed some possible reversions of external funds when reviewing the Special Diabetes Program report.

“So your program lost about \$7.1 million from the grant, but were able to recover the \$3.5 million? That is a near loss of \$3.6 million and that is a big problem for us as the oversight committee,” said Delegate BeGaye.

After further review of the report, BFC chair Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) expressed concerns regarding all the external funding that comes to the SDP.

“As my colleague has indicated, the reversions are a concern of this committee. Has their been any further reversions since 2011 until now?” asked Delegate Bates.

Delrow confirmed that the NNSDP had lost approximately \$12 million in grant or external funding which had reverted back to the funding source.

“I find this very concerning because the money the program is losing could be used for diabetes programs throughout the entire Navajo Nation, for the children, adults, and elders, “ said BFC vice chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin). “What is the problem? Is there no communication between NNSDP, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of the Controller?”

Delrow said the NNSDP did have external funds revert back to the funding sources, however, since the Navajo Nation had not approved a final indirect cost rate for FY2008-2013, it affected the programs ability to expend the funds entirely and to receive approval to carry forward the \$12 million that had accumulated over the past several years.

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 through grants, contracts, and agreements.

Office of the Controller FMIS project manager Laura Johnson provided clarification to the committee regarding the programs attempt to collect IDC’s, saying that although the IDC was recently approved it ultimately caused issues for the program in collecting external funds.

“Although the program has reverted a large amount of external funds, we have to work back from FY2008 to now, because of the delay of the approval of the Nation’s IDC rate, however we will be collecting the entire \$12 million in carry forwards for NNSDP,” said Johnson.

Delgate Nez suggested that as the oversight committee, the BFC should be more proactive in getting funds to programs as quickly as possible and to find an alternative way to streamline the process through amending the Navajo Nation Budget Instruction Manual.

BFC members voted 2-1 to accept the report.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Naabik'iyátí' Committee opposes liquor license renewal for Sanders liquor establishment; tables bill opposing disparaging references to Native People

WINDOW ROCK—On Thursday, Naabik'iyátí' Committee members approved Legislation No. 0059-14, urging the Apache County Board of Supervisors, the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control, the Arizona State Liquor Board and any other appropriate agencies to reject the renewal of a liquor license for “Ole Red Barn Liquor,” owned by Gary McDonald.

Legislation co-sponsor Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins), pointed out that the owner of the establishment, Gary McDonald, is currently facing federal charges for manufacturing and distributing methamphetamine drugs in addition to weapons charges.

Such activity has led to increased drug use and other criminal activity involving surrounding community members including Diné people, according to Delegate Curley.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) called on state leaders to also address the ongoing issues concerning the “Red Barn” liquor establishment.

“Where are Rep. [Albert] Hale and Sen. [Carlyle] Begay? They should be leading the charge on these issues,” stated Delegate Tsosie.

During the discussion, committee members approved two amendments including one to change language to urge the disapproval of the “transfer” of the liquor license, in addition to its renewal and to add three additional liquor establishments to the legislation.

The committee approved a second amendment proposed by Delegate Tsosie, to use the term demand instead of the word “urge” in an effort to strengthen the language of the bill.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Naabik'iyátí' Committee members voted 12-0 to approve Legislation No. 0059-14.

The Naabik'iyátí' Committee serves as the final authority for the legislation.

In a separate bill, the Naabik'iyátí' Committee voted 5-4 to table Legislation No. 0078-14, opposing the use of disparaging references to Native People by professional sports franchises.

Sponsor of the bill, Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi), called upon his fellow Naabik'iyátí' Committee members to support the legislation while emphasizing that the Navajo Nation is the leader among Native American tribes and should “blaze the trail” for other tribes to

oppose disparaging references such as the term, “Redskins” used by the Washington Redskins—a professional football team of the National Football Association.

“This unfortunate practice of using such insulting names as Redskins without regard to Native people and our unique identity has to stop. It is blatant discrimination, racism, and ignorance. It exploits our sovereign identity as Diné,” Delegate Butler stated.

Delegate Butler also cited the psychological ramifications of disparaging remarks on Navajo youth and provided a brief history of the term “redskins,” explaining that bounties were once offered for the murder of “redskins.”

“What do our youth think of themselves when they see team names and mascots that ridicule and deride our culture?” asked Delegate Butler. “This becomes a roadblock preventing them from achieving success, and being secure in their identity as a Native person, as Diné—contributing to unemployment, domestic and family violence, substance abuse, and other social ills prevalent on our lands.”

At the request of Council Delegate Charles Damon II (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), former Navajo Nation Chairman and Navajo Code Talkers Association President Peter MacDonald was provided the opportunity to respond to the legislation.

MacDonald said the term “Redskins” should be viewed in a positive light that honors Native Americans instead of in a manner that demeans Diné people.

In addition, Delegate Butler noted that U.S. Congressman Eni Fa’aua’a Hunkin Faleomavaega Jr. of American Samoa has introduced legislation that would prohibit the registration of new trademarks using the term “redskin” or “redskins,” and would provide a mechanism to petition for the cancellation of existing trademarks using disparaging epithets.

Near the end of the two-hour long discussion, Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) requested the input of administrators from schools within the Navajo Nation that utilize similar mascots and names for their sports teams.

Naabik’iyátí’ Committee members voted 5-4 to table the legislation to provide time to gather input from school administrators.

#

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.871.7160
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Navajo Nation Council approves supplemental funding for Navajo chapters

WINDOW ROCK – During a special session held on Wednesday, the Navajo Nation Council voted 14-0 to approve Legislation No. 0027-14, to provide supplemental funding from the Navajo Nation’s Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for various renovation and repair projects at several sites throughout the Nation.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Charles Damon II (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) urged his Council colleagues to pass the bill to assist with what he described as “dire” conditions at several chapter facilities.

“The chapters are really in dire need of [funding] to begin renovations this summer. If we approve this today, they’ll start right away and possibly within six months they should be ready to have people move back into those chapters,” said Delegate Damon.

Delegate Damon also stated that President Ben Shelly has been waiting “for some time” for the legislation to make its way through the legislative process.

Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) advocated for the Tsé Si áni Chapter which he represents, explaining that damaged roofing has led to a buildup of mold and mildew resulting from roof leaks.

The legislation initially sought \$90,000 for Tsé Si áni Chapter for roof repairs, \$600,000 for Chichiltah Chapter for renovations, and \$300,000 for Chilchinbeto Chapter for the planning and design of a new chapter house.

However, Council on Wednesday also passed a total of four amendments

Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) proposed three of the four amendments which included \$500,000 for the architectural design of a new governmental complex in Oljato, \$75,000 for a chain-link fence at Navajo Preparatory School, and approximately \$180,000 for a multi-purpose modular unit for the Cameron Chapter.

The other amendment, proposed by Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) sought \$150,000 for the planning, engineering, and construction of a waterline extension for the Newcomb Chapter.

On Feb. 4, the Budget and Finance Committee also considered the bill and referred it to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee with a "do pass" recommendation along with one amendment to include \$135,000 for the planning and design of a new chapter house for the Mexican Springs community.

President Shelly will have 10 calendar days to consider the bill once it is sent to the Office of the President and Vice President.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2014

President Shelly, Gov. Brewer sign \$7 million agreement for NTU



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Arizona Governor Jan Brewer sign an agreement into law for a state funding agreement for Navajo institutions of higher education. Flanking them during the signing are Speaker Johnny Naize, delegate Dwight Witherspoon, Dr. Elmer Guy, Dr. Maggie George and former delegate Andy Ayze. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

PHOENIX — Education is a cornerstone for the Shelly-Jim administration.

In support of this, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer on March 26 to sign a funding agreement between the Navajo Nation, the State of Arizona, Dine' College and Navajo Technical University.

A funding agreement between the Nation and Arizona has been in place since 1999, but recent amendments to the legislation allowed for funding to also be provided for Navajo Technical University.

While signing the agreement into law next to President Shelly, Gov. Brewer said, "It is an honor today to be able to participate

with you."

He responded, "Well, it's an honor to be with you today. I was supposed to be with Gov. Martinez, but I chose to be here with you today."

Flanked by Speaker of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council Johnny Naize, delegate Dwight Witherspoon, Dr. Maggie George, Dr. Elmer Guy and former delegate Andy Ayze, President Shelly and Gov. Brewer signed the agreement into law.

After the agreement was signed, President Shelly joined the group for photos and expressed appreciation for the funding.

"The Navajo Nation is thankful for the support we have received from Governor Brewer and the State of Arizona," President Shelly said. "This legislation gives our Navajo students a healthy learning environment and the necessary infrastructure at our tribal institutions of learning.

"Chief Manuelito instructed the Navajo people to climb the ladder of education. We are still climbing," he added.

Under terms of the agreement, Transaction Privilege Tax revenues collected on the Navajo Nation will be utilized to provide up to \$1.75 million annually for Dine' College and \$875,000 annually for Navajo Technical University. This will continue through 2020.

Gov. Brewer presented the "\$7 million pen" to President Shelly after the signing was completed. He gave the pen to Dr. Guy as commemoration of the historic event for NTU.

