



Navajo Nation Proclamation

DINÉ BIKÉYAH TOURIST APPRECIATION WEEK

WHEREAS, The travel and tourism industry is the source of countless benefits for Navajo Nation and our guests from local and foreign lands; and

WHEREAS, Diné Bikéyah (Navajoland) is a myriad of spectacular scenery and enchanting getaways reflecting the uniqueness and beauty of the Diné Bikéyah to its people and resources; and

WHEREAS, Friendship, knowledge, and appreciation of intercultural differences and similarity enhance international understanding, cooperation and goodwill; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation recognizes the Proclamation 5920, National Tourism Week, signed January 6, 1989 by the President of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Every year, millions of Americans and foreign visitors travel throughout the country discovering the beauty of natural wonders, wilderness, cast land, hospitality of the people, and the outstanding recreational, educational and significant cultural activities; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation is the largest American Indian tribe in North America, encompassing more than 27,000 square miles, extends into southwestern Utah, northeast New Mexico and northern Arizona. The Navajo Nation receives over \$112.8 million of direct spending by out-of-region visitors, contributing to a total economic impact of \$153.7 million annually to the Navajo Nation; furthermore, this economic activity supported some 1,788 fulltime equivalent full-time jobs; and

WHEREAS, With the millions of visitors traveling throughout Diné Bikéyah find the “World’s Best Kept Secret” embodied with rich and vibrant people and scenic whispering canyon walls, mystifying ancient architecture, picturesque mountains, relaxing lakes and rivers; the earthly scent of cedar and sage, fiery sunsets, and refreshing blue skies; the intrinsic quality of the sustained traditional Diné philosophy and culture, surrounded by the Four Sacred Mountain; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation is truly a great destination to reminisce history as the Diné teachings and values remain strong. We are open to share our culture with the world.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED:

I, Ben Shelly, President of the Navajo Nation, by the authority vest in, hereby proclaim the week of May 4, 2015 through May 2015 as Diné Bikéyah Tourist Appreciation Week.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ben Shelly".

Ben Shelly, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2015

President Shelly lauds \$13.2 million for cleanup of 16 abandoned uranium mines



President Shelly praised the announcement of \$13.2 million for the cleanup evaluation of 16 abandoned uranium mines across the Navajo Nation. However, he said there are still hundreds more that must be addressed for the health and safety of the Navajo people. He noted that it is the federal government's responsibility to cleanup this environmental hazard. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The U.S. Department of Justice announced a settlement agreement with the Navajo Nation to provide \$13.2 million for the cleanup evaluation of 16 abandoned uranium mines located across the Navajo Nation.

The first phase settlement agreement for the abandoned uranium mines will establish an environmental response trust to pay for the evaluations. The inspection of the 16 sites will initiate solutions for the final cleanup.

"The Navajo Nation is working with U.S. EPA for cleanup of uranium contamination that was abandoned upon tribal lands after the Cold War," President Shelly said. "Countless Navajos have suffered from the health and environmental impacts from this contamination.

"It is our hope the U.S. will finally accept responsibility for the cleanup of this uranium contamination," he added.

The U.S. DOJ is increasing

their focus on environmental and health concerns across Indian Country. The commitment by the Obama administration to resolve these grievances from American Indian tribes is commendable, President Shelly said.

John Cruden, assistant attorney general for Justice Department Environmental and Natural Resources Division said the site evaluations are focused on mines that pose the most significant hazards.

"In partnership with our sister federal agencies, we will also continue our work to address the legacy of uranium mining on Navajo lands, including ongoing discussions with the Navajo Nation," Cruden said.

Jared Blumenfeld, regional administrator for the U.S. EPA Pacific Southwest, said the EPA is proud to implement the historic settlement.

"It dovetails with our ongoing activities as we work together to make real progress on the environmental legacy of

uranium mining on the Navajo Nation," Blumenfeld said.

From 1944 to 1986, approximately four million tons of uranium ore was extracted from Navajo Nation lands. The U.S. DOJ said the federal government, through the Atomic Energy Commission, was the sole purchaser of uranium until 1966, when commercial sales of uranium began.

The AEC continued to purchase ore until 1970. The last uranium mine on the Navajo Nation shut down in 1986.

Harrison Tsosie, attorney general for the Navajo Nation, said the environmental response trust is officially named the "Navajo Nation Abandoned Uranium Mine Environmental Response Trust – First Phase."

He said Sadie Hoskie was selected to serve as trustee for the Nation. Hoskie was the first executive director of Navajo EPA. Most recently, she has served at the U.S. EPA Region 8 in Denver.

"She brings a unique combination of upper level administrative experience, technical environmental knowledge and a command of Navajo culture to this program," Tsosie said.

A panel from the Navajo Nation made the selection of Hoskie. The panel consisted of representatives from the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo EPA and the Dine' Medicine Men's Association.

Navajo DOJ demonstrated there were well qualified Navajos to fill these important positions, Tsosie said, adding that their goal of showcasing

competency was achieved. He said the Navajo Nation was optimistic about receiving a comprehensive settlement to restore tribal lands and the environment back into harmony.

President Shelly said, "I welcome this preliminary settlement agreement that will address 16 abandoned uranium mine sites. We have always said the U.S. is responsible for the cleanup of uranium legacy sites."

The 16 sites are orphaned mines because the companies that operated the sites are no longer in existence.

Stephen Etsitty, executive director of Navajo EPA, said there are hundreds more that must be addressed.

"Sixteen abandoned uranium mines is a small number of the entire 521 sites on the current inventory," Etsitty said. "However these 16 sites are high priority mines the Navajo Nation needs cleaned.

"They do not have a responsible party or viable company to provide the cleanup," he added.

The Navajo Nation will continue to work with U.S. DOJ and the U.S. Department of Energy to provide cleanup of all abandoned uranium mines left on tribal lands.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 4, 2015

President Shelly attends Zoo Fest, announces funding for new aviary



President Shelly said the new aviary will be an opportunity to teach golden eagle conservation to Navajo people. He began planning for the aviary upon taking office in 2011. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Parents and children came out in droves.

On May 2, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the 8th annual Navajo Nation Zoo Fest. Guest speakers, entertainment, a play area for kids and animals were featured at the free event.

The tribal zoo features more than 50 different species of animals indigenous to the Navajo Nation. It is also the only zoo in the country owned and operated by a Native American tribe.

“A small but dedicated staff takes care of the animals in our zoo. If you see them, please take a moment to thank them for their service,” President Shelly said. “From the black bears to the golden eagles, these animals can be found across the Navajo Nation.”

He noted that the zoo operates

on donations from the general public and tribal departments and entities that adopt animals. Entities adopting an animal provide funding for food, repairs for their enclosures and other needs.

Upon taking office in 2011, President Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly adopted a golden eagle that could not fly because it was missing a wing. Shellie the golden eagle is one of the many animals on display at the zoo.

In 2011, President Shelly also made the commitment to fund an eagle aviary exhibit at the zoo. The project will give the birds more room to fly and provide the public with an exhibit dedicated to conservation of the birds of prey.

“This week, I will sign off and approve legislation to fund more than \$400,000 for the construction of the eagle aviary.

I have been very passionate about this project,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly will approve \$401,514 in supplemental funding to cover the remaining construction costs for the project.

In 2011, the Navajo Nation became the fourth Native American tribe in the U.S. to be permitted for an eagle aviary. The aviary measures 4,133 square feet and will be located in the center of the zoo.

Drinking ponds, storage, examination rooms, office space, an observation area and gallery are included in the conceptual design of the aviary. The eagle aviary area will have 2,533 square feet and will house up to 30 injured, non-releasable golden eagles.

President Shelly said, “The new aviary will provide live eagle feathers to the Navajo people through a program

established by the Navajo Nation Zoo and Navajo Fish and Wildlife Department.”

David Mikesic, curator of the Navajo Nation Zoo, said naturally shed feathers from the golden eagles are going to be distributed in a legal manner pursuant to federal regulations for traditional purposes.

Not only will this expedite the process for eagle feathers, but it will also reduce illegal actions on eagles in the wild, he said.

The aviary will also have a security system to monitor the eagles.

A federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wild Life Service provided \$200,000 for initial design and engineering of the aviary in 2014. The total project cost is estimated at \$757,935.

President Shelly said the new aviary is a chance to teach Navajo people about eagle conservation, especially young children.

“The Navajo Nation will become known as an aviary tribe and we will continue to push for the protection of these magnificent birds. It is our hope that the new aviary will attract more visitors and hopefully, more funding.

“This is your zoo, take pride in it. We need your donations and support,” he added.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 5, 2015

President Shelly announces opening of new Huerfano bridge



President Shelly said the most dangerous bridge in San Juan County has been replaced with a \$2.3 million state-of-the-art bridge that will safely transport Navajo students to school. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

HUERFANO, N.M.—The new bridge is open.

In the eastern portion of the Navajo Nation, residents of the remote chapter of Huerfano have waited for more than two decades for the replacement of a bridge that carries residents across County Road 5150.

The bridge is located about five miles west of U.S. Highway 550, south of Bloomfield.

“The most dangerous bridge is San Juan County has been replaced,” President Shelly said. “This was the first major construction project funded by Navajo Division of Transportation since we entered into a direct funding agreement with the Federal Highway Administration in February of 2013.

“Now, school buses can safely transport children to school,” he added.

In 2013, the FHWA executed a direct funding agreement with NDOT, providing \$10 million to the tribal division annually.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is the other partner in the agreement. The BIA receives \$44 million annually from FHWA to service Navajo Nation roads.

Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT, said the new bridge is a major accomplishment for the Navajo Nation, proving the tribe has the capacity to complete major road projects to meet the needs of Navajo communities.

“This is the first time NDOT took over the reins from the BIA to complete a project of this magnitude from start to finish. We are now partners with the BIA and the direct funding agreement with the FHWA is making a significant difference,” Chaco said.

He said the bridge replacement was an important project the Shelly-Jim administration focused on completing before leaving office.

The bridge opened to receive traffic on April 28. Previously, residents had to travel through a makeshift route down the Gallegos Wash to cross the roadway.

Bridge 8105 was completed at a cost of \$2.3 million. NDOT provided \$1.5 million to replace the bridge and the difference was paid by San Juan County and the N.M. gross receipts tax. For more than two decades, the greatest hurdle to constructing the 356-foot bridge was funding.

The average height of the two-lane bridge deck above the natural channel is 11 to 12-feet. The bridge is constructed of pre-stressed concrete girders on drilled shaft foundations, with a

cast-in-place concrete deck.

The old single lane Bailey bridge that was replaced was constructed in the 1970s. The old bridge was known as the most dangerous bridge in San Juan County because it had a rating of 13 on a scale of 1 to 100.

Of the 18 bridges in the county inventory, it was placed on top of the priority listing for replacement.

Chaco said NDOT and San Juan County are going to announce the official ribbon cutting ceremony for the new bridge soon.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 5, 2015

MEDIA ADVISORY

WHO : President Ben Shelly
THE NAVAJO NATION

Vice President Rex Lee Jim
THE NAVAJO NATION

Albert Damon, Division Director
Division of Economic Development

WHAT : Groundbreaking Ceremony:
Thompson's Convenience Store and Gas Station

WHERE : Junction of Highways 118 and 566
Church Rock, N.M.

WHEN : May 8, 2015 at 9 a.m.

CONTACT : *Rick Abasta, Communications Director*
Office of the President and Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION
Phone: 928-871-7884
Fax: 928-871-4025
Email: rickyabasta@navajo-nsn.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 7, 2015

President Shelly executes line item veto, cites need to maintain UUFB



President Shelly executed his line item veto authority to maintain an acceptable balance in the UUFB before leaving office. He funded more than \$12.8 million in projects across the Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has executed his line item veto authority on Legislation No. 0089-15, which was requesting more than \$19.7 million in supplemental funding from the Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance.

The legislation had many projects listed, from power line extensions, chapter house construction, capital improvement projects, summer youth employment, public employment program, zoo aviary, water line extension, veterans and Navajo Transitional Energy Company.

President Shelly said, “When my administration first took office, the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance was in a deficit of more than \$22 million.”

He said the administration worked diligently to replenish the UUFB and maintained the tribal policy of keeping the balance above the 10 percent threshold.

“Therefore, my administration will not leave office with a deficit in the UUFB,” President Shelly said. “After careful consideration, I will exercise my line item veto authority.”

The Teesto Chapter request

for \$2,922,425 to rebuild their chapter house has been vetoed. The \$1,500,000 request for summer youth employment has been vetoed. The \$1,500,000 for the public employment program has been vetoed. The request for \$1,000,000 for veterans has been vetoed.

The president noted that the Teesto Chapter has an existing claim pending with Navajo Risk Management and said they need to proceed with the claim to resolve their funding needs.

“On behalf of Vice President Jim and I, we would like to express our appreciation to the Navajo Nation Council,”

President Shelly said. “As we end our duties, the fact that our administration was fiscally responsible leaves us with great pride.”

A total of \$12,859,429.21 of projects were approved and funded by President Shelly.

-30-



NDPS Director Responds to Vote of No-Confidence and Budget Inquires

The Nation's public safety and health needs remain critically underfunded which keeps NDPS from achieving the state-of-the-art level of first responder services the people of the Nation deserve. As Director, I have made it my mission to transform this dangerous situation. Significant change is required to protect the Navajo Nation.

When I became Director of Public Safety in 2011, it was obvious that this Division was poorly equipped, underfunded, not functioning properly, and could not adequately protect the citizens of the Navajo Nation (i.e., a critical example is the inadequate status of our 911 system). Communication with federal agencies was contentious, and the existing faulty business infrastructure did not allow NDPS to successfully capture essential funding creating a dangerous operational environment for NDPS and more importantly for our first responders and the public.

It is and always has been my goal to provide the highest caliber of public safety services. I have not shied away from making the tough and often unpopular decisions that true change dictates. I have not and will not compromise quality service to appease those few who fear and resist change. Change is never easy and it is often unpopular and uncomfortable. However the majority of NDPS staff have embraced change and are working their hardest to fulfill NDPS's mission.

We need to continue to address the tough financial, infrastructure, equipment, and staffing issues that plague the Division, and the Law and Order Committee needs to be a supportive partner in this modernization process – not a detractor. We cannot continue to fight and be at odds with each other. It is time for everyone to focus on how we can move forward together. I know I have the courage to continue to implement these changes and look forward to completing them with the support of the Council.

As NDPS Director I have leveraged all available funds to make key investments in specific projects aimed at improving the Nation's public safety and health capabilities and services. We as a Division have made great strides. Our most notable global improvements include:

Completed a professional Division-wide assessment of policies and procedures and

initiated optimization of those practices that are outdated, inefficient, and non-productive. Job requirements have been upgraded for existing employees, and new hires have been held to these enhanced standards.

Developed and implemented strategies to identify and create new revenue streams for NDPS programs (Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise Agreement).

Initiated the design and implementation of a Next Generation 911 Navajo Nation public safety system. This state-of-the-art upgrade will create a faster, more flexible,

resilient, and scalable system that allows 911 to support current and future communication technology used by the Navajo public.

Built external strategic partnerships and enlisted support from NDPS program staff and state and federal agencies (e.g., BIA).

Completed the first phase of implementing an Enterprise Architecture Pilot Program (EAPP) program for NDPS. The EAPP's mission is to integrate and align business functions and processes across the division to establish a uniform, efficient, and effective NDPS operating model.