On Feb. 7, 2014, Resolution No. 0038-14 was sponsored by Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hard Rock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) and introduced to the 22nd Navajo Nation Council as an action relating to Health Education and Human Services and the Budget and Finance Committees.

The funding compact with the state has been in place since Oct. 19, 1999 and was originally only for Dine' College. TPT funding collected on the Nation was provided to the college to support maintenance, renewal and capital expenses.

In 2013, amendments to the agreement passed through the Arizona Legislature with House Bill 2009. The bill made provisions to the existing agreement to include NTU, with funding allocations of \$875,000 per year.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 27, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

Law and Order Committee receives update on the Dilkon justice center

LEUPP, Ariz. – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Judicial Branch, Design and Engineering representatives, Department of Justice, Office of Contracts and Grants, and the Office of Management and Budget, regarding the status of the Dilkon justice center.

According to the report, Navajo Nation Design and Engineering project manager Scott House said the development of the proposed Dilkon justice center is experiencing grant funding issues which is affecting the planning and design of the building.

“We received a grant in the amount of \$150,000 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009,” said House. “It was leftover money from the Tuba City judicial center, and we transferred that remaining grant to the Dilkon project.”

House clarified that the grant funding for the design of the Dilkon justice center is set to expire on March 31 and hopes to receive an extension to expend the entirety of the funds. The initial deadline passed in Sept. 2013 and was extended for an additional six months.

The U.S. Department of Justice awarded the Navajo Nation the ARRA funds to be allocated for infrastructure improvement and development, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, etc. that relate to judicial and criminal justice programs in the Nation.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat) expressed his concern regarding the upcoming grant deadline and suggested that a deadline extension be requested from the U.S. DOJ.

“We need to find a way to get the funds and deadline extended, we do not want to lose out on any external funding for this project,” said Delegate Shepherd.

House explained to committee members that the Dilkon justice center would need an additional \$39 million to complete the design, engineering, and construction of the facility, adding that it is time to begin seeking funds for construction after the planning and design phases are completed.

Delegate Shepherd said the procurement process for design, engineering, bidding, and construction need to be made simpler due to issues that arise with funding and deadlines,

especially in regards to the disbursement process of the Navajo Nation OMB, and the Office of the Controller.

“I think we as lawmakers need to amend the procurement process to rectify the issues we run into when it comes to capital projects,” said Delegate Shepherd. “We have to find a more streamlined process to ensure these projects do not run into any more obstacles.”

LOC members voted 2-0 to accept the report.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



Gov. Martinez announces \$78 million funding for U.S. Route 491



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez announced the \$78 million in funding for completion of the four-lane construction on U.S. Route 491 on March 25. Under construction since the 1980s, U.S. 491 has 21.8 miles left to be constructed, from Naschitti to Twin Lakes. The project will be funded by performance bonds sold by New Mexico Department of Transportation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

SHEEP SPRINGS, N.M. — It was a celebration.

Although there was no groundbreaking, no ribbon cutting or any other ceremony indicative of celebration, the announcement by New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez that four-lane highway construction for the completion of U.S. Route 491 improvements would be funded was enough cause for celebration.

On the Tuesday afternoon, a crowd of 50-plus people gathered alongside U.S. Route 491 while commercial trucks

and other vehicles sped by. A makeshift stage on a tractor-trailer bed faced an audience seated on folding chairs.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly was the first to speak and he began by giving recognition to Sen. John Pinto.

“I’d first like to start by recognizing the hard work and dedication of a man that made the four-lane construction of U.S. Route 491 a priority in his service to the State and the Navajo Nation: Senator John Pinto,” President Shelly said.

He said Sen. Pinto got the

ball rolling for the four-lane construction on U.S. Route 491, which was formerly named U.S. 666 and called the “Devil’s Highway” because of the large number of fatalities on the road.

President Shelly also thanked Gov. Martinez for her commitment to working with the Navajo people, which he said was “unquestionable.” He presented a letter of appreciation for her recent approval of capital outlay funding to the Navajo Nation.

He recalled how the importance of U.S. Route 491

was underscored back on July 5, 2013, when a portion of the road between Naschitti and Sheep Springs was closed after heavy flooding damaged a portion of the roadway.

“The rest of the country quickly realized how vital this road is to travel in the Four Corners region,” he said.

Sen. Pinto spoke next and was assisted to the podium by Gov. Martinez.

He gave thanks for those in attendance and recalled how he and others began advocating for widening the roadway more

than 20 years ago. Funding was a constant concern.

“There were years when the money could have been taken away from us for other use. After asking for money year after year for almost 20 years, we are here today,” Sen. Pinto said.

He expressed sadness for those that lost their lives on the highway and said completing the four-lane construction would put an end to the destruction and make the road safe for Navajo families and all visitors.

Sen. Pinto said, “This is an important highway. It brings all of the Navajo people together. We all drive great distances to keep connected with families and work.”

Tom Church, cabinet secretary and director of New Mexico Department of Transportation, said he has worked for the highway department for more than 21 years.

“During my entire career, we have talked and promised that this highway improvement to the people of northwest New Mexico would be completed and I am proud today that Gov. Susana Martinez will keep that promise,” Church said.

The funds were generated from the sale of bonds with a triple-A rating, he explained.

“Three years ago, the state transportation department could not have done this project. We were operating at about \$100 million in the red,” Church said. “It’s been the sound financial and fiscal policies the governor and transportation that really turned the department around.

“Now, we’re operating \$100 million in the black,” he added.

Gov. Martinez agreed with Church and gave him praise for his leadership in turning the department around.

She credited him with being smart about the money that taxpayers pay to the state government and making it stretch, making the best of it and being able to complete a project as big as U.S. 491.

“Today, we’re here to talk about an important project that will of course make U.S. 491 more safe and accessible,” Gov. Martinez said. “This road is an essential highway for commerce and tourism in the area, with local families and businesses depending on it on a daily basis.”

In 1982, the state widened 21 miles of the two-lane road into a four-lane highway, which saw an immediate decrease in the accident severity and fatality rates on that stretch of road.

The remaining two-lane road from Shiprock to Gallup on Highway 666 was listed in the top 10 most dangerous highways in the U.S. and had a fatality rate six times higher than the rest of the state. Sixty percent of those fatalities were alcohol related.

“In 2003, the highway designation was changed to 491 and that same year, the legislature approved more funding for more areas of the corridor to be reconstructed,” Gov. Martinez said.

She noted that 21.8 miles remain to be constructed at a cost of \$78 million.

“The New Mexico DOT recently issued \$80 million in new money revenue bonds to fund certain eligible highway projects, including U.S. Route 491,” Gov. Martinez said. “Today, I am pleased to announce that much of that money will be spent to improve this road and safety of those who travel upon it.

“The proposed improvements to this corridor will improve safety, efficiency and drive economic development along the highway in surrounding communities,” she added.

Major improvements include two additional lanes to increase capacity, a median separating northbound and southbound lanes, plus development of acceleration and deceleration lanes in congested and high traffic areas.

“I am proud of all the hard work that has gone into this vital project,” she said.



President Shelly first acknowledged the dedicated efforts of Sen. John Pinto in his unending quest to have U.S. Route 491’s four-lane construction completed. He recounted reporting before the New Mexico Transportation Commission in 2007, along with Sen. Pinto, to request funding for the highway. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Sen. John Pinto said he spent the past 20 years lobbying and advocating for the four-lane construction of U.S. Route 491. He expressed sadness for the many lives lost on the roadway and said with the completion of construction, that perhaps now the destruction will end. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



With over 21 years experience in the state transportation department, N.M. Department of Transportation Cabinet Secretary Tom Church said during his entire career, he’s heard the state promise that construction of the roadway in northwestern New Mexico would be completed. He was proud to announce Gov. Martinez’s decision to finish the road. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 26, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Navajo Nation finalizes the amended Arizona Funding Compact to provide \$875,000 annually for Navajo Technical University



Photo: Speaker Johnny Naize, Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon, Navajo Technical University President Dr. Elmer Guy, Dr. Maggie George, and Diné College President and former Council Delegate Andy Ayze look on as President Ben Shelly and Gov. Jan Brewer sign the amended Compact.

PHOENIX – On Wednesday, Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) and Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) were in attendance at a signing ceremony for the recently amended Arizona Funding Compact between the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona.

Delegate Witherspoon sponsored Legislation No. 0038-14, which was unanimously approved by the Budget and Finance Committee on Feb. 19, allowing Navajo Technical University to receive a portion of Transaction Privilege Tax revenues collected on the Navajo Nation.

“I fully support the purpose of educational capital projects for both of our Navajo Nation higher education institutions. The easiest way to raise the quality of life for individuals, families, and extended families is through education,” said Delegate Witherspoon following the signing

ceremony. "Education provides the opportunity for more choices in life. Greater choices provides for enhanced quality of life."

Gov. Jan Brewer and Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed off on the amended compact which will provide approximately \$875,000 on an annual basis to support maintenance, renewal, and capital expenses for NTU.

The funding was made possible by Arizona H.B. 2009, which amended the state's TPT Code to allow for the allocation of tax revenues for NTU, in addition to the \$1.75 million that the Navajo Nation currently receives annually for Diné College under the same compact.

Following the signing ceremony, Speaker Naize said the additional funding will help NTU to further expand educational opportunities for Navajo students living in remote areas of the Navajo Nation and thanked members of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council for their assistance in developing and approving the amended compact.

NTU President Dr. Elmer Guy was also in attendance and has previously stated that the funding will be used for capital outlay projects at NTU's smaller sites in the communities of Chinle and Teecnospos.

The compact will remain in effect until the year 2020, unless extended prior to its expiration.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 18, 2014

CONTACT:
Delilah Goodluck, Sr. Public Information Officer
delilah.goodluck@nntanf.org • 928.810.8553

Department for Self Reliance Makes an Impression at the Six Tribal TANF Conference in Tucson, Arizona.

Window Rock, Ariz. - On March 12th and 13th, 2014 the Department for Self Reliance (DSR) attended the Quarterly Six Tribal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Conference in Tucson, Arizona to share the DSR's best practices.

DSR's Assistant Department Manager, Deannah Neswood-Gishey announced to the Tribal Liaisons of Arizona's Department of Economic Security (ADES) and the Arizona Tribal TANF programs (Pascua Yaqui Tribal YOEME Services Program, Hopi Tribal TANF Program, Salt River Pima – Maricopa Indian Community Life Enhancement and Resource Network, San Carlos Apache Tribal Nnee Bicho'Nii Program and the White Mountain Apache Tribal TANF Program) that in result of the restructuring of some Navajo Division of Social Services programs the Department for Self Reliance was established.

"We were known as the Navajo Nation Program for Self Reliance who implemented just the Tribal TANF program. Since January 2014, we have been given the added responsibility of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), General Assistance (GA), Funeral Assistance (FA) and Emergency Assistance (EA) for the Navajo Nation," stated Neswood-Gishey.

Neswood-Gishey gave an overview of the statistics generated by the DSR's Case Management software, Tribal Assistance System (TAS) for each of DSR's assistance programs.

FY 2014 (October 1, 2013 to current):

- DSR Tribal TANF has 7,718 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$5,449,318.00.
- DSR General Assistance has 1,553 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$1,031,394.00.
- DSR Funeral Assistance has 174 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$411,054.00.
- DSR LIHEAP assistance has 718 recipients for a total assistance amount of \$205,013.00.
- From January 7th to February 3rd, 2014 the DSR LIHEAP program has done 89 Orientations throughout the Navajo Nation with 3,614 attendees.

Statistics provided by Dr. Konstance Shirley, DSR's Senior Statistical Research Analyst

"Using our TAS and TANF program as a model for the new programs we oversee, we have been able to organize and incorporate the two new programs to assist thousands of people within a very short period of time," stated Neswood-Gishey.

Continued on next page...



*Deannah Neswood-Gishey, DSR Assistant Department Manager
presenting at the Six Tribal TANF Conference.*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253

Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174

Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Law and Order Committee approves support of Arizona H.B. 2559
to aid in the construction of a Navajo Nation Supreme Court complex**

CHURCHROCK, N.M. – The Law and Order Committee met on Monday and discussed Legislation No. 0072-14, which seeks support from the Navajo Nation for Arizona House Bill 2559, sponsored by Representative Albert Hale, D – St. Michaels (District 7).

According to the legislation, H.B. 2559 aims to appropriate approximately \$7.5 million to the Arizona Department of Economic Security, which would then distribute the funding to the Navajo Nation to aid in the construction of the Supreme Court complex. The total cost to construct the complex currently sits at \$15 million.

Navajo Nation Chief Justice Herb Yazzie explained that the Nation’s support of H.B. 2559 would not only benefit the initial construction of the complex, but it would mark the second time the state of Arizona has contributed to the development of a court complex on the Navajo Nation.

“We’ve gone through one [other] similar experience with the Arizona legislature four to five years ago, and through coordinated efforts and the Navajo Nation’s support, [the state of Arizona] appropriated \$2 million for the construction of the courthouse in Dilkon,” said Chief Justice Yazzie. “We are trying to repeat that [effort].”

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) voiced his support of the legislation and suggested that the Judicial Branch remind the state of Arizona of the many tax revenues the Navajo Nation has contributed to the state over the years.

“We have contributed to the state through the Navajo Nation fuel excise tax and gaming revenue from our casinos,” said Delegate Begaye. “I think it is appropriate to ask the state of Arizona to support and approve this appropriation.”

Chief Justice Yazzie added that the Navajo Nation also provides Transaction Privilege Taxes to the state from coalmine operations and revenues on the reservation, noting that it is time the Navajo Nation receives a return on the taxes paid to the state of Arizona.

The TPT is a sales tax imposed by the state of Arizona on non-Indian owned businesses operating on Indian lands, such as Peabody Coal Company in Kayenta.

The fuel excise tax is derived from gasoline sales on the Navajo Nation, and the state of Arizona also receives a percentage of the Nation's gaming revenue on an annual basis.

LOC member Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K'ai'biit'ó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake) applauded the Judicial Branch's efforts to seek state funding, and encouraged other Navajo Nation departments to begin lobbying for financial assistance from the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

LOC members voted 4-0 to approve Legislation No. 0072-14. The legislation now moves forward to the Naabik'iyátí' Committee who serves as the final authority for the legislation.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Law and Order Committee receives report on law enforcement and criminal justice programs at Navajo Technical University and Diné College

CROWNPOINT, N.M. – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report on law enforcement and criminal justice programs currently offered at Navajo Technical University and Diné College, and discussed the development of a public safety program to train Navajo Nation police officers.

According to the report provided by the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety director John Billison, the recruitment and training process for potential Navajo Nation police officers has raised some challenges, especially the intellectual portion of police training, which includes reading and writing skills.

“Currently, our recruitment process is not a problem and we have many candidates applying to the police program,” said Billison. “The recruits pass the physical portion of the police training with flying colors, however, when it comes to the reading and writing portion of the process, many fail the program making it difficult for us to hire more police officers.”

Dr. Elmer Guy, president of Navajo Technical University, said that it is possible to develop a program that would aid in the expansion of the recruits academic and critical thinking skills. He added that there are already existing criminal justice programs available to recruits, however it would be more beneficial to create a program that is specific to the needs of a Navajo Nation police officer.

In agreement, Diné College president Dr. Maggie George added that both educational institutions are open to working together to develop the curriculum to aid in ensuring that recruits have all the necessary skills to be successful law enforcement agents.

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) advocated for the professional development of Navajo Nation police officers and said that it is essential they be trained to serve at a high level similar to other law enforcement agencies in the U.S.

“We do not want to lower the standards of becoming a police officer,” said Delegate Begaye. “We need to help the recruits succeed in these programs and we can even go as far as creating an

internship program to incubate them, so they can be confident and efficient officers on the Navajo Nation.”

LOC vice chair and former police officer, Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), mentioned that there would be a new Navajo police academy facility built in the community of Chinle in the near future.

“We requested both institutions [NTU and Diné College] here today to discuss what programs you can offer so we can prepare for the new Navajo police academy and improve the recruitment process to increase higher success rates,” said Delegate Shepherd.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), who also served as a police officer, added that the curriculum would need to be geared toward the understanding of the unique issues and challenges that Navajo police encounter, in relation to the needs of a tribal reservation and its people.

LOC members voted 3-0 to accept the report.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Delegate Butler introduces legislation opposing the use of disparaging references to Native People by professional sports franchises

WINDOW ROCK—Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi) has introduced Legislation No. 0078-14, opposing the use of disparaging references to Native People by professional sports franchises.

The legislation was posted on the Navajo Nation Council’s website on March 13 for the five-day comment period and will become available for committee action on March 19.

The legislation seeks to establish an official position of the Navajo Nation to oppose the use of such derogatory terms as “Redskins,” as used by the Washington Redskins—a professional football team of the National Football Association.

Language in the legislation states that several professional sports franchises, including the Washington Redskins, continue to utilize references to Native Americans in mascots and team names. The term “redskin” or “redskins” originated from a time when bounties were offered for the murder of Native Americans and their scalps turned in for money.

“The use of terms referencing Native Americans in professional sports has a negative psychological effect on Native Americans,” said Delegate Butler. “Such terms only promote low self-esteem and self-image in Native youth who are already disadvantaged by social ills beyond their control.”

According to a 2004 report by Stephanie A. Fryberg of Stanford University, usage of such terms actually promotes and increases the self-esteem of non-native people.

Today, tribes across the country fight against higher-than-average statistics of suicide, violence against Native women, racial and hate crimes, poverty, unemployment, and with the loss of Native identity and culture, according to language within the legislation.

“The continued usage of Native American mascots and team names in professional sports franchises is damaging to Native Americans. Such usage only perpetuates racism, stereotyping, ignorance and misrepresentation of indigenous peoples,” stated Delegate Butler.