Completed a Fleet Management Business Case Analysis (BCA) that identified significant opportunities for NDPS fleet cost savings and operational optimization paths.

Completed construction of 132 bed adult correctional facility in Tuba City, Arizona. The facility is equipped with programming space to allow for intervention and educational services for individuals detained in these facilities.

Completed construction of a 48 bed adult correctional facility in Crownpoint, New Mexico. The facility is equipped with programming space to allow for intervention and educational services for individuals detained in these facilities.

Acquired new emergency and first responder equipment including new

ambulances and airboat for river rescues.

Focused efforts on staff training, which resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of commissioned officers reaching all of their training goals.

We cannot dwell on our success, as much still needs to be done. The only path forward is to work together. If we are to fulfill our duty of serving the people we must plan, fund, and implement all of the following near and long-term objectives:

Conduct a comprehensive legal analysis of and prepare a mitigation plan responsive to regulatory compliance requirements at the federal, state, and municipal levels.

Create a holistic legal based strategy essential to capturing 100% of the dollars required to carry out all mandated public safety activities within the Navajo Nation's boundaries.

Legislate fiscal year-end payout of accrued annual and vacation leave for all NDPS staff.

Conduct an Organizational Management Study to develop a baseline of the true cost of doing business for each of the departments and NDPS as a whole.

Conduct Phase 2 of the EAPP to enhance NDPS' performance by re-engineering the division based on the Plan of Operation that was developed in Phase 1 of the EAPP.

Complete a comprehensive overhaul of NDPS's aged fleet using BCA recommendations.

Establish a Fire Department in each of the seven Economic Growth Areas.

Continue to increase hiring qualifications, training, and standards for performance

on the job.

Address pay disparity of personnel who are essential to the division and yet are paid less than personnel performing comparable work at other federal or state agencies.

Modernize the Department's information technology to include a fully operational case management system, and enhance current financial, human resource, and grant tracking IT systems.

Increase overall staffing levels in all departments to meet the demand.

Enhance, renovate, and reorganize NDPS infrastructure.

Although I am disappointed by the actions of the Law and order Committee I believe it is time for everyone to put aside their personal grievances and work together to increase police presence, improve infrastructure, provide cutting-edge emergency equipment, training and certification, lower response time, and take steps to enhance the safety of those in the field. To do this we must fully fund NDPS's mandates – nothing is more important to myself and to the brave individuals who make up NDPS.

I want to thank every person in NDPS who put their own personal safety secondary to that of the Navajo people. Their unwavering commitment to ensuring that those in need can trust there will be someone there to help should be the focus. I should not.

Organizational change is always uncomfortable and controversial; however, change is critical for ensuring a better future for the Navajo Nation. I expected employees within the Division to be directly challenged and concerned by this process, however this change will significantly benefit all. I remain humbled by the commitment of all those who are dedicated to fulfilling NDPS's mission.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2015

President Shelly celebrates Thompson’s Store groundbreaking



President Shelly applauded the patience and tenacity of Alvin Thompson, for never giving up on his dream of opening a new business. He said the Navajo Nation, through the BIDEF, contributed \$1.5 million toward the \$4 million project located across from “Campaign Hill.” (Photo by Rick Abasta)

CHURCH ROCK, N.M.— The junction of N.M. Highway 118 and Highway 566 was a hotbed of activity on the morning of May 9.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson’s convenience store and gas station in Church Rock.

Navajo businessman Alvin Thompson, council delegate Edmund Yazzie, Division of Economic Development director Albert Damon, chapter president Johnny Henry, representatives from the city of Gallup and state of N.M were also on hand to break ground for the new business.

“Today we are here to break ground and celebrate the construction of a new \$4 million convenience store,” President

Shelly said. “The Navajo Nation, through the Business Improvement Development Fund, contributed \$1.5 million for this project.

“The new business will create 20-plus new jobs for the community,” he added.

Financial partners in the project include the DED, Navajo Division of Transportation, Great Western Bank and personal funds from Thompson.

The new store is a response to the community needs for food, gas and other supplies. Thompson has operated a store in the heart of Church Rock for many years.

In business since 1964, Thompson made the move for a better location to stimulate his business. The perfect location for the proposed gas station will

undoubtedly generate traffic, as his business is directly across from “Campaign Hill.”

Thanking the staff of DED, Business Improvement Development Fund and the Eastern Regional Business Development Office, President Shelly noted that breaking ground for a new business on the Nation is always cause for celebration.

“Thank you Mr. Thompson for not giving up during the lengthy process involved in establishing a new business. It’s not easy, I know this reality firsthand,” President Shelly said.

Negotiating the bureaucracy of regulations from federal, tribal, state and county laws is not only tedious, but complicated as well, he said.

“The Navajo Nation continues

to grow. We must enable our small business owners to be successful,” President Shelly said.

Once the business is off the ground and fully operational, the Navajo Nation will receive revenue from leasing, rental space and taxes.

Because of the fee land status, the new business will also pay county and state taxes, which will assist regional Navajos in the areas, according to Damon.

The celebration concluded with a luncheon at Red Rock State Park.





NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2015

CONTACT:
Adrian Dotson | 928-380-2158

Navajo Head Start creates job opportunities

Boost to Navajo economy

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — With the recent surge in funding and a fresh start, Navajo Head Start (NHS) is in a position to be more successful than ever before. This success will benefit the organization and impact the local communities by not only providing and expanding much needed early childhood development services, but also creating many new jobs within the Navajo Nation.

In 2014, NHS was awarded a five-year, noncompetitive grant worth \$125 million. Grant money will continue to be used to hire highly-qualified staff and make improvements to head start facilities across the Navajo Nation.

NHS is currently looking to fill multiple positions in its four regions of operation—teacher, bus driver and paraprofessional vacancies are a few positions needed to continue operations in the growing head start program.

With more than 20 openings and an ongoing hiring process, NHS is not only creating jobs for individuals, but also boosting the local economy as a whole through a giving organizational platform.

NHS takes pride in hiring the best candidates to foster a high-quality educational environment for all of the children and families that are a part of NHS. This entails strict requirements in the hiring process.

All hired positions in NHS require a Navajo Nation Tribal and Federal background investigation, other types of background checks are not accepted.

Teachers must have a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or an equivalent to that, as well as at least one year of classroom experience teaching pre-school or toddler-aged children. These requirements also include an early childhood endorsement and a valid drivers license.

NHS paraprofessionals are required to have a high school diploma or an equivalent, such as a GED, and a minimum 45 college credit hours. Requirements also include six months of teaching experience and a commercial drivers license.

Bus Drivers must also have a high school diploma or GED equivalent and the position also requires 12 hours of college credit in child development, a valid CDL license and ability to pass a physical exam.

-More-

Page 2-2-2/ Navajo Head Start creates job opportunities

NHS also has job openings within human resources and maintenance areas in select regions.

NHS mandates these requirements to create the safest environment as possible for the children and families at NHS. This also allows for the highest quality of education, as all of the teachers are not only required to have a bachelor's degree, but also experience teaching.

Currently, the unemployment rate of the Navajo Nation is 52 percent. With NHS continually creating new jobs it is aiding the Navajo Nation and boosting the economy as a whole.

Applications for any of the aforementioned job openings can be found at NHS's website www.navajohs.org/employment.

Applications must be faxed, hand-delivered or mailed to Navajo Head Start's Human Resources Section, P.O. Box 3479, Window Rock, AZ, 86515.

###

Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, AZ, capital of the Navajo Nation.



NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 8, 2015

CONTACT:
Adrian Dotson | 928-380-2158

Singer Elected to National Indian Head Start Directors Association

Singer making national impact

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Sharon H. Singer, the assistant superintendent of the Navajo Division of Diné Education, was elected to the National Indian Head Start Directors Association (NIHSDA) where she will play a pivotal role in preserving the identity of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) children and families.

Singer, who runs Navajo Head Start (NHS), was elected as the alternate for Region 6, which is the Arizona region, and serves as the primary substitute for Region 6 representative Bill Rosenberg.

The association serves as the nation's leading voice for AIAN programs. Founded in 1979, the association has made strides in providing quality services to all AIAN children and their families.

NIHSDA is predominantly motivated to provide advocacy, leadership, development and professional growth opportunities to AIAN children and families, while preserving and respecting tribal identity.

Along with joining the NIHSDA, Singer leads fundamental roles in both head start and early head start programs. Singer also serves on the national work group for child advocacy. Singer will use her past experience from NHS to help make improvements and be a key contributor during her time with NIHSDA.

The election of Singer to the NIHSDA is well deserved.

In her time with NHS, Singer played a very important role in rehabilitating the Head Start program and helping it get to where it currently is. Much of the recent success of NHS is due to the hard work of Singer, who fought hard to keep the head start program for the Navajo Nation in strict compliance to the mandates of a 2014 federal review and to regain funding to make further improvements.

Through involvement with other organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children, Singer gained the experience needed to make real changes for programs providing services to families.

-More-

Page 2-2-2/ Singer Elected to National Indian Head Start Directors Association

She plans to meet with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of North Colorado to do studies to improve early childhood services in Indian Country. This will help Singer bring more improvements to NHS to benefit the children that learn from the programs offered by head start.

Singer's involvement in multiple organizations devoted to the early development of children shows her determination and dedication to help children who are in the most need of the various services provided by these organizations.

NIHSDA has recently revised their mission and values, as well as created a strategic plan to move forward into the next 24 months of operation. Singer's involvement with the NIHSDA benefits NHS, the two organizations share similar goals and values.

###

Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, AZ, capital of the Navajo Nation.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 10, 2015

President Shelly issues Mother’s Day statement, encourages family unity



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has been married to First Lady Martha Shelly for 50 years. He said she was an important part of the administration and traveled with him throughout his term of service to meet with Navajo people and assist elders and children. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Today is a time of family and unity.

The pillars of Navajo society, our mothers, are celebrated on this day for their tireless and unwavering dedication to family.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly encourages the Navajo people to spend time with family this Mother’s Day and to honor

those who brought us into this world.

“Happy Mother’s Day,” President Shelly proclaimed.

Please spend time to honor our mothers on this day, he said, adding that families need to join together to celebrate the matriarchs that brought life into the world.

“Do something special for your mothers today.

Whether it’s breakfast in bed, a cookout, or spending time at the movies, take care and honor our mothers on this day,” President Shelly said. “I want to thank First Lady Martha Shelly for keeping our family strengthened.

“She has been an important part of my presidency and I could not have done it without her love and support,” he

added.

The Shelly-Jim administration honors all mothers across the Navajo Nation on this day. They are the foundation for our tribe and we thank them for their unending love and dedication to the children of this great Nation.

Ahe’hee!



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 11, 2015

President Shelly breaks ground for Phase I of Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead



President Shelly broke ground for the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead on May 8. He was joined by staff from the NNDED and officials from the Thoreau Chapter. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

THOREAU, N.M.—Phase I of the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead is officially underway.

On the afternoon of May 8, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly broke ground in Thoreau for the proposed rail port that will import goods to the Four Corners and export agriculture, coal and oil throughout the country via the Intercontinental Railway.

The grand design of the three-phase project is to have a rail spur connecting Thoreau to Farmington. Thoreau's 380-acre industrial park will accommodate up to 20 companies through a transcontinental loading center.

"We have talked to New Mexico DOT and they really like this idea," President Shelly said. "The New Mexico House and Senate are also supportive"

He said the storage area

of one railcar is equivalent to four semi trailers.

Phase II of the project will involve construction of a four-lane highway on Highway 371. The middle of the roadway will be reserved for the railway, which will connect Farmington with Thoreau and then on to the Transcontinental Railway.

"The right of way will have to be widened from the 160-foot width it currently is today. The feasibility study has been done and we have an investor for the \$14 million cost on Phase I," President Shelly said.

New businesses will follow, he added, for the benefit of Thoreau residents.

Elroy Drake of Blue Horse Energy, LLC, said it's been a long journey to get to the groundbreaking ceremony for the project. Blue Horse Energy was selected to develop, operate, finance and

manage the operation of the railhead.

"Sovereignty. Indian tribes are sovereign. It's important to understand that," Drake said.

Sovereign authorities, such as taxation, played a significant role in providing the Navajo Nation self-determination for their future economic efforts, he said.

In 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Navajo Nation's right to tax companies doing business on the Nation paved the way for the Permanent Trust Fund and the Narbona Growth Fund, he added.

"I wrote the concept paper for the Permanent Trust Fund," Drake said. "It was capital resource creation through compounded rate of return. Now we have \$2.6 billion."

In 2013, the Navajo Nation established the Narbona Growth Fund, a for-profit company under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act, to execute business with states and foreign countries.

"The Narbona Growth Fund will be a holding company, so we can have subsidiaries under it. If a company wants to joint venture with us, it can be done," Drake said.

He noted that the Nation would not be subject to federal, state or corporate taxes.

"The Farmington power plants are closing units. Oil

prices are dropping. The Navajo Nation must look into other opportunities like partnering with BNSF," Drake said.

Pete Deswood, senior economic specialist with DED, said the Narbona Growth Fund is structured to allow the Navajo Nation to work with entities like BNSF.

"We have an investor waiting in the wings to help us with a bridge loan," Deswood said.

The Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead will not only establish the Navajo Nation's master lease agreement, but it will also be a business multiplier and create new shops for repairs, mechanics and other businesses associated with the industry.

The transcontinental loading center will reduce shipping costs, spur investment opportunities in new and existing markets and reduce the carbon footprint left behind by the trucking industry.

"That's what this is all about. The opportunity is there," Deswood said.

-30-





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 11, 2015

Navajo Police involved in high-speed pursuit, two suspects dead



Navajo Police were involved in a high-speed chase from Cortez, Colo. to Shiprock, which left two suspects dead and another arrested. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

SHIPROCK, N.M.—A high-speed chase from Cortez, Colo. and ending in Shiprock, N.M. ended with two suspects dead.

San Juan County Sheriff's Department, Navajo Police, N.M. State Police and other agencies were involved in a high-speed pursuit from Cortez, Colo. to Shiprock.

The incident occurred before noon. Police officers from San Juan County Sheriff's Department tried to pull over the suspects' vehicle, a black Nissan Pathfinder, when they were fired upon.

The chase eventually ended in Shiprock, when the suspects traveled down a dead street. A male and

female suspect were found dead in the vehicle and a third passenger, a male, fled the scene but was arrested before 1 p.m.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly commended the swift response by officers and said he was relieved no innocent people were hurt in the incident.

It is unclear whether police shot and killed the suspects or if they took their own lives in a murder-suicide.

The case is under investigation and the FBI is taking the lead.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2015

President Shelly announces return of \$1.2 million in FET funding



President Shelly said he is happy to announce that \$1.2 million in Navajo Nation Fuel Excise Tax dollars will be returned to Navajo DOT for road maintenance. The return of this funding has been a priority since he took office. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The Navajo Nation Fuel Excise Tax continues to make a difference in improving the quality of life for tribal members.

Since taking office in 2011, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has pushed for the return of FET dollars that's earmarked for the state of Ariz.

For every gallon of gasoline purchased, 18 cents is taxed and deposited into the Navajo Nation Road Fund. For every gallon of diesel, 25 cents is taxed and deposited into the fund. The state receives 6 cents from every

gallon of gas sold on the Nation.

FET funding is used for road improvement projects such as school bus routes, drainage crossings, access roads, maintenance, grading and many other enhancements.