U.S. Congressman Eni Fa’aua’a Hunkin Faleomavaega Jr. of American Samoa has introduced legislation that would prohibit the registration of new trademarks using the term “redskin” or “redskins,” and would provide a mechanism to petition for the cancellation of existing trademarks using disparaging epithets.

“It is time for the Navajo Nation to finally take a firm position on this national issue that hurts Indian Country. The Navajo Nation can no longer afford to sit back and remain neutral on this issue,” added Delegate Butler. “We have found that our lack of action on this topic undermines our overall advocacy efforts at the state and federal government levels and it affects our inter-tribal relations as well. We must make a strong position and say enough is enough. It’s about time the largest tribe in the United States speaks and is heard across this land.”

The Naabik’iyáti’ Committee serves as the final authority for the legislation.

A digital copy of the legislation is available online at <http://www.navajonationcouncil.org/Legislations/2014/MAR/0078-14.pdf>.

Digital comments may be emailed to comments@navajo-nsn.gov, written comments may be mailed to the executive director of the Office of Legislative Services at P.O. Box 3390, Window Rock, AZ 86515.

Comments may be in the form of chapter resolutions, letters or position papers. You must include your name, position title, address for written comments and a valid email address is required. Anonymous comments will not be included in the legislation packet.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2014

Tsoodzil traditional cultural property designation unites tribes, pueblos



The Mount Taylor traditional cultural property designation with the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties was a seven-year effort with the collaboration between the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe and Pueblos of Acoma, Laguna and Zuni. The New Mexico Supreme Court affirmed the designation on Feb. 6, 2014. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

ALBUQUERQUE — Sometimes, the strength of a unified collective has to power to defeat the machinations of industry and development.

Such was the case with the traditional cultural property (TCP) designation of Mount Taylor in New Mexico.

Since time immemorial, Mount Taylor has been known as Tsoodzil to the Navajo people and has been revered as the southern mountain of the Four Sacred Mountains.

The traditional homeland of the Navajo people is located between the Four Sacred Mountains of Sinaajini (Mount Blanca) to the east, Tsoodzil (Mount Taylor) to the south, Dook'o'sliid (San

Francisco Peaks) to the west and Dibé Nitsaa (Mount Hesperus) to the north.

On March 18, 2014, Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim provided the welcome address at Casa Esencia Hotel to celebrate of the designation of Mount Taylor as a TCP. The event was hosted by the Society for Applied Anthropology and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

“Within Navajo, Tsoodzil means ‘strong tongue.’ So we speak with the power of Tsoodzil,” Vice President Jim said. “We are taught that the sacred begins at the tip of our tongue.

“So when we speak of

Tsoodzil, we speak of our ability to articulate, to express ourselves in ways that convinces others,” he added.

Vice President Jim said Mount Taylor allowed Navajos, pueblos and tribes to speak what’s on their mind and in their heart and that it will always be the cultural property of native people.

“Some of us have been fighting on the international level through the United Nations, creating the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, so that all people, wherever they live, where they have sacred sites, that they will be protected,” he said.

The effort to protect Mount Taylor from uranium mining and other industrial development

coalesced in 2007, when the Pueblo of Acoma began coordinating the effort for the TCP designation.

The TCP Workgroup was created as a partnership of five tribes – the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe and Pueblos of Acoma, Laguna and Zuni – to nominate Mount Taylor as a TCP with the New Mexico Register of Cultural Properties.

Tribal cultural advisors, elders and traditional practitioners provided narratives on the cultural significance of the mountain and worked in tandem with GIS professionals, hydrologists, environmental specialists and archaeologists to document tribal relationships

to the mountain.

Theresa Pasqual, director of the Pueblo of Acoma Historic Preservation Office, took the lead role in the effort, after being inundated with mail from tribal members opposing the uranium mining.

The spark that ignited the effort to protect the mountain came Pasqual's phone call to the Hopi Tribe and Pueblo of Zuni.

"I wanted to know if they were seeing the same things

undermine the cultural property laws in the State of New Mexico.

The case navigated through the state courts for five years and on Feb. 6, 2014, the New Mexico Supreme Court affirmed the TCP designation.

The high court's decision to uphold the designation of 400,000 acres and assign it TCP status was unprecedented and profound, according to Dr. Jeffery Pappas, N.M. State Historic Preservation Officer and

“Within Navajo, Tsoodzil means ‘strong tongue.’ So we speak with the power of Tsoodzil. We are taught that the sacred begins at the tip of our tongue.”

that I was seeing at my office: the enormous amount of letters regarding the proposed development happening on Mount Taylor,” she recalled.

A series of meetings titled “Protecting the Sacred” convened after that phone call and over the past seven years, the tribes worked together to map the mountain and reach out to national organizations to bring attention to preserving the mountain.

The Navajo Nation Land Department and Historic Preservation Department provided the maps and GIS data used for the technical aspects of the TCP designation.

“What came out of the effort was truly a partnership and that’s what we’re celebrating,” Pasqual said.

In 2009, the state provided the original TCP designation, which resulted in a mountain of opposing legislation and lawsuits from private landowners, Spanish land grant members and uranium mining companies.

Pasqual said the slew of legislation was meant to

director of the N.M. Historic Preservation Division.

“It’s an immensely important recognition of a very important traditional and cultural property that is unprecedented throughout the American southwest,” Pappas said.

While the mood at Casa Esencia was celebratory, all agreed that the TCP designation of Mount Taylor was only the beginning and tribes and pueblos must continue working together for the protection of sacred sites and tribal sovereignty.

-30-



Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim provided the welcome address for the celebration of the Mt. Taylor traditional cultural property designation at Casa Esencia Hotel in Albuquerque on March 18, 2014. He said Tsoodzil means ‘strong tongue’ in Navajo. Tsoodzil is the traditional Navajo name for Mt. Taylor, which is one of the Four Sacred Mountains. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Dr. Jeffery Pappas is the New Mexico Historic Preservation Officer and director of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. He said the TCP designation was profound and set precedence for future cases in the American southwest. He noted that TCP designation for over 400,000 acres was unheard of for tribal nations in the country. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee receives report regarding awareness of agricultural-related injury risk to Navajo youth

BÁÁHÁÁLÍ, N.M. – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee received a report on a project entitled, “Diné Parents and Community Leaders Perceptions of Agriculture-Related Injury Risk to Youth: A Social Narrative,” presented by Michael L. Pate, a former high school agriculture teacher.

The project’s initiative is to educate Navajo community members and youth about agricultural-risk related injuries and to seek solutions to prevent injuries.

“We wanted to do a formative needs assessment as far as parents and community members and what they would like relating to farm safety and health issues. We want to provide training to prevent injuries to youth and what the parents are engaged in such as farming or ranching needs,” stated Pate.

According to the report, Navajo people are engaged in livestock production but very little is understood about the perceived risks to their youth and agricultural safety training needs. Particularly in the southwest, livestock production is important, but along with that comes the risk of injury by animal, whether thrown, kicked, or bucked.

“When it comes down to livestock safety, there are a lot of injuries that occur with our livestock that doesn’t get reported. If I got injured, it was my fault for not being safe,” stated Gloria Skeet de Cruz, Bááháálí Chapter manager.

Currently, the project is limited to areas near Farmington and the Shiprock, but Pate hopes to reach more agencies as it seeks involvement from more communities.

“One of the biggest challenges facing youth is issues with the language barrier amongst elders, lack of a consistent learning environment and social pressures within the youth communities which pose at risk behaviors such as peer pressure,” stated Pate.

According to surveys from 96 community members, the majority of their farming operations included tending to sheep or goats, followed by horses and beef cattle. Another finding indicates that the most concerning injuries involving youth are broken bones and head injuries associated with horsemanship.

“An important thing that would be good to show the youth and community is a video about injury prevention dealing with livestock during our summer youth programs. There’s a lot of opportunity out there and we need to partner up with the Navajo Office of Diné Youth,” stated Skeet de Cruz.

The project is funded by the National Children’s Center for Rural and Agricultural Safety.

“Do you have any base information as to the current number of injuries to be used for monitoring livestock injuries and is there any other organizations that are able to contribute to this cause?” asked RDC member Council Delegate Roscoe Smith(Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill).

Pate said that data pertaining to Diné youth injuries is very limited and there are very few researchers that are able to pinpoint the exact number of injuries related to livestock. Pate proposed that hospitals implement a log book to record individuals who have been treated for traumas related to livestock activity.

“There is a need for safety training and this project would like to be able to provide that to their youth. We would like to provide access to youth programs that would develop horse and livestock safety practices. We can do that by developing user-friendly networking that involves the internet, Youtube, and Facebook,” stated Pate.

According to Pate, more funding can be generated through a number of programs that are willing to work with issues that are not solely geared toward agricultural safety but interweaving education, technology, safety, and health initiatives. Once all relationships conjoin, educational opportunities grants will hopefully expand, added Pate.

“Shiprock is the worksite where the research was funded and this program is asking for more funding for more research to expand across the [reservation],” stated RDC chairperson Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

The RDC will vote on whether to accept the report at their next scheduled RDC meeting.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 12, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee opposes the legalization of marijuana in Arizona

WINDOW ROCK—During a special meeting held on Tuesday, Health, Education, and Human Services Committee members voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0071-14, requesting the Navajo Nation to oppose Arizona H.B. 2558.

On Feb. 3, Arizona Rep. Ruben Gallego D-Phoenix (District 27), introduced H.B. 2558 which outlines provisions for the taxation and regulation of marijuana within the State of Arizona.

If approved, the bill would also permit individuals 21 years of age or older to consume, purchase, and transport up to an ounce of marijuana and allow individuals to grow up to five marijuana plants. However, the use of marijuana in public would remain prohibited.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) said the legalization of marijuana would add to the many problems the Nation is already facing such as substance abuse and domestic violence.

“We’re not in a capacity to allow such because we already see the effects of alcohol, so legalizing marijuana is not the right path for the Navajo Nation,” Delegate Hale stated.

Also included in the legislation packet are two chapter resolutions from Oak Springs and St. Michaels chapters, which are both represented by Delegate Hale, opposing the legalization of marijuana. Both resolutions cite the harmful effects of the drug on adolescents and young adults, particularly high school and college students.

HEHSC member Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi) informed his committee colleagues that the Tó Nanees Dizi Chapter unanimously passed a similar resolution to oppose marijuana legalization on March 9, adding that the resolution will be added to Delegate Hale’s legislation in the form of an exhibit.

In his address to Tó Nanees Dizi chapter members on March 9, Delegate Butler said the Navajo Nation is a sovereign nation and should maintain its current law under Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code which prohibits the possession of marijuana.

“This is not the way to generate money for the state. We know Arizona has no money, but this is not the way to go—regardless of the possible tax revenue the state may generate,” stated Delegate Butler in reference to supporters of H.B. 2558 who have cited tax revenues as a major upside to legalizing marijuana.

“We all know the negative effects of drugs on our children and families, and this is the last thing our community needs,” concluded Delegate Butler.

Legislation No. 0071-14 now goes to the Naabik’iyáti’ Committee for final consideration.

#



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2014

CONTACT:
Delilah Goodluck, Sr. Public Information Officer
delilah.goodluck@nntanf.org • 928.810.8553

Department for Self Reliance Offices to Remain Open

Window Rock, Ariz. - The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) announces that due to recent accommodations, the DSR field offices will remain open during their Quarterly Staff Meeting, Wednesday, March 19th through the Friday, March 21st, 2014.

Be advised that the Fort Defiance Field Office will be operating out of the Window Rock DSR Support Services Office at the Quality Inn Office Complex, Suite 110 in Window Rock, AZ.

Below are the DSR Field Offices that will be open for emergency assistance with Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Funeral Service Assistance.

The DSR customers are encouraged to contact their Case Workers prior to these dates with any issues regarding their case.

CHINLE

Imperial Mart Circle Route 7 (across from Cellular One)
Chinle, AZ
TOLL FREE: 866.700.5175
T: 928.674.8194
F: 928.674.2351

FORT DEFIANCE

Window Rock Support Services Office
Quality Inn Office Complex - Suite 110
Window Rock, AZ
TOLL FREE: 866.347.2403
T: 928.810.8553
F: 928.810.8557

SHIPROCK

101 Ayani Nez Blvd SE
(next to Navajo Ace Home Ctr)
Shiprock, NM
TOLL FREE: 866.309.0346
T: 505.368.1457
F: 505.368.1456

CROWNPOINT

Dine Family Empowerment Office
Complex
Lower Point Road HWY 371, Route 9
Crownpoint, NM
TOLL FREE: 866.784.1694
T: 505.786.2384
F: 505.786.2394

GALLUP

2907 E. Aztec
Gallup, NM
TOLL FREE: 866.704.6940
T: 505.722.8415
F: 505.722.8959

TUBA CITY

North Main Street, Suite 103 (behind Shell Gas Station)
Tuba City, AZ
TOLL FREE: 866.731.7015
T: 928.283.6613
F: 928.283.3407

KAYENTA

1000 Main Street Pony Road
Kayenta, AZ
T: 928.697.5661
F: 928.697.5665

For more information please contact the DSR Support Services Office at 928.810.8553 or 866.347.2403.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 10, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves legislation to amend the plan of operation for the Office of Background Investigations

WINDOW ROCK – Last Wednesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0060-14, which seeks to amend the plan of operation for the Navajo Nation Office of Background Investigations.

Proposed language in the legislation states that the Navajo Nation Office of Background Investigations will provide professional background investigations for individuals that require services for program recipients, positions under schools, enterprises, boards, tribal programs, non-profit organizations, and contractors, excluding the U.S. Indian Health Services and Bureau of Indian Affairs Personnel and tribal commissioned law enforcement and tribal gaming enterprise personnel.

“This legislation is meant to improve and expand the services within the Navajo Nation, to have greater sustainability and financial liability that affects the operating service delivery to the Navajo people. This is a safe way to allow us to increase clients served by expanding our markets,” stated manager of the Office of Background Investigations Perry B. Yazzie.

Investigative services will include verification services, character references, civil searches, fingerprinting services, criminal record searches, credit checks, program specific searches and employment stability.

In addition, civil court searches will include FBI fingerprinting, federal nationwide and statewide criminal database searches, tribal court searches, sex offender registry searches, warrant searches, and tribal audit general.

“I make an amendment to add the Enterprise personnel and the Tribal Gaming Regulatory Office to be included in this exclusion as well. The Tribal Gaming Enterprise is regulated by the Navajo Regulatory Office in accordance with the Navajo Nation Gaming Regulatory Act,” stated HEHSC Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi).

HEHSC members approved Delegate Butler’s amendment with a vote 3-0.

“The Enterprise and Regulatory are still covered under the public law and the authorities to do the background checks according to their public law and compacts,” added Yazzie.

According to the legislation, the Office of Background Investigations would be under the Division of Human Resources as an independent department to eliminate any potential political influences

of sensitive background investigations and matters and it will operate under the legislative oversight of the HEHSC.

Part of the overall process includes drafting a Fund Management Plan, a plan aimed at generating revenue for operating and supporting costs of the program. Currently, the Fund Management Plan is being drafted and will go to the Budget and Finance Committee for consideration.

“With this legislation, if we follow the procedure, the Fund Management Plan would go first and then the Plan of Operation would go second, in case you needed to change anything. However, this committee can push for this option for this department,” stated legislation sponsor Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon(Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill).

HEHSC members approved Legislation No. 0060-14 with a vote of 2-1. The HEHSC serves as the final authority for this legislation.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2014

President Shelly praises nomination of Estevan Lopez to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly praised the nomination of Estevan Lopez to serve as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. President Shelly and Vice President Jim were in Washington, D.C. last week on behalf of the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Jared King)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly lauded the nomination of Estevan Lopez to serve as Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

The U.S. Department of Interior reported that President Barack Obama nominated Lopez to serve as commissioner. An engineer by profession, Lopez has more than 20 years experience in water resource management.

Michael Connor, the former commissioner, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as Deputy Secretary of the DOI on Feb. 27.

“Mr. Lopez is a welcomed

public servant who will do well in serving as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation,” President Shelly said. “His years of service is impressive and shows his support for clean up work and remediation on the Navajo Nation and for tribes.

“Mr. Lopez has our full support,” he added.

Stanley Pollack, assistant attorney general for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice Water Rights Unit, said Lopez previously served as executive director of the N.M. Interstate Stream Commission.

“He was very instrumental in getting the approval of the

Interstate Stream Commission for the Navajo Nation water rights settlement. He’s a great guy and a friend of the Nation,” Pollack said.

The agreement provides the Navajo Nation with 130,000 acre feet of water from the San Juan for farming. This is in addition to the 195,400 acre feet the Navajo Nation currently uses.

The water rights settlement for the Navajo Nation for the San Juan River was approved by the NMISC in 2005 and by Congress in 2009. The Eleventh District Court in San Juan County approved the water rights settlement in

August 2013.

Lopez awaits confirmation by the U.S. Senate before taking the reins for a federal agency with a \$1 billion annual budget serving 17 western states with more than 5,000 employees.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nmlb.communications@gmail.com

Budget and Finance Committee receives update on feral horse roundup

WINDOW ROCK – The Budget and Finance Committee received a report on Tuesday, regarding the feral horse roundup on the Navajo Nation, which included a status update on expenditures and the number of horses rounded up.

Leo Watchman, director of the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture, stated that the Navajo Nation Department of Natural Resources received approximately \$3 million, which was approved on July 18, 2013 by the Navajo Nation Council. The appropriation went towards their program to address the extreme drought conditions and feral horse problem on the Navajo Nation.

“Of the \$3 million allocated to the NNDNR, the NNDA received around \$1.4 million and have expended about \$862,000,” said Watchman. “This has resulted in a carryover amount of [approximately] \$535,000 and we are hoping to have that processed soon.”