After their inauguration, the Shelly-Jim administration faced 78 unfinished FET projects left behind by the previous administration.

On March 28, 2013, the Naa'bi'k'iyati' Committee placed a moratorium on new FET projects until the outstanding work was completed.

More than 60 of the projects have been completed since that time, allowing Navajo Division of Transportation to begin soliciting for new proposals.

"Completing the Fuel Excise Tax projects that were left in limbo was a priority for our administration," President Shelly said. "I'm happy to report that we've done our job and completed most of this work.

"Beyond that, we have been successful for the return of tribal FET dollars from the state of Arizona," he added.

President Shelly said servicing school bus routes has been the priority and that the new Huerfano bridge was testament to the work of his administration.

Over the past decade, FET dollars have averaged more than \$13 million annually on the Navajo Nation. From that amount, \$4 million goes to the state of Arizona, \$2 million is deposited into the Permanent Trust Fund, \$3 million is for the tribal road fund and \$3 million is utilized for road maintenance.

NDOT has followed the directives of President Shelly.

"President Shelly's directive was very clear: finish the outstanding FET projects," said Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT.

Chaco said his other priority was working with tribal legislators in the state legislature to begin recouping FET funds going into the state coffers.

"We are excited with the news that \$1.2 million will be returned to the Nation from Arizona for transportation infrastructure. This would not have been possible without the help of Senator Carlyle Begay," he said.

Sen. Begay said infrastructure development, especially transportation, has been a priority for him throughout his service in the Arizona Senate.

"Transportation is what binds our Nation together. It's what allows our kids to go to school, to go to work, to go to the hospital," Begay said.

The \$1.2 million in FET dollars returning to the Navajo Nation will equate to about \$750 per mile for unpaved school bus route maintenance, according to NDOT.

Begay said the \$9.1 billion budget packet that was passed by the Arizona Legislature this past session allowed for the return of \$1.2 million for the Navajo Nation.

"We'll continue to pursue policies that will enable us to become more self-determined and really look at avenues to retain greater economies of scale," Begay said. "Bringing more jobs, improving education, improving infrastructure.

"Much of that doesn't occur overnight. We'll continue making the small changes to move toward a more positive direction," he said.

-30-





NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2015

CONTACT:
Adrian Dotson | 928-380-2158

Navajo Head Start desperately needing facility upgrades

“Our facilities are dilapidated and are in need of major upgrades and renovations.”
—Sharon Singer, assistant superintendent

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Head Start serves roughly 2,200 children across the Navajo Nation. Most head start centers are utilizing facilities that are more than 30 years old. These outdated facilities are falling apart and are unsuitable for effective learning and educational development for children.

NHS has recently undergone a restructuring plan to improve and expand early childhood development services. The program is focused on preparing children for K-12 education by developing literacy, science and math skills. The plan also includes making much needed facility upgrades to the 96 head start centers across the Navajo Nation.

Studies have proven the quality, age and features of the building effect children’s ability to learn and retain information. Facilities on the Navajo Nation need to be modernized in order to most effectively educate young children, head start administrators say. Education facilities play a key role in the education process.

“Our facilities are dilapidated and are in need of major upgrades and renovations,” said Sharon Singer, assistant superintendent. “We want the best for all of our children, including the best facilities to facilitate learning and development.”

Newer facilities can improve a child’s overall learning of materials. In a study conducted by the Council of Educational Facility Planners, researchers found that students who were in new or renovated buildings had higher performance scores, especially in math. New structures help to make students feel safe which allows them to focus on their schooling. When children are not distracted by leaks, broken equipment or rundown facilitates, their attention is focused on what they are being taught.

New buildings will also benefit teachers and staff. In one study, educators in newer structures felt safer and more confident. When the instructor feels safe and confident in the classroom, children are the ones who benefit. Faculty can perform their job more effectively and students gain more knowledge.

-More-

Page 2-2-2/Needing Facility Upgrades

Air quality is an important part of the building and can affect more than a student's ability to learn. In some older buildings, contaminants such as asbestos, radon and formaldehyde float in the air. Children under the age of 10 are more vulnerable to these contaminants and could possibly get sick.

Indoor air quality can cause what the Environmental Protection Agency calls "sick building syndrome." Symptoms of this syndrome can include irritated eyes, nose and throat, upper-respiratory infections, nausea, dizziness, headaches, fatigue and sleepiness. When children are out sick, they miss out on learning and fall behind. With new facilities, air flow is better and these illness are less likely.

There currently is not enough money in the NHS budget to make all the necessary changes. NHS has set aside some funding for new facilities but it is not nearly enough to address the problem. NHS hopes to gain attention and support of the U.S. Congress and other law makers, and is also looking for donations and grants to make necessary improvements. For Navajo Head Start to reach its maximum potential, facilities will need to be renovated.

###

Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, AZ, capital of the Navajo Nation.



GOLDEN RULE DAY
Vice President Rex Lee Jim hosted Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day for the second year in Window Rock, page 2.



THOREAU RAILHEAD
Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly broke ground for the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead before finishing his term of office, page 7.



SALUTING A NAVAJO HERO
President Shelly honored Navajo Police Officer Alex K. Yazzie, who was killed in the line of duty so that the lives of others could be saved, page 11.

HÓZHOOJÍ NAHAT'ÁH BAA HANE'

MAY 2015
VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

A PUBLICATION OF THE NAVAJO NATION

EXECUTIVE BRANCH NEWS
WWW.NAVAJO-NSN.GOV



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the 8th Annual Zoo Fest and noted it was the fifth time he has attended the event since taking office in 2011. Early on in his administration, he adopted a golden eagle and made the commitment to construct an aviary for the magnificent birds. The aviary will be constructed after President Shelly approved more than \$400,000 for the project. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

President Shelly attends Zoo Fest, approves eagle aviary funding

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Parents and children came out in droves.

On May 2, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the 8th annual Navajo Nation Zoo Fest. Guest speakers, entertainment, a play area for kids and animals were featured at the free event.

The tribal zoo features more than 50 different species of animals indigenous to the Navajo Nation. It is also the only zoo in the country owned and operated by a Native American tribe.

“A small but dedicated staff takes care of the animals in our zoo. If you see them, please take a moment to thank them for their service,” President Shelly said. “From the black bears to the golden eagles, these animals

can be found across the Navajo Nation.”

He noted that the zoo operates on donations from the general public and tribal departments and entities that adopt animals. Entities adopting an animal provide funding for food, repairs for their enclosures and other needs.

Upon taking office in 2011, President Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly adopted a golden eagle that could not fly because it was missing a wing. Shellie the golden eagle is one of the many animals on display at the zoo.

In 2011, President Shelly also made the commitment to fund an eagle aviary exhibit at the zoo. The project will give the birds more room to fly and provide the **SEE Eagle >> Page 11**

President Shelly celebrates groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson’s Convenience Store in Church Rock

The junction of N.M. Highway 118 and Highway 566 was a hotbed of activity on the morning of May 9.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson’s convenience store and gas station in Church Rock.

Navajo businessman Alvin Thompson, council delegate Edmund Yazzie, Division of Economic Development director Albert Damon, chapter president Johnny Henry, representatives from the city of Gallup and state of N.M were also on hand to break ground for the new business.

“Today we are here to break ground and celebrate the construction of a new \$4 million

convenience store,” President Shelly said. “The Navajo Nation, through the Business Improvement Development Fund, contributed \$1.5 million for this project.

“The new business will create 20-plus new jobs for the community,” he added.

Financial partners in the project include the DED, Navajo Division of Transportation, Great Western Bank and personal funds from Thompson.

The new store is a response to the community needs for food, gas and other supplies. Thompson has operated a store in the heart of Church Rock for many years.

In business since 1964, Thompson made the move for a

better location to stimulate his business. The perfect location for the proposed gas station will undoubtedly generate traffic, as his business is directly across from “Campaign Hill.”

Thanking the staff of DED, Business Improvement Development Fund and the Eastern Regional Business Development Office, President Shelly noted that breaking ground for a new business on the Nation is always cause for celebration.

“Thank you Mr. Thompson for not giving up during the lengthy process involved in establishing a new business. It’s not easy, I know this reality firsthand,” President Shelly said.

Negotiating the bureaucracy



President Shelly praised the groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson’s Convenience Store in Church Rock recently. Located at entrance of Church Rock, he said the business will be a success. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

of regulations from federal, tribal, state and county laws is not only tedious, but complicated as well, he said.

“The Navajo Nation continues to grow. We must enable our small business owners to be

successful,” President Shelly said.

Once the business is off the ground and fully operational, the Navajo Nation will receive revenue from leasing, rental space and taxes.



Yá'át'ééh!

Welcome to the final issue of *Hózhoojį Nahat'á Ba Hane'* for the Shelly-Jim administration.

On behalf of Vice President Rex Lee Jim and I, we want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your leaders for the past four-plus years. It was a blessing to serve the Navajo people during this time in office.

The Navajo Nation is going through a paradigm shift and our tribal government is changing. Our young Navajos are returning home educated and determined to make the necessary changes for the future generations to come.

I always believed in giving our young and educated Navajos a chance to serve in this government. When we took office, I appointed a 29-year-old Navajo man to serve as our chief of staff. This was an unprecedented move.

During our administration I also enacted legislation that terminated the equivalency standard that was in place for employment with the tribal government.

Today, if you want a job with the Navajo Nation, you must have a college degree.

Our young and educated Navajos can now return home to participate in the tribal government. We worked with our tribal legislators to accomplish this shift in hiring practices.

In direct contrast to the previous administration, we have worked hard with our Navajo Nation Council and in doing so, we achieved many accomplishments on behalf of the Navajo people. We must work together, that is the key to getting things done.

Please respect your tribal leaders and your elders. We have gone the other direction from our traditional teachings and this is not good. The preservation of language and culture was a mainstay of our administration and we pray this continues for the future.

Diné bizaad is Navajo sovereignty. It is vital that we preserve our Navajo language and teach our children the importance of speaking it and ensuring its

survival for the generations ahead.

Take care of your elders and check up on them to ensure they have enough food, water and other necessities. They are living treasures and hold the rich history of our great Navajo Nation.

Take care of each other and bring our Nation back into harmony. We will move forward with peace and unity for our Navajo people.

Again, thank you for allowing us to serve the great Navajo Nation. It has been a privilege and an honor to be your leaders. May the Holy People bless the Navajo people and continue guiding us for the road ahead.

Ahe'hee!

Honorable Ben Shelly
NAVAJO NATION
PRESIDENT



NAVAJO NATION GOLDEN RULE DAY



Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim is the Golden Rule Ambassador for the Navajo Nation. He hosted the 2nd Annual Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day in April 2015. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

The premise of the Golden Rule is simple: treat others as you would like to be treated. This basic teaching has been around since biblical times and maybe even longer.

It's human nature to disagree with others, but finding the proper way to resolve such conflicts in a positive manner was the premise of Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day, which was celebrated on April 4 at the Navajo Nation Museum for the second year.

On July 3, 2013, the Golden Rule International selected Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim Golden Rule Ambassador for the Navajo Nation. The GRI and Committee of the Interfaith Peace Building Initiative selected him as ambassador.

"We want to treat others the way that we want to be treated. You have to listen to them, talk to them, observe them," Vice President Jim said. "To understand someone, you

must walk in their shoes for a mile or two, or three.

"The whole idea is to promote peace," he added.

Golden Rule Day is observed globally on April 5, with 120 nations across the globe participating. Ambassadorship is awarded to leaders internationally who have exemplified the Golden Rule in their everyday lives.

For the 2015 Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day, festivities began with a fun run and walk hosted by the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Program. The fresh air and exercise prepared participants for a day of guest speakers and information.

Living a healthy life has been a mainstay in Vice President Jim's term of office, as he ran across the Navajo Nation for all four years of the administration. Not just a marathon, either. We're talking hundreds of miles ran in the name of healthy living.

Council delegate Amber Crotty provided the welcome address as a member of the Health,

Education and Human Services Committee. Vice President Jim provided the keynote address.

Milissa Tatum, research professor of law at the University of Arizona, also spoke and provided an hour-long presentation on "Culture Clash: Turning Confrontation into Cooperation."

With lunch provided by the Casey Foundation, participants spent the day at the museum to learn about conflict resolution, negotiations and difficult conversations from a faith-based perspective.

Ama Doo Alchini Bighan, Inc. also presented information on domestic violence and the need to protect Navajo children from unhealthy home environments.

Vice President Jim encouraged all to make the extra effort to treat others with respect and positivity, regardless of the situation. The Golden Rule is alive and well and living on the Navajo Nation.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Chinle Denny's groundbreaking ceremony

President Shelly supported Navajo businessman Romero Brown for new restaurant construction



Navajo Nation President Vice President Rex Lee Jim is the Golden Rule Ambassador for the Navajo Nation. He hosted the 2nd Annual Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

CHINLE, Ariz.—On April 29, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly broke ground for a new Denny's restaurant in Chinle.

The site of the restaurant is located adjacent to the Program for Self Reliance office.

The celebration began with a traditional Navajo blessing. Participants blessed themselves with Tádídíín (corn pollen) and the site of the restaurant.

Navajo businessman Romero Brown joined President Shelly for groundbreaking ceremony.

Also participating in the shovel ceremony were President-Elect Russell Begaye and Vice

President-Elect Jonathan Nez. Chapter president Andy Ayze and chapter vice president Myron McLaughlin participated, along with tribal officials from Division of Economic Development and the Navajo Nation Council.

The group took photos at the site of the Denny's restaurant before convening at the Chinle Chapter House for the festivities.

President Shelly said, "I would like to thank Romero Brown for having the courage to step forward and start a new business here in Chinle. I want to also thank Albert Damon and the hardworking staff at the Division of

Economic Development."

Denny's will undoubtedly be a success, the president said, because Navajos love to eat. He said the Shelly-Jim administration pushed for innovative ideas for businesses during their term of office.

Projects like the Thoreau Rail Port, Narbona Growth Fund and federal

of the box" thinking to address the challenges of starting a business on the Navajo Nation, he said.

"We must work with our small businesses for the benefit of the Navajo Nation. These businesses create new jobs and stimulate the economy," President Shelly said. "It gives me great pleasure

Ahe'hee."

Romero Brown said work on the Denny's project began in 2008. He noted that President Shelly's involvement made the project a reality.

"We probably gave up three or four times. Native American Bank wanted to build this back in 2009, but after the economic crash they pulled back," Brown said. "It sure is hard to build a business on the Navajo Nation."

The Division of Economic Development and Regional Business Development Office stepped forward to help the Navajo entrepreneur. The Navajo Nation provided \$341,000 for the project. Native American Bank

provided \$2,150,000.

"When we build this Denny's, it's going to have 100 permanent employees. There will be 230 temporary construction jobs. We're going to pay about \$1 million per year in payroll. Then we're going to pay the Navajo Tax Commission about \$150,000 per year," Brown said.

Construction will take six months and the anticipated completion date is Oct. 17.

"In October, we'll have some Grand Slams," Brown said.

Brown noted that he wants to open a chain of Denny's restaurants across the Navajo Nation.

"I would like to thank Romero Brown for having the courage to step forward and start a new business here in Chinle."

EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program provided "out to break ground for a new Navajo-owned business.

President Shelly negotiates gaming compact



Top, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and other tribal leaders sat in the rostrum during the legislative sessions for the tribal gaming compact. Bottom, President Shelly and Speaker LoRenzo Bates listen in on the proceedings. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

SANTA FE—It came down to the wire.