BFC member Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) voiced his frustration in regards to the carryover process and budget transfers by the Navajo Nation Office of the Controller and Office of Management and Budget.

“It should not take two to three months to process a carryover. OOC and OMB should process these transfers as soon as possible,” said Delegate Simpson. “Especially important programs such as this, they should not have to wait this long, or any other program for that matter. Timelines need to be established.”

According to Watchman, \$250,000 went to the veterinary program that aided in castrating stud horses and administering contraceptive drugs to mares. To date, Watchman said they have rounded up roughly 7,000 feral horses, which has contributed to the decrease in overgrazing that affects the foliage on Navajo land.

“At this point, 72 chapters have passed resolutions to receive aid in rounding up feral horses in their areas and we are trying to get to all of them as soon as we can,” said Watchman. He added that they are currently waiting for the carryover to be approved and processed so they can continue their efforts to round up the feral livestock.

BFC chair LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) reminded the committee that Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly had halted the roundup of feral horses in Oct. 2013, and requested an update on the President's current stance on the issue.

"We need to know whether the President will continue to support this initiative, especially given that you have captured over 7,000 feral livestock and it is definitely a significant progress," said Delegate Bates. "We need to make sure we are all on board if it is our goal to continue the roundup program."

In support of the initiative, BFC member Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tse Ch'izhi) commended the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture and Department of Resource Enforcement for not only rounding up the wild horses, but also capturing other feral animals such as livestock, cats, and dogs.

BFC members voted 2-1 to accept the report.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 6, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

Resources and Development Committee tables legislation to grant right-of-way to develop optic telephone cable within the Chichiltah Chapter

WINDOW ROCK – On Tuesday, the Resources and Development Committee discussed Legislation No. 0051-14, approving a right-to-way to Century Link LLC, to construct, operate, and maintain a fiber optic telephone cable within New Mexico State Road No. 602, on approximately 2.57 acres of Trust Lands located within Chichiltah Chapter.

Pursuant to 2 N.N.C. Section 501 (B)(2), the RDC has the authority to grant right-of-way on Navajo Trust Land and unrestricted (fee) land.

One portion of the legislation in which Century Link LLC requests that all rent and fees be waived because the improvements will benefit the Navajo Nation, drew skepticism from RDC members.

“We’ve granted right-of-ways to 50% of our land, free of charge and we keep doing this and other tribes take Navajo Nation for granted. If we waiver this, we just give them everything. We should say that we won’t waive these fees, but we reserve the cost of it, for fees that [Century Link] are supposed to pay and credit that to a development that benefits the Navajo people,” stated RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake).

According to a letter addressed to Howard Draper, Program and Project Specialist with the Navajo Land Department, the new telephone cable will serve the local residences, Chichiltah Chapter, Chichiltah BIA School, Breadsprings Chapter, and the Vanderwagon Fire Department.

“I’m wondering why the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority is not doing the project out there. They are already doing fiber optic lines in Shiprock. We charge them. We charge them a fee and that’s our own Navajo Nation company. And this company [Century Link], wants to put up their line and they charge everybody else and they have other companies that piggy-back off of them,” stated RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

According to the Right-of-Way Terms and Conditions, the right-of-way would be in effect for 20 years at a cost of approximately \$25,000 to be paid in full to the Controller of the Navajo Nation.

“If we look at this legislation and pass it as it is, we will be waiving that \$25,000 and it will benefit the Century Link LLC rather than the Navajo people. The improvement that they are calling for is minimal,” stated RDC member Council Delegate Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill).

According to a Final Environmental Assessment by Tierra Right-of-Way Services, a third party consultant, Century Link is requesting that the BIA Zuni Agency and the Navajo Nation grant an easement across tribal lands so that the project may be constructed.

“The BIA told us from early on that New Mexico Department of Transportation wanted the Nation’s consent for issuing a permit and they felt like Century Link could not proceed with the project without the Nation’s consent,” explained Katherine Grounds, attorney for the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.

In the letter addressed to Mr. Draper it states, “the Zuni Tribal Government and the New Mexico State Highway Department have been notified and pending approval from both entities.”

“So, the permission from New Mexico is not final yet. And we don’t even have the final approval yet from NMDOT. I’m wondering how they are going to work this because you have a right-of-way within a right-of-way which creates all sorts of legal scenarios,” added Delegate Tsosie.

RDC members agreed to table the legislation to modify the Terms and Conditions that Century Link has provided and also to seek approval from certain entities so that the project can proceed.

RDC members tabled Legislation No. 0051-14 with a vote of 5-0. The RDC serves as the final authority for the legislation.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



President Shelly meets with Deputy Assistant Secretary Fiala



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with the U.S. Department of Labor Deputy Assistant Secretary Gerri Fiala on Feb. 25 to discuss issues surrounding the Navajo Department of Workforce Development. (Photo by Jared King)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Last week, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with the U.S. Department of Labor Assistant Secretary Gerri Fiala regarding the Navajo Nation Department of Workforce Development.

The meeting took place on Feb. 25 and focused on progress with the Workforce Investment Act grant and the associated expenditures for Navajo Workforce Development.

“We spoke with Assistant Secretary Fiala about the corrective action plan for Department Navajo Workforce Development,” President Shelly said. “What’s blocking the process is the funding distribution through the states.

“I have suggested that funding funnels through the BIA and straight to the Navajo Nation for immediate spending for training and jobs,” he added.

On Feb. 13, President Shelly met with Duane Hall, federal project officer with the Department of Labor on issues facing the NNDWD. Hall was inspecting the Nation’s program and explained the federal process in detail.

“What’s happening is the federal money is given to Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. They figure out how much is for the Navajo Nation and then send it back into the account in Washington so we can send it back out,” Hall said.

The process ultimately delays funding distribution for up to seven months or longer before it finally reaches the Navajo Nation. By the time Workforce Development receives the funding, they have a short timeframe to expend the funds.

Another area was the eligibility requirements for program participants. Hall said the federal government requires that participants are Native American and that they are either low income or unemployed.

The NNDWD mandated that participants were both low income and unemployed. Over income families for the youth program was also reviewed. Five percent over established income levels was allowable, provided participants had an additional barrier to employment or training such as low reading skills.

“There’s barriers in place that the department has imposed on itself. They misread the guidelines and said all youth have to be Native American, low income and have one of those barriers,” Hall said.

Workforce Development has the potential to be an economic development generator, especially through the work experience program.

Employers can provide participants the necessary work experience to compete in the job market and in return, they will have employees working for at least three months with wages provided by Workforce Development funding.

“I think there are some economic development opportunities there,” Hall said.

President Shelly is placing a high priority on the use of technology for the eligibility and intake processes to remove barriers for chapter participants from having to drive to Window Rock for services.

“We need to invest Workforce Development funding in software and high speed Internet access. We also have broadband data centers available on the Nation and we can store the data securely on the cloud,” President Shelly said.

This will help the department and participants to communicate, instead of making a trip down here, he added.

President Shelly is also going to nominate a new representative for the Native American Advisory Council, which meets twice a year with the U.S. Department of Labor.

“It’s a great opportunity to convey your messages,” Hall said of the council. “The secretary believes it’s important the Navajo Nation have representation on the council because of the size of the Nation.”

Hall agreed with President Shelly and said information technology is a critical component for the success of NNDWD.

They need faster Internet speed and good bandwidth, he noted. “There’s no web-based workforce system in place in the U.S. by any tribe. But when you have remote agencies, you definitely need something web-based,” Hall said. “You can develop that with all the criteria that we need.

“You would be helping out the tribes of the U.S. if you licensed it,” he added.

The other area of concern for the department audit was the cost allocation system. Establishing a plan for the cost allocation system and review of disallowable costs will clear up this area, Hall explained.

The carryover for unspent monies was another issue. Hall said his office has drafted a policy for this and that the NNDWD must immediately begin implementation.

Workforce staff reconciled accounts with Hall and developed caseload limits for case managers working in the five agencies. The next step is development of a plan and implementation.

President Shelly said effective communication is the key to

“This is why we’re running around like ants. When you kick the anthill, everybody’s running into each other and asking, ‘What’s the reduction percentage?’ ”

success for NNDWD. He noted that the annual competitive grant funding process for the allocation of federal dollars is an unknown and tribes never know what is going to be funded.

“This is why we’re running around like ants. When you kick the anthill, everybody’s running into each other and asking, ‘What’s the reduction percentage?’ That’s what everybody’s worried about,” he said.

Hall said his week spent with Workforce Development on the Navajo Nation was an eye-opening experience.

“You’re going to get criticism from the feds and any other tribe because you’re so much bigger than other tribes,” he said.

President Shelly ordered that the memorandum of agreement with the states be revised, so funding can reach the Nation faster for immediate spending. He also instructed Workforce Development to invest in broadband access and a web-based platform for intake and eligibility services at the chapter level.

His nomination for a suitable candidate to the advisory council is forthcoming.