With the 2015 N.M. Legislative Session expiring on March 21, Senate Joint Resolution 19 passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 61-5 on the evening of March 18.

The gaming compact now advances to Gov. Susana Martinez for approval before getting sent to the U.S. Department of Interior for final authorization.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly expressed appreciation for state lawmakers for approving the compact and not only saving thousands of jobs, but encouraging tribal economic independence.

“I want to say thank you to members of both the House

and Senate for approval of this compact,” President Shelly said. “Gaming is independence and revenue for the tribes.

“Thanks are in order for the governor’s office as well, they worked hard on this compact alongside us,” he added.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T’iistoh Sikaad, Tse’ Daa’ Kaan, Upper Fruitland) and council delegates Amber Crotty (Beclabito, Gadiiahi-To’Koi, Red Valley, Sheep Springs, Toadlena-Two Grey Hills, Tse’alnozt’i’i’) and Tuchoney Slim, Jr. (Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine, K’aibi’to, LeChee, Tonalea-Red Lake) joined President Shelly in the rostrum.

Rep. Sharon Clahchischilliage (R-San Juan) introduced SJR 19

to the House floor.

She described the joint resolution as a good bill and said five tribes united over the past three years to craft the compact with Gov. Martinez’s office.

“The tribe’s casinos have created thousands of jobs for New Mexicans and brings in millions of dollars every year in revenue sharing to the state of New Mexico,” Clahchischilliage said.

Time was of the essence, she said, because current compacts expire on June 30 and non-approval of SJR 19 would cause severe economic setbacks for the tribes.

She reviewed the main provisions of the compact: increased revenue sharing, limits on the number of gaming facilities for tribes, the extended 22-year expiration date, new provisions for comps and participation in the state self-exclusion program.

Many members of the House rose and stood in support of the bill, including Speaker. Ken Martinez (D-Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley).

He said the negotiations were a long and difficult process, especially after last year’s session that saw the Navajo compact stall in the Senate. The difference with the new compact is that the tribes worked together to create a compact in the interests of all.

“It affects everybody,” Martinez said. “I rise in strong support of this gaming compact.”

Rep. Debbie Rodella also rose in support of the compact on behalf of the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

She said in north central N.M., jobs are hard to come by.

“This compact will keep more than 200 people employed,” Rodella said. “It provides stability for the next 22 years.”

Gov. Susan Martinez and President Shelly signed the compact on April 13 and sent it to the Interior Department.

HUERFANO BRIDGE



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly announced that the most dangerous bridge in San Juan County has finally been replaced. The new Huerfano bridge opened to traffic on April 28, 2015. It was the first project constructed with Tribal Transportation Improvement Project funds since the Feb. 2013 direct funding agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

HUERFANO, N.M.—The new bridge is open.

In the eastern portion of the Navajo Nation, residents of the remote chapter of Huerfano have waited for more than two decades for the replacement of a bridge that carries residents across County Road 5150.

The bridge is located about five miles west of U.S. Highway 550, south of Bloomfield.

“The most dangerous bridge in San Juan County has been replaced,” President Shelly said. “This was the first major construction project funded by Navajo Division of Transportation since we entered into a direct funding agreement with the Federal Highway Administration in February of 2013.

“Now, school buses can safely transport children to school,” he added.

In 2013, the FHWA executed a direct funding agreement with NDOT, providing \$10 million to the tribal division annually.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is the other partner in the agreement. The BIA receives \$44 million annually from FHWA to service Navajo Nation roads.

Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT, said the new bridge is a major accomplishment for the

Navajo Nation, proving the tribe has the capacity to complete major road projects to meet the needs of Navajo communities.

“This is the first time NDOT took over the reins from the BIA to complete a project of this magnitude from start to finish. We are now partners with the BIA and the direct funding agreement with the FHWA is making a significant difference,” Chaco said.

He said the bridge replacement was an important project the Shelly-Jim administration focused on completing before leaving office.

The bridge opened to receive traffic on April 28. Previously, residents had to travel through a makeshift route down the Gallegos Wash to cross the roadway.

Bridge 8105 was completed at a cost of \$2.3 million. NDOT provided \$1.5 million to replace the bridge and the difference was paid by San Juan County and the N.M. gross receipts tax. For more than two decades, the greatest hurdle to constructing the 356-foot bridge was funding.

The old bridge was known as the most dangerous bridge in San Juan County because it had a rating of 13 on a scale of 1 to 100.

\$13.2 million for abandoned uranium mine cleanup plan

President Shelly praises U.S. DOJ announcement, pushes for more funding

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The U.S. Department of Justice announced a settlement agreement with the Navajo Nation to provide \$13.2 million for the cleanup evaluation of 16 abandoned uranium mines located across the Navajo Nation.

The first phase settlement agreement for the abandoned uranium mines will establish an environmental response trust to pay for the evaluations. The inspection of the 16 sites will initiate solutions for the final cleanup.

“The Navajo Nation is working with U.S. EPA for cleanup of uranium contamination that was abandoned upon tribal lands after the Cold War,” President Shelly said. “Countless Navajos have suffered from the health and environmental impacts from this contamination.

“It is our hope the U.S. will finally accept responsibility for the cleanup of this uranium contamination,” he added.

The U.S. DOJ is increasing their focus on environmental and health concerns across Indian Country. The commitment by the Obama administration to resolve these grievances from American Indian tribes is commendable, President Shelly said.

John Cruden, assistant attorney general for Justice Department Environmental and Natural Resources Division said the site evaluations are focused on mines that pose the most significant hazards.

“In partnership with our sister federal agencies, we will also continue our work to address the legacy of uranium mining on Navajo lands, including ongoing discussions with the Navajo Nation,” Cruden said.

Jared Blumenfeld, regional administrator for the U.S. EPA Pacific Southwest, said the EPA is proud to implement the historic settlement.

“It dovetails with our ongoing



From the \$1.2 billion Tronox settlement to the recently announced \$13.2 million funding for the evaluation of cleaning 16 abandoned uranium sites on the Navajo Nation, President Shelly was steadfast in his efforts to cleanup radioactive waste on tribal lands. He said there are still hundreds of sites in need of remediation for the safety of Navajo people and livestock. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

activities as we work together to make real progress on the environmental legacy of uranium mining on the Navajo Nation,” Blumenfeld said.

From 1944 to 1986, approximately four million tons of uranium ore was extracted from Navajo Nation lands. The U.S. DOJ said the federal government, through the Atomic Energy Commission, was the sole purchaser of uranium until

said the environmental response trust is officially named the “Navajo Nation Abandoned Uranium Mine Environmental Response Trust – First Phase.”

He said Sadie Hoskie was selected to serve as trustee for the Nation. Hoskie was the first executive director of Navajo EPA. Most recently, she has served at the U.S. EPA Region 8 in Denver.

“She brings a unique

Hoskie. The panel consisted of representatives from the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo EPA and the Dine’ Medicine Men’s Association.

Navajo DOJ demonstrated there were well qualified Navajos to fill these important positions, Tsosie said, adding that their goal of showcasing competency was achieved. He said the Navajo Nation was optimistic about receiving a comprehensive settlement to restore tribal lands and the environment back into harmony.

President Shelly said, “I welcome this preliminary settlement agreement that will address 16 abandoned uranium mine sites. We have always said the U.S. is responsible for the cleanup of uranium legacy sites.”

The 16 sites are orphaned mines because the companies that operated the sites are no longer in existence.

Stephen Etsitty, executive director of Navajo EPA, said there are hundreds more that

must be addressed.

“Sixteen abandoned uranium mines is a small number of the entire 521 sites on the current inventory,” Etsitty said. “However these 16 sites are high priority mines the Navajo Nation needs cleaned.

“They do not have a responsible party or viable company to provide the cleanup,” he added.

The Navajo Nation will continue to work with U.S. DOJ and the U.S. Department of Energy to provide cleanup of all abandoned uranium mines left on tribal lands.

The U.S. EPA website states, “Today the mines are closed, but a legacy of uranium contamination remains, including over 500 abandoned uranium mines as well as homes and drinking water sources with elevated levels of radiation.”

Potential health effects include lung cancer from inhalation of radioactive particles, as well as bone cancer and impaired kidney function from exposure to radionuclides in drinking water.

Although the legacy of uranium mining is widespread and will take many years to address completely, the collaborative effort of U.S. EPA, other federal agencies and the Navajo Nation will bring an unprecedented level of support and protection for the people at risk from these sites. Much work remains to be done, and US EPA is committed to working with the Navajo Nation to remove the most immediate contamination risks and to find permanent solutions to the remaining contamination on Navajo lands.



“The Navajo Nation is working with the U.S. EPA for cleanup of uranium contamination that was abandoned upon tribal lands after the Cold War.”

1966, when commercial sales of uranium began.

The AEC continued to purchase ore until 1970. The last uranium mine on the Navajo Nation shut down in 1986.

Harrison Tsosie, attorney general for the Navajo Nation,

combination of upper level administrative experience, technical environmental knowledge and a command of Navajo culture to this program,” Tsosie said.

A panel from the Navajo Nation made the selection of

President Shelly honors Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day, declares independence



President Ben Shelly has stood firm on acknowledging Navajo sovereignty and said leaders must not go against the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Navajo Nation Sovereignty is more than just another tribal holiday.

Tribal employees received eight hours off from work to mark the occasion, but its commemoration of independence must not be lost, said Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly.

On May 3, 1985, the tribal council established Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld tribal rights to impose taxes without approval of the U.S. Secretary of Interior.

The case was *Kerr-McGee v. Navajo Tribe*. The Navajo Nation's authority to tax energy companies and others involved in utilizing natural resources found on tribal lands was reaffirmed by the high court.

Since then the Possessory Interest Tax, Business Activity Tax and other tribal tariffs have brought in hundreds of millions of dollars to the tribal economy.

"Please remember the importance of this day, that the Navajo Nation has the authority and inherent

right to impose taxes on companies doing business on the Nation," President Shelly said.

He said the Navajo Nation's strength and execution of tribal sovereignty is evident in many developments throughout the government.

"For decades, the Navajo Nation was not included in the negotiations of mineral leases for coal and other natural resources found on our tribal lands," President Shelly said. "We fought hard to earn a seat at the table for these negotiations.

"Now, we have our own coal mine," he added.

Today, funding from natural resources in the form of taxes, leases, employment and other forms of economic development fund a large part of the tribal budget. In turn, these funds provide important direct services to the Navajo people.

The recent tribal election for the tribal presidency is another example of exercising Navajo sovereignty the president said, especially given the fact the process was carried out in a democratic, peaceful manner.

The various factions exercising their right to protest was a demonstration of tribal sovereignty, he said, and the subsequent election of a president and vice president.

"We operate a young

tribal government and we are changing processes that were written in the Navajo Nation Code to operate our government. Recent developments require that we change the law in accordance with the needs of the Navajo people," President Shelly said.

Tribal sovereignty was also executed recently when the Navajo Nation sat down at the table with Pueblo and Apache Nations in N.M. to formulate the tribal gaming compact with the state.

The N.M. Senate and House passed the bill, with many legislators lauding the Navajo Nation's decision to sit down with other tribes to hammer out an agreement that benefitted all. Because of this, Gov. Susana Martinez did not hesitate to sign off and approve the compact before forwarding it to the U.S. Department of Interior.

"We exercised Navajo sovereignty to pass a new gaming compact with the state of New Mexico," President Shelly said. "Now, we have an agreement in place for the next 22 years.

"Those gaming funds not only stimulate the economy, but they also provide direct services to the Navajo people. That's Navajo sovereignty," he added.

\$1.2 million in Navajo FET funds to be returned to Nation

The Navajo Nation Fuel Excise Tax continues to make a difference in improving the quality of life for tribal members.

Since taking office in 2011, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has pushed for the return of FET dollars that's earmarked for the state of Ariz.

For every gallon of gasoline purchased, 18 cents is taxed and deposited into the Navajo Nation Road Fund. For every gallon of diesel, 25 cents is taxed and deposited into the fund. The state receives 6 cents from every gallon of gas sold on the Nation.

FET funding is used for road improvement projects such as school bus routes, drainage crossings, access roads, maintenance, grading and many other enhancements.

After their inauguration, the Shelly-Jim administration faced 78 unfinished FET projects left behind by the previous administration.

On March 28, 2013, the Naa'bi'iyati' Committee placed a moratorium on new FET projects until the outstanding work was completed.

More than 60 of the projects have been completed since that time, allowing Navajo Division of Transportation to begin soliciting for new proposals.

"Completing the Fuel Excise Tax projects that were left in limbo was a priority for our administration," President Shelly said. "I'm happy to report that we've done our job and completed most of



SENATOR CARLYLE BEGAY

this work.

"Beyond that, we have been successful for the return of tribal FET dollars from the state of Arizona," he added.

President Shelly said servicing school bus routes has been the priority and that the new Huerfano bridge was testament to the work of his administration.

Over the past decade, FET dollars have averaged more than \$13 million annually on the Navajo Nation. From that amount, \$4 million goes to the state of Arizona, \$2 million is deposited into the Permanent Trust Fund, \$3 million is for the tribal road fund and \$3 million is utilized for road maintenance.

NDOT has followed the directives of President Shelly.

"President Shelly's directive was very clear: finish the outstanding FET projects," said Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT.

Chaco said his other priority was working with tribal legislators in the state legislature to begin recouping FET funds going into the state coffers.

"We are excited with the news that \$1.2 million will be returned to the Nation from Arizona for transportation infrastructure. This would not have been possible

without the help of Sen. Carlyle Begay," he said.

Sen. Begay said infrastructure development, especially transportation, has been a priority for him throughout his service in the Arizona Senate.

"Transportation is what binds our Nation together. It's what allows our kids to go to school, to go to work, to go to the hospital," Begay said.

The \$1.2 million in FET dollars returning to the Navajo Nation will equate to about \$750 per mile for unpaved school bus route maintenance, according to NDOT.

Begay said the \$9.1 billion budget packet that was passed by the Arizona Legislature this past session allowed for the return of \$1.2 million for the Navajo Nation.

"We'll continue to pursue policies that will enable us to become more self-determined and really look at avenues to retain greater economies of scale," Begay said. "Bringing more jobs, improving education, improving infrastructure.

"Much of that doesn't occur overnight. We'll continue making the small changes to move toward a more positive direction," he said.

NAÁTS'ÍILID

Nááts'íilid is the rainbow, or Navajo sovereignty in *Dine' bizaad*. The rainbow symbolizes the sovereignty that protects the Navajo Nation. It can be found on both the Great Seal of the Navajo Nation and the Navajo Nation Flag.

Beyond that, Navajo sovereignty is a way of life for the Navajo people and it must be protected at all costs. Many have tried to step over our tribal sovereignty, but we must ensure it is respected and maintained for the future of the Navajo Nation.

Dine' bizaad is Navajo sovereignty.

Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead

President Shelly breaks ground to officially start Phase I for economic development



President Ben Shelly broke ground for the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead before ending his term of service as the leader of the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

THOREAU, N.M.— Phase I of the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead is officially underway.

On the afternoon of May 8, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly broke ground in Thoreau for the proposed rail port that will import goods to the Four Corners and export agriculture, coal and oil throughout the country via the Intercontinental Railway.

The grand design of the three-phase project is to have a rail spur connecting Thoreau to Farmington. Thoreau's 380-acre industrial park will accommodate up to 20 companies through a transcontinental loading center.