-30-



President Shelly met with Duane Hall from the U.S. Department of Labor on Feb. 13 to discuss the audit of Navajo Department of Workforce Development. They both agreed technology must be implemented. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Duane Hall, federal project officer for U.S. Department of Labor, said he was assigned to oversee the Navajo Nation Workforce Development for the federal government. He said the size of the Nation is a challenge. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



In addition to the U.S. Department of Labor, President Shelly also met with representatives from Office of Management and Budget, Division of Human Resources and Workforce Development. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 4, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.380.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nmlb.communications@gmail.com

Public hearing held to address the Fort Wingate Land Division Act of 2014
Legislation to support H.R. 3822 to be introduced to Council

CHURCHROCK, N.M.—Last Friday, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) met with constituents from Bááháálí, Churchrock, and Iyanbito chapters during a public hearing to address H.R. 3822, the Fort Wingate Land Division Act of 2014, introduced by U.S. Rep. Ben R. Luján (D-NM) on Jan. 8, 2014.

The Fort Wingate Land Division Act of 2014 seeks to divide approximately 21,000 acres of parceled land between the Navajo Nation and the Zuni Tribe, which was previously used by the military to store ammunition and explosive materials.

Delegate Yazzie, who represents the communities of Churchrock and Iyanbito, said it was critical to hear the concerns of his community members because the proposed land division will have lasting impacts on their land and their families.

In addition, Delegate Yazzie noted that he recently sent a letter to Rep. Luján inviting him to meet with several of the local chapters and said he continues to urge the congressman to do so to address the bill and to answer questions from community members.

Approximately 150 community members attended the public hearing and many shared ancestral stories of Navajo people residing within the disputed land boundaries dating back centuries.

Some expressed concern over the contamination caused by the storage of ammunition and explosive materials for decades and urged the Navajo Nation Council to ensure that proper land restoration is conducted by the federal government prior to the passage of the congressional bill.

“We need to look at the air quality, water quality, and vegetation to make sure the U.S. is not going to place those responsibilities on us to restore,” stated community member Ted Nez.

On July 8, 2013, members of the Fort Wingate Army Depot Task Force met in Washington, D.C. with Reps. Luján (D-N.M.), Steve Pearce (R-N.M.), Don Young (R-Alaska), and Pueblo of Zuni Gov. Arlen Quetawki, Sr. to negotiate and discuss the proposed land settlement.

As a result of the negotiations, the Navajo Nation would receive approximately 10,000 acres and the Zuni Tribe approximately 9,000 acres of the parceled land, with the remaining 2,000 acres to remain under the U.S. Department of Defense due to high levels of contamination in the area.

Throughout the day-long public hearing, numerous community members thanked Delegate Yazzie for bringing the issue to their attention and for listening to their concerns.

The Iyanibito Chapter also held a public hearing on Aug. 25, 2013, in which Delegate Yazzie was joined by Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) who chairs the Fort Wingate Army Depot Task Force.

During a meeting held on Feb. 14, task force members voted in support of H.R. 3822, along with a directive to introduce legislation to Council in support of the congressional bill.

On Feb. 26, Speaker Naize issued a memo informing members of Council of the task force's support of H.R. 3822 and requested that legislation be drafted to support the land division.

"The best course of action is to seek a resolution of the Council supporting H.R. 3822 and approving the Fort Wingate MOU Task Force's negotiated resolution of this matter," wrote Speaker Naize.

Legislation is expected to be drafted and introduced by next week.

Other Fort Wingate Army Depot Task Force members include Council Delegates Mel R. Begay, Charles Damon II, Edmund Yazzie, Leonard Tsosie, Danny Simpson, and George Apachito.

#

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 4, 2014

President Shelly meets with FCC regarding NTUA Wireless



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly traveled to Washington, D.C. last week and met with the Federal Communications Commission regarding the designation of NTUA Wireless as a limited eligible telecommunications provider on the Nation. He met with Geoffrey Blackwell, Chief of the FCC Office of Native Affairs and Policy. (Photo by Jared King)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Providing affordable mobile communications on the Navajo Nation is a challenge. Navajo people now have another wireless provider to choose from for services.

Last week, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with the Federal Communications Commission in Washington, D.C. regarding Navajo Tribal Utility Authority Wireless, LLC and telecommunications on the Nation.

Telecommunications is an

important component of the five pillars of nation building for the Shelly-Jim administration, specifically with regard to infrastructure development.

The FCC issued an order on Feb. 18, 2014, designating NTUA Wireless as an eligible telecommunications carrier on the Navajo Nation.

NTUA Wireless' designation as a limited ETC for Lifeline Service and conditional ETC status to participate in Tribal Mobility Fund Phase I is another major step toward connectivity

in rural parts of the Nation.

The ETC designation was an exercise in Navajo sovereignty, especially with regard to jurisdictional authority.

President Shelly lauded the designation and the efforts of Brian Tagaban, executive director of the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission for their work with the FCC.

"Telecommunications and technology is our priority," said President Shelly, who championed broadband as vice

president. "We dedicated our efforts and formed a broadband team, that worked to completion, creating a middle and last mile network for the future."

The FCC order stated "NTUA Wireless is Navajo owned and submits to the jurisdiction over its operations by the NNTRC. Therefore, we find that NTUA Wireless is a tribally-owned commercial mobile radio service provider subject to the laws and jurisdiction of the tribal authority of the Navajo Nation."

"The NNTRC is specifically

named in the order as the regulatory oversight and sets precedence for other telecommunications companies to be regulated by the Nation. This is a big step for us to be a true regulator,” Tagaban said.

The NNTRC’s mission is to regulate the telecommunications industry on the Navajo Nation. It is committed to the protection of the public welfare, regulation and security of tribal telecommunications.

Tagaban said NTUA Wireless is a mobile wireless carrier that has committed to being regulated by the NNTRC.

“The Navajo Nation has committed to a mobile market that is competitive under a regulatory oversight,” he said. “All other phone companies or carriers like Frontier, Sacred Wind and Cellular One get their ETC designation from the state utility commission.”

Only the FCC and state utility commissions are authorized to designate phone companies with ETC status. For the Navajo Nation, the ETC designation of NTUA Wireless began in March 2011, two-months after the Shelly-Jim administration took office.

NTUA Wireless is a for-profit entity and is 51 percent owned by NTUA. Commnet, a wholly owned company of Atlantic Tele-Network, Inc., owns the remaining 49 percent. Atlantic Tele-Network has more than \$900 million in investment capital.

Tagaban noted that NTUA Wireless is an example of mitigating risk while bringing capital and expertise to the Navajo Nation.

The FCC order also recognized the exterior boundaries of the Navajo Nation and is significant because the checkerboard area of the Nation has been included for service.

“We are committed to a fair market for telecommunication providers in order for the people of the Navajo Nation to have a

choice,” Tagaban said.

“Owning and operating critical communications infrastructure empowers tribal nations to protect the health and safety of consumers living on tribal lands, to spur local economic development, to preserve tribal language and culture, and to further the education of residents through federal distance education programs,” the FCC stated.

The Communications Act of 1934 as amended, provided that, “Only an eligible telecommunications carrier designated under section 214(e) shall be eligible to receive specific federal universal support.”

“This was not easy, nor was it short. Once again, the Navajo Nation has helped the FCC forge some new ground here,” said Geoffrey Blackwell, chief of the FCC Office of Native Affairs and Policy.

Blackwell thanked President Shelly for his assistance and patience with the process.

He expressed hope for other government bureaus to understand the complexities of the effort, which included the Jeddito chapter area.

“Our door at the FCC is always open. Brian (Tagaban) and other folks know they can always reach out to us for issues on the Navajo Nation,” Blackwell said.



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim traveled to Capitol Hill last week to share concerns from the Navajo Nation with federal officials and congressional members. (Photo by Jared King)



Clara Pratt, executive director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office joined President Shelly and Brian Tagaban in a meeting with the FCC last week in Washington, D.C. (Photo by Jared King)



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, along with Brian Tagaban, executive director of the Navajo Telecommunications Regulatory Commission and Deswood Tome, special advisor to the president, spoke with FCC Chief Geoffrey Blackwell on Feb. 18, 2014 about the NTUA Wireless designation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2014

CONTACT:
Delilah Goodluck, Sr. Public Information Officer
delilah.goodluck@nntanf.org • 928.810.8553

Department for Self Reliance Partners to Instill Healthy Habits for Navajo Children.

Window Rock, Ariz. - Through its Nutrition, Education and Obesity Prevention (NEOP) program, First Things First collaborated with the Department for Self Reliance (DSR) to focus on the nutritional needs of children, healthy activity for the family, and strategies to prevent childhood malnutrition and obesity.

Customers of DSR's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program are given an opportunity to earn a certificate from the NEOP program.

According to the DSR Senior Caseworkers, the certificate benefits DSR's customers on many levels. The certificate can be referenced on early childhood job applications; it is recognized by DSR as job training; and it can be applied as credit towards Northern Pioneer College's, Child Development Associate (CDA) credential.