"We have talked to New Mexico DOT and

they really like this idea," President Shelly said. "The New Mexico House and Senate are also supportive"

He said the storage area of one railcar is equivalent to four semi trailers.

Phase II of the project will involve construction of a four-lane highway on Highway 371. The middle of the roadway will be reserved for the railway, which will connect Farmington with Thoreau and then on to the Transcontinental Railway.

"The right of way will have to be widened from the 160-foot width it currently is today. The feasibility study has been done and we have an investor for the \$14 million cost on Phase I," President Shelly said.

New businesses will follow, he added, for

the benefit of Thoreau residents.

Elroy Drake of Blue Horse Energy, LLC, said it's been a long journey to get to the groundbreaking ceremony for the project. Blue Horse Energy was selected to develop, operate, finance and manage the operation of the railhead.

"Sovereignty. Indian tribes are sovereign. It's important to understand that," Drake said.

Sovereign authorities, such as taxation, played a significant role in providing the Navajo Nation self-determination for their future economic efforts, he said.

In 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Navajo Nation's right to tax

companies doing business on the Nation paved the way for the Permanent Trust Fund and the Narbona Growth Fund, he added.

"I wrote the concept paper for the Permanent Trust Fund," Drake said. "It was capital resource creation through compounded rate of return. Now we have \$2.6 billion."

In 2013, the Navajo Nation established the Narbona Growth Fund, a for-profit company under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act, to execute business with states and foreign countries.

"The Narbona Growth Fund will be a holding company, so we can have subsidiaries under it. If a company wants to joint

venture with us, it can be done," Drake said.

He noted that the Nation would not be subject to federal, state or corporate taxes.

"The Farmington power plants are closing units. Oil prices are dropping. The Navajo Nation must look into other opportunities like partnering with BNSF," Drake said.

Pete Deswood, senior economic specialist with DED, said the Narbona Growth Fund is structured to allow the Navajo Nation to work with entities like BNSF.

"We have an investor waiting in the wings to help us with a bridge loan," Deswood said.

The Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead will not only establish the Navajo

Nation's master lease agreement, but it will also be a business multiplier and create new shops for repairs, mechanics and other businesses associated with the industry.

The transcontinental loading center will reduce shipping costs, spur investment opportunities in new and existing markets and reduce the carbon footprint left behind by the trucking industry.

"That's what this is all about. The opportunity is there," Deswood said.



Navajo Land Summit II focuses on land, tribal paradigm shift for progress



President Shelly encouraged the audience comprised of tribal employees, chapter officials, CLUP committee members and concerned citizens to take advantage of the knowledge shared during the 2nd Annual Navajo Land Summit. He said new innovations like the Navajo Land Title Data System will not only automate antiquated tribal processes, but also work in tandem with the Navajo Nation General Leasing Act, which was approved by the Interior Department in May 2014. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

TWIN ARROWS, Ariz.—Pay attention. Listen. Take notes.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly's advice to the more than 800 registered attendees of the 2nd Annual Navajo Nation Land Summit was straightforward.

"Please be sure you attend the sessions and take good notes to take back with you to your offices," President Shelly said. "There's a lot of good information that will be shared with you over the next few days.

For a second year, the Navajo Land Department provided information on the rigors of tribal land management and the numerous layers of data that will be available to Navajos and non-Navajos alike. Once again, the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort played host.

The Navajo Nation Land Title Data System, a new database with exceptional firewall protection and countless tiers of information providing real time data on everything from roads, infrastructure, forested areas, water wells and right-of-way areas, is the crown jewel of the Land Department.

President Shelly said, "This new database will automate services for chapter members, tribal officials, and the general public. People no longer have to travel to Window Rock to find information."

Data is literally at the fingertips of the general public, as the NLTDS will be accessible on desktops, iPads and even smart phones. The database works in tandem with the Navajo Nation General Leasing Act of

2013, which was enacted by the U.S. Department of the Interior in the summer of 2014.

"The Navajo Nation now has authority over all leases on the Navajo Nation, with the exception of minerals and right-of-ways. Those two are still under the jurisdiction of the BIA," President Shelly said.

The Navajo Nation is vastly different from the tribal government of 15 years past, he said, noting that technology savvy chapters are finding self-determination and transparency through online tools like the Woven Integrated Navajo Data System.

"Chapter officials attending the land summit will learn about creating the most effective Community Land Based Plans that serve

as blueprints to their communities," President Shelly said. "Gone are the days of building anywhere on the land.

"Everything is now recorded, monitored and protected to ensure we are getting the most of our tribal lands," he added.

Paradigm Shift

"The Beginning of a Paradigm Shift that Promotes Independence" was the theme of the summit. Attendees included chapter officials, council delegates, tribal enterprises, community land use planning committees, grazing officials and land boards.

Moroni Benally, executive director of the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, provided the welcome address and encouraged the audience to realize that

"land is life."

"This is an incredibly important summit, not just for what's happening now, but for the future of the Navajo Nation," Benally said. "The information you leave with becomes power."

He said it's the power to change existing laws and policies, the power to change the way communities are organized, the power to change the way people use land.

Dissecting the theme of the summit, Benally explained that a paradigm is a set of rules or guidelines, whether it's federal or tribal policies, school board directives or the Red Book that governs the Eastern Land Board.

Presently, a paradigm shift is occurring at DNR, he said, ever since he took over the reins to the division earlier this year.

"I began reviewing programmatic agreements with the federal government and realized that a lot of times, the Navajo Nation is in the back seat," Benally said.

Updating outdated policies can be done with a little hard work and persistence, he said, because federal regulations are not carved in stone.

"There's always creative ways around existing law. That's what I kept telling the federal officials and now, we are changing the criteria for selecting contractors that are working on the Navajo Nation," Benally said. "This did not require Navajo Nation Council or Congressional approval."

Benally challenged the attendees to take control of the land so cities, towns, schools, factories and

hospitals could be created, all which create a tax base to draw money from for services to the people.

"Listen carefully. This is the beginning. It all starts with land," he said.

Navajo Nation Strategic Plan

Arbin Mitchell, chief of staff for the Office of the Speaker, said the land is our Mother.

"As Navajo people, we have simple idea, a simple plan," Mitchell said. "There are four items in our strategic plan: *Nitsáhákees*, *Nahat'á*, *Iiná*, and *Sihasin*.

"(The plan) goes around and around. You plant it out, you think it out," he said.

The four concepts of thinking, planning, life and hope are the foundation for the Navajo Nation.

Mitchell said his decades of experience serving at the highest levels of the Navajo Nation Executive Branch has taught him that progress begins at the local level.

Citing Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, the Local Governance Act, he said certified chapters have an opportunity to issue their own business site or home site leases.

"Any plan that starts in Window Rock is hard to finish. If it starts from the community, it's not that hard to complete. Local empowerment is about doing for yourself," Mitchell said.

The Navajo Land Department is currently uploading documents to the Navajo Land Title Data System and they anticipate the automation process to be completed in the next year or two.

President Shelly funds more than \$12.5 million in supplemental appropriations for projects

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has executed his line item veto authority on Legislation No. 0089-15, which was requesting more than \$19.7 million in supplemental funding from the Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance.

The legislation had many projects listed, from power line extensions, chapter house construction, capital improvement projects, summer youth employment, public employment program, zoo aviary, water line

extension, veterans and Navajo Transitional Energy Company.

President Shelly said, “When my administration first took office, the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance was in a deficit of more than \$22 million.”

He said the administration worked diligently to replenish the UUFB and maintained the tribal policy of keeping the balance above the 10 percent threshold.

“Therefore, my administration will not leave office with a deficit

in the UUFB,” President Shelly said. “After careful consideration, I will exercise my line item veto authority.”

The Teesto Chapter request for \$2,922,425 to rebuild their chapter house has been vetoed. The \$1,500,000 request for summer youth employment has been vetoed. The \$1,500,000 for the public employment program has been vetoed. The request for \$1,000,000 for veterans has been vetoed.

The president noted that the Teesto Chapter

has an existing claim pending with Navajo Risk Management and said they need to proceed with the claim to resolve their funding needs.

“On behalf of Vice President Jim and I, we would like to express our appreciation to the Navajo Nation Council,” President Shelly said. “As we end our duties, the fact that our administration was fiscally responsible leaves us with great pride.”

A total of \$12,859,429.21 of projects were approved and funded by President Shelly.

President Shelly cuts ribbon for Shiprock Youth Center

SHIPROCK, N.M.—It’s for the kids.

This morning, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the grand opening of the Shiprock Youth Center and snipped the ribbon to officially open the spacious facility to the general public.

On March 6, 2013, President Shelly broke ground for the new youth center. The grand opening comes almost two years to the day.

“Our Navajo kids need opportunities to do something constructive with their time. This new facility will give them the opportunity to play sports and have a safe and sanitary place to meet,” President Shelly said.

The \$6.6 million facility was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Measuring 22,000 square feet, the center features rooms for art, games, learning, technology, media and the open ceiling gym.

The new facility is a welcome distraction for Navajo kids seeking recreational activities that don’t involve drug or alcohol abuse.

President Shelly said the war against drugs and alcohol on the Navajo Nation is a daily challenge.

“We need to teach our children about the dangers of these addictive lifestyles,” he said.

The new multipurpose building goes a long way toward addressing those dangers, in addition to replacing the dilapidated old facility, which is more than 50 years old.

Our kids are the future leaders of tomorrow, the president said, adding that more youth centers like the one in Shiprock need to be constructed at chapters across the Navajo Nation.

“First Lady and I have dedicated our lives to protecting Navajo children,” President Shelly said. “It started at our home with our kids and grandkids.

“Our homes are the first learning centers for our kids,” he added.

Thanking the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, Navajo Housing Authority, Division of Dine’ Education and the Office of Dine Youth, President Shelly said it was a collaborative effort that made the project a reality.

Design and Engineering Services worked with Dyron Murphy for the architecture and design. Oakland-Arviso provided the construction.

President Shelly said the 2014 presidential election taught the Navajo people the most important lesson of all – the preservation of self-identity.

“(The election) taught us the importance of preserving our Navajo language and culture. I have great hope that this new facility will help us preserve those elements in our lives,” he said.

PRESIDENT SHELLY HONORS ALEX K. YAZZIE

FARMINGTON, N.M.—Thousands of people gathered.

The funeral services for fallen Navajo Police officer Alex K. Yazzie was emotional.

Police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel and other first responders answered the call to pay final respect to one of their comrades.

They came from different states, different counties and different tribes. But the common thread was that they all worked to serve the public and the greater good.

Members from the U.S. Armed Forces were also in attendance, with many wearing the dress uniforms in honor of the departed.

A large American flag draped between two cranes fully extended marked the entrance to the Pinon Hill Community Church, which was filled to capacity. Police officers stood along the walls of church interior

in a protective circle.

For those unable to be seated, they stood in the back and watched the proceedings, while hundreds of other stood outside the church and waited.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly provided remarks.

He said the Nation is grieving and saddened by the loss of a tribal officer that gave his life to protect others.

“I would like to thank all the law enforcement officers that are here from the different agencies. Thank you for being with us and with the family,” President Shelly said.

Police officers face many challenges: stress and emotional toll, he said, adding that interaction with the public is usually met with a sharp eye and equally cutting words.

“The people you stop, they never have a nice word to say to (officers.) They chew on you, they

give you a hard time,” President Shelly said. “Domestic violence calls are the most dangerous.”

In spite of this, brave men and women don the uniform and protect their communities, he noted, with the understanding that they have only three to six seconds to react in dangerous situations.

Beyond those daily challenges, Navajo Police have to work with less. Whether it’s funding to purchase equipment, pay salaries or simple manpower, there’s not enough to cover the tremendous land base of the Navajo Nation, he added.

The times are changing.

“When I was growing up, I remember a non-Navajo, hungry or thirsty, another Navajo would pick him up, feed him and give him water,” President Shelly said. “What’s today’s world? Right now, if you’re in that situation, you get beat up or you get

killed.

“These are Navajos I’m talking about. Society is changing,” he added.

With the increase population and changing social values, President Shelly said more funding is needed from the federal, state and tribal governments to properly equip officers for changing times.

“We are shorthanded. Believe it or not, the Navajo Police officers that are here, one officer has to cover 1,282 persons. Farmington has more officers as whole, than the Navajo Police as a force,” President Shelly said.

Upon concluding his address, President Shelly presented the family of Alex K. Yazzie the Navajo Nation Flag and saluted his brave service and tragic sacrifice.



President Shelly praises Navajo Beef initiative, supports hard work of Navajo ranchers



President Shelly praised the Navajo Beef program with Labatt Food Service and said the superior grade beef is something Navajos all over the world can be proud of. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Since 2011, the Navajo Beef initiative has been growing and offering unmatched culinary delights at casinos owned and operated by Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

On Feb. 10, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with representatives of NNGE and Labatt Food Service at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort at Santa Ana Pueblo to discuss progress with the Navajo Beef program.

The group dined on Navajo Beef prepared by the executive chef of the Corn Maiden Restaurant for a high class dining experience that was one part celebration and one part demonstration.

Joining in the dinner were representatives from NNGE, Labatt, Navajo ranchers participating in

the program and board members from gaming.

The Labatt Premium Verified Native American Beef program partners select Navajo ranchers with Navajo casinos. The company has expanded their program to include other tribes and pueblos.

Navajo cattle is purchased, placed on to feed and ultimately processed into boxed beef items upon market readiness. The beef is then distributed to Navajo casinos to be enjoyed by the consumer.

Local Navajo ranchers ship their cattle to feedlots owned by Billy Hall, a cattle buyer who owns the number one certified Angus feedlot in the country. From there, cattle are shipped to a harvest facility and then to direct source meat processing facilities.

Finally, Labatt distributes the beef to casinos, schools, travel and health centers in the southwest. “Navajos supporting Navajos” is the overarching theme.

President Shelly said the Navajo Beef initiative is not only a source of pride, but also a tremendous opportunity for self-sufficiency.

“For generations, we have known that livestock is an important Navajo way of life that must be preserved,” President Shelly said. “By working with our partners at Navajo Gaming Enterprise and Labatt, we are enriching our tribal economy and traditional way of life.

“We look forward to growing this partnership for the generations to come,” he added.

Labatt is the eighth largest broad line food

service distributor nationally, said Al Silva, chief operating officer of Labatt Food Service.

Silva said the idea to incorporate Navajo Beef into the menus of Navajo casinos was an important step to prove the quality of the meat. The decision by NNGE to become the first customer for Navajo Beef has opened the door to other opportunities like tribal schools and hospitals.

The partnership connects producers with consumers and Navajo cattle ranchers are able to market their cattle at a premium and increase their bottom line for economic stability.

In 2013, Navajo ranchers had a ranching economic impact of \$439,768 through sales of their cattle. In 2014, that number increased by 15

percent to \$745,940 for 236,000 pounds of usable meat harvested.

In 2014, there were 481 head of cattle in the Navajo Beef Program. For 2015, that number grew to 561 and estimates for future project continued growth.

Silva said, “You can see the product is superior to anybody else’s product. There’s no apology there.”

The steaks served at the dinner were flavorful and marbled with succulent cuts of tenderness that Silva says is unmatched because of ranching techniques incorporating a low stress environment and low antibiotic use.

Navajo ranchers are literally doting on their head of cattle, Silva said, ensuring they are vaccinated, watered and fed. They are herded by cattlemen on foot or on

horseback, which reduces the stress on the cattle and in turn means a tender meat product.

“A calf needs a booster shot like your kid needs a booster shot,” Silva said.

Proper vaccinations mean the cattle are less susceptible to diseases and illnesses. Healthy cattle equals weight increase and a superior product for the growing niche market of Navajo Beef.

Last year, Navajo ranchers averaged \$1,200 per head through the Navajo Beef program, Silva said. Labatt serves Navajo Beef at all Navajo casinos and plans are to pitch the product to other industries on the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly is proud of the Navajo Beef initiative and said the steak was the best he’s ever tasted.

EAGLE AVIARY FUNDING



President Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly adopted Shellie, a golden eagle with an injured wing, upon taking office in 2011. Deeply moved by the plight of these majestic birds of prey, President Shelly resolved to fund an eagle aviary for the protection of the eagles. He said Navajo people, especially young ones, must learn about the conservation efforts for the golden eagles on the Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Continued from Page 1
public with an exhibit dedicated to conservation of the birds of prey.

“This week, I will sign off and approve legislation to fund more than \$400,000 for the construction of the eagle aviary. I have been very passionate about this project,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly will approve \$401,514 in supplemental funding to cover the remaining construction costs for the project.

In 2011, the Navajo Nation became the fourth Native American tribe in the U.S. to be permitted for an eagle aviary. The aviary measures 4,133 square feet and will be located in the center of the zoo.

Drinking ponds, storage, examination rooms, office space, an observation area and gallery are included in the conceptual design of the aviary. The eagle aviary area will have 2,533

square feet and will house up to 30 injured, non-releasable golden eagles.

President Shelly said, “The new aviary will provide live eagle feathers to the Navajo people through a program established by the Navajo Nation Zoo and Navajo Fish and Wildlife Department.”

David Mikesic, curator of the Navajo Nation Zoo, said naturally shed feathers from the golden eagles are going to be distributed in a legal manner pursuant to federal regulations for traditional purposes.

Not only will this expedite the process for eagle feathers, but it will also reduce illegal actions on eagles in the wild, he said.

The aviary will also

have a security system to monitor the eagles.

A federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wild Life Service provided \$200,000 for initial design and engineering of the aviary in 2014. The total project cost is estimated at \$757,935.

President Shelly said the new aviary is a chance to teach Navajo people about eagle conservation, especially young children.

“The Navajo Nation will become known as an aviary tribe and we will continue to push for the protection of these magnificent birds. It is our hope that the new aviary will attract more visitors and hopefully, more funding.

“This is your zoo, take pride in it,” he added.

“I will approve legislation to fund more than \$400,000 for the construction of the aviary.”

Vice President Rex Lee Jim visits rural advanced education center



ZAPATA, Tex.— Advancing education and technology, Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim met with Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, and officials from the Harvard Medical School Global Health Delivery

Program and the U.S. Economic Development Administration in Austin and Zapata County in Texas as he toured the Zapata County Technical and Advanced Education Center (ZTAC).

“The Navajo Nation is encouraged by the success of this facility. We envision a similar facility in the Navajo Nation focused on education, training, career development for Navajo people in healthcare education,” said Vice President Jim.

ZTAC opened its doors in 2011 and provides educational and training opportunities

for approximately 90 students who take college courses in English, history and math from Laredo Community College through videoconferencing and in-person with adjunct professors.

The vice president said a facility like this in the Navajo Nation would serve as a model for public, private and academic partnerships in community health and education and will result in job creation for Navajo citizens and better health outcomes for our most vulnerable citizens living off road on Navajo lands.

HONORING NAVAJO POLICE HERO ALEX K. YAZZIE



On March 26, 2015, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly honored Navajo Police Officer Alex K. Yazzie during funeral services at Pinon Hills Community Church in Farmington. Having served as a N.M. State Police officer for a period of four years, President Shelly said he had firsthand knowledge of the dangers law enforcement officers face on a daily basis. Officer Yazzie was lost in the line of duty on March 19, while protecting others from an armed gun man. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

Diné Binaat'áanii Bił Da'ínííshjí T'áá Náás Diné Yá Deílníísh

At the Navajo Nation Executive Branch, we continue to work on behalf of the Navajo Nation. It is our responsibility to carry out the administrative functions of the tribal government.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim extend thanks and gratitude to our divisions, departments and programs for your loyal service on behalf of the Navajo people.

Our employees are the greatest natural resource for the Navajo Nation. By providing direct services to the Navajo people, you are at the seat of power for our tribal government.

We continue to work together with our partners at the Legislative and Judicial Branches. Together, we can achieve great things for our Navajo Nation. Ahe'hee!

Navajo Nation Divisions and Offices

Division of Community Development
Division of Dine' Education
Division of Economic Development
Division of Finance
Division of Public Safety
Division of General Services
Division of Health
Division of Human Resources
Division of Natural Resources
Division of Social Services
Division of Transportation

Navajo Environmental Protection Agency
Navajo Nation Gaming Regulatory Office
Navajo Nation Washington Office

Office of Miss Navajo Nation
Office of Management and Budget
Office of the President and Vice President
Office of the Navajo Tax Commission
Office of Telecommunication Regulatory Commission

THE NAVAJO NATION
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT
P.O. BOX 7440
WINDOW ROCK, AZ 86515
PHONE: 928-871-7000
FAX: 928-871-4025
WWW.PRESIDENT.NAVAJO-NSN.GOV



THE NAVAJO NATION
BEN SHELLY PRESIDENT
REX LEE JIM VICE PRESIDENT



May 14, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez broadcast cabinet appointments, graduation message at KTNN AM 660 studios



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez shared news of key cabinet appointments and a special graduation message to Navajo students across the country. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— It is the “Awakening of a New Dawn.”

That statement is more than a campaign slogan. It is a change in consciousness for the Navajo people, as the Begaye-Nez Administration begins their term of service.

Earlier this afternoon, President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez visited the studios of KTNN AM 660 to announce cabinet appointments and the agreement signed during the Presidential Inauguration on May 12.

“Thank you for your prayers and support. We are very appreciative,” said President Begaye.

Vice President Nez introduced himself and said, “Thank you to everyone who joined and watched our inauguration. I want to congratulate the new Navajo Board of Elections Supervisors.”

In direct contrast to the

previous administration, there will be no separation of duties and responsibilities between the president and vice president. Instead, President Begaye and Vice President Nez will work together to make decisions in the best interest of the Navajo people.

Taking turns to speak and share their message during the KTNN broadcast, the new leaders of the Navajo Nation displayed their teamwork approach.

President Begaye said key cabinet appointments for the administration include Roland Becenti as the executive director of Navajo Division of

Transportation, Jackson Brossy as executive director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office, and Biddah Becker as the executive director of Division of Natural Resources.

Vice President Nez announced the appointment of Terrelene Massey as executive director of the Division of Social Services, Ethel Branch as Attorney General and Wenona Benally as executive director for Navajo-Hopi Land Commission.

The administration will work on many different projects and will take a look at the agreement that was presented by the previous administration during the inauguration.

The agreement signed during the inauguration was done in the spirit of cooperation and transitioning to the “Awakening of a New Dawn” for the Navajo people.

President Begaye said, “We

President Begaye said, “We already spoke about our position on the Grand Canyon Escalade. We don’t support it.”

The media reported erroneous accounts that we supported the Escalade. We do not, he said.

Vice President Nez said the administration plans to continue broadcasting weekly to report on news from the Executive Branch.

“We visited students from Navajo Head Start. They speak Navajo very well and it was impressive. We appreciate the invitations to speak at your schools,” Vice President Nez said. “Congratulations to our promotees and graduates of 2015.

“Reach for the stars. Thank you to the parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts for encouraging our kids,” he said.

As the cabinet appointments indicate, this administration is bringing home our skilled and educated Navajos, the message they spoke of throughout their campaign.

“We want to open the door back up to you to build our Navajo Nation. God bless,” Vice President Nez said.

President Begaye said, “It’s the ‘Awakening of a New Dawn.’ We’ll move our Nation forward with K’eh and Hozho’. We need your prayers. Thank you and God bless you all.”

“We already spoke about our position on the Grand Canyon Escalade. We don’t support it.”

will review these projects and see if they are worthwhile initiatives to pursue. It’s important to understand they were the priorities of the previous administration.

“Our administration is advancing good, worthwhile projects,” President Begaye said.

In response to the Grand Canyon Escalade Project,





May 14, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez immediately respond to Tohajiilee emergency



President Russell Begaye quickly responded to a declaration of emergency issued by Tohajiilee Chapter due to lack of water services for 90 housing units at an NHA subdivision on May 15. He will be visiting the chapter on May 17 to ensure their concerns are alleviated until the water well is repaired. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Shortly before 6 p.m. on May 15, the Tohajiilee Chapter issued a declaration of emergency due to lack of water for 90 housing units operated by Navajo Housing Authority. Chapter president Raymond Secatero stated, “The community

of Tohajiilee is declaring a state of emergency for the 90 homes that were impacted.” President Russell Begaye responded immediately and instructed Office of the President and Vice President staff to work with NHA and the Navajo Nation Department of

Emergency Management to address the crisis.

“We have our emergency personnel assisting with the water crisis. The Department of Emergency Management has been contacted and we have water delivered in the morning,” said President Begaye.

“We encourage residents to use caution and remain safe during this emergency. The situation is being addressed,” he said.

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed and said residents must take a proactive role in addressing the situation.

Vice President Nez said, “We encourage residents to check on each other. In an emergency like this, we must execute and recognize self-sufficiency and self-reliance.”

The immediate response to the emergency has ensured that residents will have water before noon on Sat.

Priscilla Tsinigine, housing director for the NHA Tohajiilee housing management office, said water well number 5 was not working and that it

would take a few days for repairs by the Tohajiilee Water Department.

“In coordination with the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management and Indian Health Services, we have located water truck,” Tsinigine said.

In the meantime, NHA has setup 24 portable toilets at the housing subdivision for residents.

Rose Whitehair, director of NNDEM, said, “Navajo Tribal Utility Authority will be sending out a water tanker in the morning, although east Tohajiilee is not within in their jurisdiction.”

“We are thankful for the cooperation of all who responded,” she added.

President Begaye commended the participating agencies for the swift response and assured residents that water is on the way.

The NHA housing management office anticipates repair of the water well to be completed in a few days.



NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 16, 2015

CONTACT:
Adrian Dotson | 928-380-2158

Navajo Head Start teachers graduate from Arizona State University

Cohort, partnership a success

TEMPE, Ariz.—Sharon H. Singer, assistant superintendent of the Navajo Department of Diné Education, and Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye congratulated three Navajo Head Start teachers who graduated from the Mary Lou Fulton College at Arizona State University (ASU) on May 15.

The three students who participated in the cohort include School Readiness Coach Samantha Johnson from Region I-Shiprock, School Readiness Coach Rolanda White from Region I-Shiprock, and Teacher Percilla Shortman from Region IV-Tuba City. The three graduated with a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in early childhood education.

Navajo Head Start has built a strong relationship with the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at ASU. The cohort is intended to provide educators an opportunity to continue their education and in return, bring their experiences and specialized study back to Navajo Head Start to help strengthen its childhood development services.

Singer said she is excited to see the teachers back in the classrooms.

“They have worked very hard through the whole restructuring [of Navajo Head Start] going on three years. Despite all the challenges, they have maintained the momentum. They are certainly role models for the rest of our staff,” said Singer minutes before the convocation began. “We look forward to having them [back] in the classrooms—so that all they have learned will be brought back to the people.”



ASU graduates Percilla Shortman, Rolanda White, and Samantha Johnson meet Ira A. Fulton, husband to Mary Lou Fulton, the college's namesake.

Singer explained the cohort is a great program for Navajo Head Start employees to further their education and to strengthen Head Start's vision to provide the best possible early childhood educational services. Navajo Head Start provides tuition assistance for employees earning a degree or advanced degree from the Mary Fulton Teachers College as long as the student-employee remains in good standing with the college and ASU.

The graduates met the college's namesake Mary Lou Fulton and her husband Ira A. Fulton during a meet-and-greet and thanked Navajo Head Start, ASU, the college, and the Navajo Nation for working together to help teachers further their education. All expressed their desire to continue on with their education and obtain their doctorate degrees.

"We have a momentum going and I am excited to see where Head Start will take us," said Shortman. "Opportunities like this don't happen to a lot of people. I consider myself blessed. What an opportunity?! An education that I can use and share with others."

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye was also in attendance, along with staff from the Navajo Department of Diné Education. The delegation visited the campus at ASU and met with ASU leadership, attended a tribal leader's reception, the American Indian Convocation and the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College Convocation.

President Begaye praised Navajo Head Start and ASU for its collaboration. He expressed his anticipation for an expansion of other programs such as agriculture, parks and recreation, and technology to devise similar educational programs and partnerships. He believes the cohort between Navajo Head Start and ASU should serve as a model for future programs.

"Thank you for having that insight and foresight in getting this relationship established," President Begaye said to Singer and Dr. Lamont Yazzie. "We really appreciate ASU because this is innovative. You got to be willing to get out into the community."

Singer explained, "Next year, we plan to graduate 16 more [with] bachelor's degrees."

###

Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, AZ, capital of the Navajo Nation.



May 17, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye inspects Tohajiilee water well, meets with chapter president



President Russell Begaye inspects the Tohajiilee water well pump that failed on May 15, after being in service for 15 months. The chapter estimated the cost to replace the pump and the galvanized steel pipes at \$30,000. President Begaye also met with the chapter president Raymond Secatero. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

TOHAJIILEE, N.M.—Water well number five has been repaired.

On Sunday morning, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye visited the Tohajiilee NHA housing development and the inoperable water well to ensure the necessary repairs were made expeditiously for the residents.

Children riding bicycles circled around the neighborhood streets as President Begaye checked on the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority water tanker parked in the neighborhood to supply residents with potable water.

Several portable restrooms provided by NHA also lined the neighborhood streets for use by residents.

“Thank you to NTUA for assisting our Navajo families in the community here,” President Begaye said. “Although they don’t provide services for this portion of the Navajo Nation, they still came out to help.

“We also appreciate the assistance of the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management and NHA,” he added.

The NHA housing subdivision is located 3.3 miles north of I-40 on West Rio Puerco Road.

Raymond Secatero, chapter president, briefed President Begaye and led him to the site of the damaged water well.

The well is located north of the subdivision, away from the highway and accessible only by a dirt road. The chapter was ready to repair the well on May 16, but the weather, especially lighting, prevented the work crew from accessing the site.

The Tohajiilee Chapter, due to its satellite community status, operates and maintains its own water works system, with more than 50 miles of waterline to service the vast community.

Water system operator Mark Begay was onsite overseeing the repair of the water well pump.

He said pump house number five went out of service on May 15 after about 15 months of use.

“This is our only production well. We have real bad water. It’s rust, hydrogen sulfide. It rusts out our draw pipes in about two years,” Begay said.

The rusted pipes and burned out water pump were laid out on the ground. Several pipes were separated because pinhole-sized punctures were discovered.

The motor will be taken apart to see if it’s salvageable. If so, it will be returned to the manufacturer for reconditioning, to provide the chapter with a spare.

The new pipes, made from galvanized steel, are connected to the 18-stage, 50 horsepower motor that draws water from the ground at a rate of 160 gallons per minute. The drilling company, based in Milan, N.M. was able to secure a new pump from a company in Clovis.