DSR customers, Jacqueline Nez and Teresa Begay are NEOP certificate recipients and are earning their CDA credentials. The CDA program consists of two years of class room study and 480 hours of work experience. Nez and Begay both confess that taking the classes has improved their parenting skills and they do more activities with their children. "I like spending time with my kids and the classes do help," said Nez.

Cassandra Bitsuie, NEOP Instructor, explained that the certificate is earned over eight sessions. Some of the NEOP classroom activities include, "learning to build a better plate with nutritional food items like fruits, veggies, wheat and dairy; family style dining; nutritional story time with reading and singing to the children; and exercising with the children with movement and activity," explained Bitsuie.

Fort Defiance DSR Senior Case Workers are all very excited that the program is being offered to their customers. "Parents have a lot of fun in the NEOP program, they have the opportunity to bring their children with them to the training," explained Marlene Smith, DSR Senior Case Worker.

For more information about DSR assistance programs please visit or call your local DSR office: **Gallup, NM:** (866) 704-6940; **Kayenta, AZ:**(928) 697-5660; **Montezuma Creek, UT Sub-office:** (435) 651-3535; **Shiprock, NM:** (866) 309-0346; **Tuba City, AZ:** (866) 731-7015; **Chinle, AZ:** (866) 700-5175; **Crownpoint, NM:** (866) 784-1694; **Fort Defiance, AZ:** (866) 860-9549; or **Greasewood, AZ Sub-office:** (928) 654-3910.

For more information about the NEOP program, contact First Things First Navajo Nation Regional Office at (602) 265-0009.



NEOP students, NEOP Instructor and Fort Defiance DSR Senior Case Workers pose to capture DSR's first certified NEOP class.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nmlb.communications@gmail.com

**Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie advocates for
improvement of the Nation’s transportation systems**

GALLUP, N.M. – Last Wednesday, Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) met with the New Mexico Department of Transportation Regional Working Group 4 to discuss a Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Currently, there are seven Regional Working Groups assigned to develop a Regional Transportation Plan in coordination with NMDOT to create a statewide, regional, and metropolitan plan to build an efficient transportation system by the year 2040.

The key components of this planning scope involve the data and needs of existing plans of transportation, the current supply and demand of transportation, the performance and statewide strategies of transportation infrastructure, and services and programs throughout the region.

Delegate Yazzie said the most challenging aspect on the New Mexico side is getting the local chapters to become certified which would enable the chapters to receive funds from the State, expediting the improvement process.

“If the chapters become certified, they will be entitled to be 110% reliable on running their chapter on their own instead of depending on Window Rock but it has been a big challenge for our chapters to do that. The multi-jurisdictional complexity and bureaucratic issues weighs down the entire process of trying to get transportation systems met,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

The majority of those in attendance agreed that there were many cross-jurisdictional collaborations among all entities and that all jurisdictions need to be on the same page when improving roads in rural communities.

“It is reflective in Council Delegate Yazzie’s point that in his case the decision- making is never local enough. All these decisions are going one way and the ‘so-called’ revenues for improvement are not happening,” stated executive director Jeffrey G. Kiely, of Northwest NM Council of Governments.

Another challenge is obtaining funding to implement transportation infrastructure, services, and programs throughout the state.

“Even though we may never have the money to do all these projects, we are still planning. We are still planning because we have to, legally. Otherwise, we are giving in. The point is, that this is an ongoing challenge,” stated Tim Karpoff, owner of Karpoff & Associates.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Regional Working Groups agreed to meet again in May or June to discuss a state wide plan that will develop more goals on transportation systems.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2014

President Shelly meets with officials on General Leasing Act



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly traveled to Washington, D.C. and met with federal officials on the Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulation Act of 2013 and other concerns from the Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Interior is moving forward with the Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulation Act of 2013, after meeting with Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly last week.

President Shelly traveled to Washington, D.C. and met with federal officials on a host of issues, including leasing provisions, telecommunications, housing and Navajo Head Start. He is awaiting the official approval letter from the DOI for the Act.

In 2013, the General Leasing Regulation Act was enacted to streamline residential and business site leasing on the Navajo Nation by providing the Nation authority to approve such leases without involvement from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

However, mineral and right-of-way leases were excluded from the legislation and still require DOI approval, he said.

“The approval of the General Leasing Act by the Department of Interior is another step toward

self-sufficiency,” President Shelly said. “This provides the Navajo Nation the authority to approve leases for homes and businesses.

“New business means growth and economic development for the Nation,” he added.

The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act, or the HEARTH Act, was enacted on July 30, 2012, after President Barack Obama signed H.R. 205 into law.

The bill followed the Navajo Nation Leasing Act of 2000 as a template.

Mike Halona, manager of Navajo Land Department said approving the Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulation Act of 2013 would be another historic step for Indian Country.

“There will be no need for the BIA to approve residential home site leasing, schools, religious sites, agriculture, energy, grazing. The Navajo Nation can now do all of those needs to streamline the approval process,” he said.

“Once again, the Navajo Nation is leading the way for the rest of Indian Country by using technology and self-determination,” President Shelly said. “The Navajo Nation improved the HEARTH Act for all tribes.”

The decision to use the Navajo Nation Leasing Act as a template occurred in 2010, when Halona and others met with the BIA and DOI to request for seed money for the Navajo Land Title Data System.

The Navajo Land Department is currently uploading data to the NLTDS.

“Which is peanuts when you consider what we’ve been able to develop. We developed a system that you cannot get anywhere else and helped all tribes,” Halona said.

The Navajo Land Department will have an enterprise license in place by summer and will begin providing other tribal departments and entities with access to their automated land title plant.

Twelve tribes are already on the waiting list for the chance to follow the NLTDS as a template for their own automated database.

“Imagine the independence

“The approval of the General Leasing Act by the Department of Interior is another step toward self-sufficiency.”

All current conveyances are being uploaded to the database and Halona said the department is simultaneously entering past data records. He anticipates completion in one to two years.

“Then we’ll have the government certify our system as a title plant,” he said.

Streamlining the land conveyance process will provide users with access to personal, industrial and economic leases, including community land use plans. Since 2006, the Land Department has invested \$1.2 million into the database.

that we’ll have. We’ll know every square inch of our land,” Halona said.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2014

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253
Jolene Holgate | 928.308.4174
Chrissy Largo | 928.637.5603
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approves \$200,000 for the Navajo Air Transportation Department

WINDOW ROCK – On Wednesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee approved Legislation No. 0043-14, approving supplemental funding from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance in the amount of \$200,000 for the Navajo Air Transportation Department to maintain aging aircraft fleet and to purchase jet fuel.

According to the Supplemental Funding Proposal Summary submitted by Air Transportation Director Joe Berardesco, the Nation owns two 29 year-old Beeschcraft King Airs aircrafts that are in need of maintenance to comply with standards governed by the Federal Aviation Administration Regulations.

“The way the [proprietary] account is set up is we maintain the airplanes and we buy fuel. If we have a lot of revenue coming in, it’s a break even account,” stated Barardesco. “When revenue goes down, our propriety funds go down as well.”

Proprietary Funds are used for government business-type activities which are later recovered by fees charged to those who use their services.

Whether the aircraft is in use or not, the department is still incurs to calendar costs due to periodic inspections that are required on all aircrafts.

“Within one week, how many airplanes are out in the air working?” asked HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels).

Barardesco explained that there usually two planes in use even though there is a shortage of pilots and staff.

According to a memo dated Nov. 12, 2013, the Air Transportation Department spent approximately \$200,000 on expenses associated with maintaining aging aircraft since the start of FY 2014.

“Every year, costs go up and our planes get older. They are almost 30 years old. So now the cost of fuel and repairs, parts and engines are sky high. We do need some help with this amount of money that we are requesting,” stated Division Director of Division of General Services, Virgil Brown.

The funding shortfall could result in a shutdown of air transportation services to the entire Navajo Nation government in the near future according to the Supplemental Funding Proposal Summary.

“Right now we have three airplanes, and it works out well. But, if you got one plane, you still got to do your scheduling maintenance out of a 12-month period and within that timeframe, 4 months is accounted for repairs and maintenance. One plane is not going to cut it,” stated Barardesco, while also noting that the Navajo Air Transportation has saved \$300,000 by performing in-house maintenance on the aircraft.

“I can certainly see your need for the \$100,000 to work on the repair maintenance of the aircrafts but the request for \$100,000 for fuel, to me, seems very suspect. You charge the Nation for flights to Phoenix and many other places, and account for the fuel costs, but are you going to reduce the cost? How is this going to benefit at the expense of the Nation’s funds?” asked Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill).

Barardesco refuted that although the department does charge for fuel, their flights are still down by 50% and flying about 600 hours a year compared to 1200 hours a year.

“Our fuel is maintained from the propriety fund. It costs so much money with the aging aircraft issues on maintenance that last year our propriety fund decreased. That basically came out of buying fuel and maintenance on the aircraft. Every year, I hear about budget cuts and cutting back on travel, but we are still flying a lot. So the need is there,” stated Barardesco.

HEHSC members approved the legislation with a vote of 2-1.

Legislation No. 0043-14 now goes to the BFC for consideration.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org