The other four wells in the community are inoperable and both Secatero and Begay said the community is in need of a backup system.

“We tried upgrading and rehabilitating some of those older wells, but we’ve only been able to get about 30 to 40 gallons a minute,” Begay said. “We have a big community and there’s about 50 miles of waterline.”

He estimated the cost of the repairs at about \$30,000.

The water pipes and motor go down to a depth of 800 feet. The total depth of the well is 900 feet. During an onsite test, the pipes hit water 72 feet below the surface of the earth.

“We appreciate the quick response from the nation, from President Begaye all the way down to the departments. It’s good to know that we have a president that’s dedicated and true to his word, as far as helping out at the community level,” Secatero said.

Secatero is on his second term as chapter president. He was a three-term council delegate in the 1970s, when the council was comprised of 74 delegates. He said the main challenges for the satellite community are housing and economic development.

“We need to begin developing something where there’s revenue coming into the community to offset some of the costs and expenses that we have regarding health, water, land and livestock issues,” he said.

Rose Whitehair, director of NNDEM, reported at 5:15 p.m. that the water well pump was operating and that it would take an hour or two to fully pressurize the water tank.

“Herman Shorty, chairman of the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management, is meeting with the repair crew to ensure the water will be safe to consume,” Whitehair said.

-30-





May 18, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye encourages public safety after Tuba City bank robbery



President Russell Begaye encouraged the public to stay safe and report any sightings of the suspected bank robber to the Navajo Police or FBI. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—A male suspect is on the loose after robbing the Tuba City Wells Fargo Bank earlier this afternoon.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said, “When there’s a robbery that occurs on the Navajo Nation, our number one concern is public safety. We must protect innocent bystanders and ensure they call law enforcement and let them handle the situation.”

He encouraged anyone who sees the suspect to please call the police department and report the location.

“The police are trained and know how to handle dangerous criminals. You can assist the law enforcement by being

aware of your surroundings and by reporting any crimes,” President Begaye said.

Navajo Police Officer Roland Dash reported the bank robbery to Navajo Police headquarters in Window Rock.

The Tuba City Wells Fargo Bank reported the robbery at 1:42 p.m., Dash said.

The responding officer was Patrick Hall, who confirmed the robbery and asked for backup, including criminal investigators and the FBI.

Video cameras in the bank captured photo surveillance of the suspect.

The description of the suspect is a Native American male, 5 feet 11 inches to 6 feet tall, heavy set with long

shoulder length hair. He was wearing a blue colored straw hat, dark sunglasses, blue jeans and a blue windbreaker.

Criminal investigators from the Navajo Police remained on the scene to conduct the investigation. The bank was shut down as the investigation took place. Local offices, such as the NTUA Tuba City District Office, also went on lockdown to protect the public and employees.

“The suspect didn’t show a weapon, he just passed a note to the teller,” Dash said. “He received the money and walked out of the bank.”

The FBI Flagstaff Regional Office has jurisdiction in the case. All media inquiries are to

be directed to the FBI Flagstaff office.

“Please remember to look out for each other. Take care of each other. We’re a nation based on *Hozho’* and *Ke’*,” President Begaye said.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said, “We condemn this act of violence on our nation and give our full support to law enforcement who will bring this man to justice.”

If the public has any information on the case, they are encouraged to call Navajo Police at 928-283-3111 or the FBI Flagstaff Regional Office at 928-774-0631.



NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 18, 2015

CONTACT:
Adrian Dotson | 928-380-2158
press@navajohs.org

Navajo Head Start celebrates 50 years

The program was established in 1965

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Head Start (NHS) is celebrating 50 years on the Navajo Nation. The program was established in 1965 and has benefited the Navajo People with early childhood educational services since.

In 1965, NHS opened its doors after being created as part of a much-larger project launched by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). Then-U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson announced “Project Head Start” in 1964 as an effort to fight poverty in the U.S.



The program was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children and low-income families with a comprehensive program to help meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs, according to the Office of Head Start.

The first head start program was in operation in the summer of 1965 and it was designed as an eight-week demonstration project used to validate its intent and purpose as a new program.

In the same year, the Navajo Tribe, as it was referred to at the time, was awarded \$920,000 from the OEO to set up programs on the reservation including the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity (ONEO). Peter MacDonald Sr. was appointed director at that time to head a program that established preschool classes to help prepare children for learning. This program eventually evolved into Navajo Head Start.

By 1969, Head Start was a full year-round service. From that point, Head Start continued to grow and its funding surpassed more than \$1 billion by 1984.

Today, there are more than 50-plus head start programs across the country and there is one in every state in the U.S., including the District of Columbia and the six U.S. territories that provide services to more than 30 million children and their families.

Just as the national head start program improved and expanded, so did NHS. At its peak, NHS had more than 120 head start centers in five regions of operation spread across 27,000-square-miles of the Navajo Nation. NHS implemented its early head start program dedicated to providing care and early education to infants and toddlers, as well as providing assistance to expecting mothers.

NHS has seen a lot of success. And like other programs, they have hit some bumps in the road. At one point, NHS was at the cusp of losing its program and funding because of noncompliance. But in 2014, under new leadership and energy, NHS passed its federal review and regained full-funding of its programs.

Today, NHS operates 96 centers across four regions that provide services to hundreds of children. The future is bright for NHS and they are looking towards expansion of its programs and opening more centers to serve a growing population on the Navajo Nation.

In 50 years, NHS has become an integral part of the Navajo Nation and has played a vital role in the development and success of its children.

Sharon H. Singer, assistant superintendent of the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education, is celebrating the program's 50 year existence but said there is much more work to be done.

"We are proud of the work we accomplished thus far, but we know there is always more that can be done," said Singer. "Navajo Head Start is continuously searching for ways to improve the development process, child health, family and community involvement, and the infrastructure needed to provide services."

"We want the best for our children on the Navajo Nation because they deserve the best," she added.

In celebration, NHS has commissioned a new 50th Anniversary logo that will be used for the year and will plan a celebration later this summer.

###

Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, Ariz., capital of the Navajo Nation.



President Begaye meets with ASU leadership, attends convocations



President Russell Begaye stands beside the three Navajo graduates receiving their master's degrees through the partnership between ASU and the Navajo Nation. All three students work for Navajo Head Start. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

TEMPE—On May 15, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye spent the day in Tempe for several key meetings and scheduled convocations at Arizona State University.

Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President Policy Advisor Dr. Peterson Zah and Attorney General Ethel Branch joined President Begaye for the events.

Throughout the day, the common thread during the discussions was the need for educated Navajo professionals, especially CPAs, nurses and attorneys.

ASU Office of the President

The first meeting was with ASU President Michael Crow.

There, top management at the university provided an update on the collaboration with Navajo Head Start for the master's degree cohort program that was established to assist teachers with obtaining post-graduate level education.

President Begaye praised the program and said there were many Navajo leaders and students that were educated at ASU. He

commended the creativity of ASU to implement the master's degree cohort program to assist the Navajo people with education.

"I'd like to see the school entertain some other aspects of education that you might help us with," President Begaye said. "Such as the need for CPAs.

"I think we could incubate some Navajos in the financial field because there's a huge need for us," he added.

Branch said she worked for the ASU Center for Indian Education to establish a grant program at Rough Rock Community School.

"We were trying to revitalize the bilingual education program (at Rough Rock). I've watched ASU Law School really build its Indian Law Program," Branch said. "You are helping us grow our own on our nation."

The sentiment of appreciation for ASU was echoed by Sharon Singer, assistant superintendent for the Department of Dine' Education. She said Navajo Head Start began working with the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College two years ago.

"We have a master agreement that was actually initiated by

former President Peterson Zah. Now we have three students who will be receiving their master's degree in curriculum instruction and assessment with an emphasis on early childhood education," Singer said.

One of the primary goals of the 2007 reauthorization of Navajo Head Start was to establish a highly qualified workforce. More than 50 percent of the staff obtained their bachelor's degrees.

The ASU master's degree cohort program provided classroom instruction on the Navajo Nation on the weekends.

"We found it to be very successful using the cohort model. We're very excited to continue the partnership with ASU. It's been a very good move for the nation," Singer said.

Dr. Lamont Yazzie, director of educational services at Navajo Head Start, said it's a very exciting time for the Navajo Nation because of the ASU partnership.

Initiatives like the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Bureau of Indian Education restructuring and developing the Navajo Nation response plan to the common core are new opportunities for the tribe, he said.

"It's very exciting to be able to develop the foundation of all of this through Navajo Head Start. We're also infusing language and culture," Yazzie said.

ASU American Indian Convocation

There were 368 American Indian students that graduated from ASU in 2015. The ASU American Indian convocation was held at the Grady Gammage Memorial Auditorium.

President Begaye sat on stage and when introduced, was greeted by a roaring crowd. During the procession of students receiving their degrees, he shook hands with them and congratulated them on their educational achievement.

Toward the end of the ceremony, the tribal leaders on stage were allowed time to speak.

"I'm really honored today because we have so many graduates from the Navajo Nation," President Begaye said.

He spoke of the need for lawyers to litigate on behalf of the Navajo Nation to secure water rights and to prosecute all crimes that occur on tribal lands, including those committed by non-Navajos.

During the evening, President Begaye attended the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College convocation, which was held at the Wells Fargo Arena. There, he met Mary Lou Fulton, the namesake of the college and alumna.

Fulton met with the three Navajo students receiving their master's degrees and expressed happiness with the post-graduate initiative with the Navajo Nation and ASU.

Samantha Johnson works as a school readiness coach for Navajo Head Start. She was excited to receive her master's degree.

"We want to continue and we want to get our doctoral," Johnson said.

Another graduate, Rolanda White also worked for Navajo Head Start as a school readiness coach said she was thankful and happy.

"I'm very thankful for Ms. Singer and Dr. Yazzie. Thank you ASU for establishing the partnership and paving the way for us," White said.

Priscilla Shortman serves as a teacher for Navajo Head Start.

"This is exciting to practice what I'm learning in the classroom. Opportunities like this don't happen for a lot of people and I consider myself blessed because it's an education I can use and share with others," Shortman said.



President Begaye met with ASU leadership to discuss continued partnerships between the university and the Navajo Nation. He praised the master's degree cohort program and called it innovative. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Parents, grandparents, students and well wishers swarmed President Begaye for photo opportunities after the ASU American Indian convocation ceremony ended at Gammage Auditorium. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



President Begaye and Attorney General Ethel Branch leave Gammage Auditorium after spending more than an hour taking photos with students, faculty and beaming family members. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



May 20, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez issue message to Navajo graduates



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the Hunters Point Boarding School promotion ceremony on May 18. President Begaye encouraged the kids to continue their education. (Photo by Leo Hoskie)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Congratulations to the graduates of 2015!

That is the message from Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez. Education is a main pillar for the administration and their first round of cabinet appointments highlight that point.

“Congratulations to our high school graduates across the Navajo Nation. We are also very proud of all our graduates from the colleges and universities across the country,” said President Begaye. “Our administration is excited to bring you home to work for the Navajo people.”

On May 15, President Begaye spent the day in

Tempe to attend several meetings and convocation ceremonies. There were 368 graduates for the Arizona State University convocation ceremony and many of them were Navajo.

A unique partnership between ASU and the Navajo Nation provided an opportunity for three Navajo Head Start staff members to receive their master’s degrees in curriculum instruction and assessment, with an emphasis on early childhood education.

The partnership brought educators from ASU to the Navajo Nation to instruct the students on the weekends. More than 50 percent of Navajo Head Start staff have bachelor’s degrees.

Both leaders of the Navajo Nation view education as

the key to solve many of the challenges facing the tribe.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said, “I congratulate all of our Navajo students, from those being promoted to the next grade level, to our graduates from high school and college. I want to thank *shi nalt*, President Begaye, for opening the doors to a lot of our educated folks coming back to the Navajo Nation.”

Vice President Nez attended convocation ceremonies last week and addressed the graduating students at Navajo Technical University and Northern Arizona University.

He also attended and spoke at the eighth grade promotion ceremony at Pueblo Pintado Community School, and the Red Valley-Cove High School graduation. He attended the Monument Valley High School graduation in Kayenta.

On May 21, Vice President Nez will be the commencement speaker for the Shonto Preparatory School promotion ceremony. The following day, he will be the commencement speaker at Monument Valley High School in Utah.

Both President Begaye and Vice President Nez attended the Hunters Point Boarding School promotion ceremony at the Navajo Nation Museum on May 18.

They thanked all of the schools, colleges and

universities for the invitations to speak at their events. Due to their busy schedule, they are not able to attend all ceremonies.

Dr. Peterson Zah, special advisor to the president, said, “This administration believes in education. For the thousand of students across the Navajo Nation, we want you to stay in school and do your homework every day. Help your school, local people, grandma and grandpa.

“And for you parents and grandparents, please support them. They’re coming home, just like Chief Manuelito said. Teachers and school boards, you too, must help us,” he added.

The Begaye-Nez administration appointed three Harvard educated appointees for cabinet positions in the administration and more appointments will be announced soon.





Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources Administration
P.O. Box 9000
Window Rock, Arizona 86515
(928) 871-6592 & 6593
Fax# (928) 871-7040

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 21, 2015

Open Indian Rodeo to Return to 2015 Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – After several years of absence, the Annual Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration will feature an Open Indian Rodeo.

Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department Manager Martin L. Begaye, said, “We’ve decided to add Open Indian Rodeo back to our Annual Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration here in the capital of the Navajo Nation. The Open Indian Rodeo will be held in conjunction with a PRCA Pro Rodeo.”

Begaye said the PRCA Pro Rodeo has been a highlight of the Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration for the past several years.

“We are extremely honored to be the only American tribe in the U.S. to host a PRCA Pro Rodeo,” Begaye said. “Many Navajo people especially enjoy watching top caliber cowboys and cowgirls from throughout the country vie for thousands of dollars in prize money.”

The PRCA Pro Rodeo in Window Rock also provides an opportunity for the local people to see Navajo contestants who are a PRCA card holder.

However, Begaye noted, “There are many Navajo cowboys and cowgirls who do not rodeo professionally yet they are just as talented, which is why we wanted to also include an Open Indian Rodeo here in Window Rock.”

Begaye said it is hoped having a professional and Open Indian rodeo in conjunction with each other will attract a wider audience.

“The Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration is a great place and time to celebrate our freedom and honor our Navajo veterans,” Begaye said. “It is also a great venue for rodeo fans to see exciting rodeo action and support their favorite cowboys and cowgirls whether that be professionally or personally.”



Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources Administration
P.O. Box 9000
Window Rock, Arizona 86515
(928) 871-6592 & 6593
Fax# (928) 871-7040

Moreover, Begay added, “Many Navajo families cannot afford to travel long distances. Window Rock is therefore, an ideal location to enjoy the Fourth of July weekend with family and friends.”

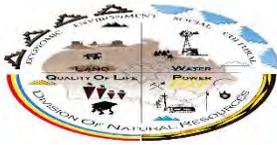
The theme for the 29th Annual Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration is Honoring Our Warriors for our Freedom, which will feature a recognition ceremony for Navajo Code Talkers at 12 noon on July fourth.

In addition to the afternoon and evening rodeo performances, the 29th Annual Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration will also include fireworks on July fourth, a carnival, a cash drawing and food vendors throughout the midway.

A combined total of more than \$132,000 will be added for both rodeos making the PRCA Pro Rodeo and Open Indian Rodeo one of the most coveted rodeos during the July Fourth holiday.

The 29th Annual Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration will be held on July 2-5th beginning with an 8 a.m. PRCA Pro Rodeo slack on Thursday, July 2nd and a final Open Indian Rodeo performance on Sunday, July 5th at 1 p.m.

For more information about the Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration, contact Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department staff at (928) 871-6478 or 7833 or at www.navajonationfair.com



Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 9000
Window Rock, Arizona 86515
(928) 871-6592 & 6593
Fax# (928) 871-7040

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2015

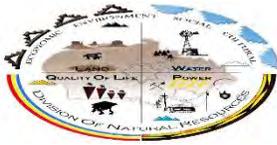
Navajo Nation Minerals Audit Program Receives Coveted Award Recognizing Superior Audit & Investigative Performance

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – Demonstrating excellence in audit and investigative activities to ensure the collection of every dollar due to the Navajo Nation.

That's how the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), described the Navajo Nation Minerals Audit Program, which is a program under the Minerals Department that was created to conduct audits and investigations of financial obligations due to the Navajo Nation under mineral leases located on tribal trust lands.



Greg Gould, Director of the Office of Natural Resources (ONRR) – an agency with the U.S. Department of Interior presents Joan Kilgore Award to Rowena Cheromiah, Principal Investigator at the Navajo Nation Minerals Department.



Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 9000
Window Rock, Arizona 86515
(928) 871-6592 & 6593
Fax# (928) 871-7040

In recognition for the Navajo Nation's outstanding audit and investigative performance, ONRR awarded the Navajo Nation with the Joan Kilgore Award. The Joan Kilgore Award is named in honor of Joan Kilgore, who was a staunch advocate for Indian royalty issues. ONRR based the award on the Navajo Nation's active participation in royalty collection and compliance activities and contributions to ongoing initiatives undertaken in partnership with ONRR.

ONRR Director Greg Gould stated, "We congratulate the Navajo Nation for working closely with ONRR and for developing a strong and robust royalty compliance program." He added, "In testament to your professionalism and commitment to excellence, the Navajo Nation received a top ranking on the 2014 peer review."

The peer review was conducted late in 2013 by Williams, Adley & Company, a CPA firm based in Washington, D.C. The peer review examined audits performed by the Navajo Nation's Minerals Audit Program. Under the peer review process, an audit organization can receive a rating of pass, pass with deficiencies or fail. The Navajo Nation's Minerals Audit Program received a rating of pass, which is the *highest* rating that can be received.

ONRR Director Greg Gould noted the Navajo Nation also received a top ranking in the annual attestation engagement, adding that the Navajo Nation "has demonstrated a commitment to excellence and a spirit of cooperation that is critical to the success of ONRR."

Erik Tsosie, a Senior Minerals Auditor with the Navajo Nation, described the dedication of the audit program's staff, "We often come to work early, and leave late in the evening." He added, "Auditing is hard work, but we are dedicated to verifying that the extractive industries on the Navajo Nation fully comply with all federal laws, regulations, and lease terms, and pay what they are required to pay to the Navajo Nation."

In closing, ONRR Director Greg Gould thanked the Navajo Nation for the tribe's efforts to ensure that the Navajo Nation receives the full return of royalties due. He added, "The Navajo Nation is truly a leader among ONRR's state and tribal partners."



Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 9000

Window Rock, Arizona 86515

(928) 871-6592 & 6593

Fax# (928) 871-7040

Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources Executive Director Bidtah Becker, stated, “I would like to congratulate all the Navajo Nation Minerals Audit Program staff for their steadfast dedication and commitment. As a result of their efforts, the Navajo Nation has one of the best royalty compliance programs in the country. Their work truly benefits the Navajo people and the Navajo Nation.”

Navajo Nation Minerals Department Director Akhtar Zaman, emphasized the importance of the audit function, which provides assurance to the Navajo Nation about the accuracy of revenues derived from the tribe’s vast mineral resources.

According to Zaman, the Navajo Nation is one of only a handful of tribes across the United States that performs its own audits of royalties and other financial obligations derived from mineral leases. He explained, “It’s a testament to the Navajo Nation’s resolve for self-determination and control over its mineral producing assets.”

In support of continued collaboration between the Navajo Nation and ONRR, Brian Bex, a Minerals Auditor with the Navajo Nation, will be joining ONRR for a two-year period under the agency’s Intergovernmental Personnel Act Fellowship Program. Participants in the program develop additional audit and compliance experience and gain special knowledge related to minerals asset valuation and enforcement.

The origin of the Navajo Nation’s Minerals Audit Program can be traced to the Federal Oil and Gas Royalty Management Act of 1982. Sections 202 and 205 of the Act provides the authority for tribes and states to enter into cooperative agreements or delegations with the Secretary of the Interior to conduct audits and investigations of mineral leases.

The Navajo Nation entered into its first cooperative agreement in 1984. The Navajo Nation is one of a small number of tribes and states that are currently performing audits and compliance reviews under agreements with the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Natural Resources Revenue.

The Minerals Audit Program is led by Rowena Cheromiah who is the Principal Investigator under the cooperative agreement and Marlene Nakai, Minerals Audit Manager. Both have provided decades of service to the Navajo Nation in support of the tribe’s minerals management function through audit and compliance related activities.



Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources

P.O. Box 9000

Window Rock, Arizona 86515

(928) 871-6592 & 6593

Fax# (928) 871-7040

The Navajo Nation Minerals Audit Program performs audit and investigation of mineral royalty payments and other lease-level obligations to the Navajo Nation including bonuses, water usage fees, scholarship payments, and all other financial obligations that are specifically required under Navajo Nation oil, gas, and solid minerals leases and agreements.

The audits are performed in accordance with the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards promulgated by the Comptroller General of the United States.



May 22, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Rick Abasta, Press Officer
Office of the President and Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION
Phone: 928-871-7000
Fax: 928-871-4025
Email: rickyabasta@navajo-nsn.gov

President Begaye, Vice President Nez urge caution when traveling for Memorial Day Weekend



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez encourage the traveling public to be safe during the Memorial Day Weekend. Shortly after 7 a.m. this morning a small black car collided head-on with a Navajo Transit System bus. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—A Navajo Transit System bus was involved in a head-on collision with a subcompact car shortly after 7 a.m. today.

The bus was traveling southbound on U.S. Route 491 when a black subcompact car hit the bus head-on. The accident site was about a mile north of the Mexican Springs turnoff.

Traffic was backed up for miles in both directions, as emergency responders and police from various agencies responded to the scene to begin their investigation.

The responding agencies included Navajo Police, N.M. State Police, McKinley County Sheriffs Office, Tsayatoh Volunteer Fire Department, Navajo Nation Fire Department,

Navajo Emergency Medical Services and N.M. Department of Transportation.

The car door, broken glass and other debris were littered across the road. The small black car was crushed and was sitting west of the highway in the dirt. The bus, a large 40-passenger model, was parked on the shoulder of the road in a southern direction.

Alvernon Tsosie, criminal investigator for the Navajo Police said there were no fatalities. A medical helicopter was spotted leaving the scene after the critically injured were airlifted to the hospital.

“This is federally-prosecutable case and the accident is under investigation at this time,” Tsosie said.

Donovan Harker from Zuni said he came upon the accident scene and saw several people surrounding the black car parked off the highway. He said there were no first responders on the scene yet and that it took about 20 minutes for authorities to arrive.

“Quite a few people were around the car, trying to help. About 20 minutes later, the police came and told the people to leave. People were getting out of the bus,” Harker said.

He said he was traveling to Farmington to pickup a load of corn for transport to Snowflake, Ariz.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye urged the traveling public to be extremely cautious when traveling for the

Memorial Day Weekend.

“Please exercise good judgment and give yourself enough time to reach your respective destination. Drive defensively and lookout for the other driver,” President Begaye said.

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed and said, “Please do not drink and drive. Think about the lives of others and your own life before getting behind the wheel of a car. This also means no texting and driving. Pay attention when traveling.”

The accident is under investigation by the Navajo Police. No further details available at this time.



Office of Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission

P.O. Box 129 St. Michaels, AZ 86511
Phone: (928) 871-7436 | Fax: (928) 871-7437

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 23, 2015

Location for NNHRC June Regular Meeting moved to Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort.

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission regular meeting location is moved to Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, 22181 Resort Boulevard, Flagstaff, Ariz. The NNHRC will meet at 10 a.m. on Friday, June 5, 2015. The regular meeting is open to the public.

For more information, call the NNHRC office at 928.871.7436 or visit the NNHRC website at www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov

###



May 24, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez issue Memorial Day message



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez honor and pay respect to the brave men and women who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the name of freedom and democracy. President Begaye is pictured here with Perry Benally, a Vietnam vet and recipient of two Purple Hearts and the Silver Star. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Freedom is not free. It is paid for by the lives of patriots and heroes who answered the call of duty to protect our country.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez honor the heroic men and women who paid the ultimate price to defend our nation from enemies foreign and domestic.

“We salute the courageous men and women who gave their lives in defense of this great nation, especially our Navajo warriors who answered the call for war,” President Begaye said. “We extend our support

to the Gold Star Mothers who lost family members in action.”

For the Navajo Nation, Memorial Day festivities will be held in Chinle and Leupp to honor veterans killed in action, beginning with early morning flag raising ceremonies. Vice President Nez will be honoring warfighters lost in battle and speaking at the event in Leupp.

“The Navajo Nation pays respect to the fallen warriors of this country. For those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation, your sacrifice will not be forgotten,” said Vice President Nez.

Before Navajo men and

women began volunteering for service in the U.S. Armed Forces, our Navajo ancestors fought ana’í, the enemy, during Hwéeldi, the Long Walk, for the freedom of the Navajo people. They too, must be remembered and honored.

Memorial Day is a time of respect and reverence for those who did not return home. From the more than 2,000 Navajos who perished during Hwéeldi, to battlefields of World War I and World War II, we will always remember their courageous sacrifice.

Our brave Navajo Code Talkers transmitted messages on the battlefields of the Pacific Theater during World War II, utilizing Diné bizaad, the Navajo language, for an unbreakable code that was never deciphered by the enemy.

We honor the men and women we lost on the icy battlefields of Korea and in the hot jungles of Vietnam. For the patriots who gave their lives in the Persian Gulf War, Operation Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom, you too, will not be forgotten.

As you see the American

flags raised across the great Navajo Nation, please take moment to reflect on the heroes who sacrificed their lives for us to continue our Navajo way of life. Memorial Day is a time of respect. Please share this reverence with your children.

For our brave Navajo warriors who lost brothers and sisters on the battlefield, we are here for you. The sacrifices of your brethren will be honored and remembered.

President Thomas Jefferson once said, “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants.”

We must not take the freedom of choice and liberties we have for granted. Please remember to honor the brave men and women who paid for the liberties we enjoy today. They paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

We salute your sacrifice. Ahéhee’.





NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 26, 2015

CONTACT:
Adrian Dotson | 928-380-2158
press@navajohs.org

Navajo Head Start celebrates end of year, student promotions

*“Our goal in Head Start is to get your children school-ready for kindergarten.”
—Sharon H. Singer*

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Sharon H. Singer, assistant superintendent of the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education, congratulates all the Navajo Head Start (NHS) students that were promoted last week to Kindergarten in several promotion ceremonies and End of Year Celebrations held across the Navajo Nation.

In total, Navajo Head Start will promote more than 1,450 three to five-year-old children in 86 promotional ceremonies.



Sharon H. Singer, assistant superintendent, provides keynote address at End of Year Celebration and promotion ceremony for St. Michaels Head Start on May 21.

Singer spent the week attending various promotions and events across the Nation and encouraged parents to stay involved in their children’s education. Singer was the keynote speaker at the End of Year Celebration and promotion ceremony for St. Michaels Head Start on May 21 at the St. Michaels Chapter House. She highlighted accomplishments of the children, as well as Navajo Head Start for the past two years.

“Two years ago, we started our journey to school readiness, transforming, and restructuring Head Start. Today, we have 50% of our teachers with bachelor’s degrees and we are very proud of them,” she explained.

She also explained NHS has been in operation for the last 50 years.

“We are celebrating our 50th birthday— Happy Birthday Head Start!” she said.

Singer stressed the importance of NHS’s goal to have children ready for kindergarten.

“Our goal in Head Start is to get your children school-ready for kindergarten, so they are able to write their names, know their alphabets, and know their numbers,” said Singer. “We started integrating math, science, and technology as well. We want them to be prepared and we need your support.”



Singer also expressed gratitude to all who took part in the education and development of the Head Start children, which includes the parents and families, teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers and the community.

Lambert Perry, local parent committee president, served as the master of ceremony at the St. Michaels event and he explained it has been a pleasure to work with the Head Start children.

“I want to thank you all, it has been my pleasure to work with the kids, staff and the entire Head Start program,” said Perry.

Perry also thanked and praised the staff and faculty of NHS who provide services to more than 96 Head Start Centers spread across the Navajo Nation, which is more than 27,000-square-miles sprawled across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

“Our head start staff are really gifted and dedicated,” he said.

One highlight of the promotion ceremony was the singing of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” by the children.

Navajo Head Start thanks parents, teachers, faculty and the community for their on-going support and they look forward to the upcoming school year.

###

Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, Ariz., capital of the Navajo Nation.



May 27, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Rick Abasta, Press Officer
Office of the President and Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION
Phone: 928-871-7000
Fax: 928-871-4025
Email: rickyabasta@navajo-nsn.gov

Begaye-Nez administration announce new cabinet appointments



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez sit with their cabinet members during a recent division directors meeting at Quality Inn. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Two more individuals have joined the awakening of a new dawn.

Today, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye announced the appointment of Jesse Delmar as the executive director of the Division of Public Safety.

"We congratulate and welcome Jesse Delmar as our new executive director of the Navajo Division of Public Safety," President Begaye said. "His extensive background in law enforcement and education in criminal justice will complement the team we have assembled."

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed and said, "Our administration has selected Jesse Delmar because of his education, experience and knowledge of issues facing law enforcement officers across Indian Country. We are happy to have him aboard."

Delmar is a graduate of Northern Arizona University with a bachelor's degree in administration of criminal justice with a minor in psychology. He is also a graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Academy and FBI National Academy.

He served as an executive fellow with the FBI Executive Fellowship Program in

Washington, D.C. and served as vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police Indian Section and served as president of the Indian Country Intelligence of Arizona.

In addition, Delmar served many terms as chief of police for the Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation Police Department.

Serving in these various capacities over the years not only gave him the experience in dealing with the many issues facing Indian Country, but also the opportunity to share these concerns on a national level.

"I'm deeply humbled and honored to be asked by the Begaye-Nez administration to serve as executive director for the Navajo Division of Public Safety," Delmar said. "I do buy into what they have to offer the Navajo people.

"I'm very impressed by their direction and I do want to be part of the awakening of this new dawn," he added.

Delmar is not stranger to the Navajo Nation, especially since he served more than 26 years for the tribe.

His recent decision to retire was to be closer to family, in particular, his grandson, Mason. Delmar has been married for more than 31 years to his wife, Marjorie. The couple has three daughters, Audrey, Melody and Josselyn.

"I feel I can contribute my wisdom, experience, and knowledge in advancing the nation and going forward in helping my people with regard to matters with the Navajo

Division of Public Safety," Delmar said.

The second appointment by President Begaye was Dr. Donald Benn to serve as executive director of Navajo Environmental Protection Agency.

"We proudly announce the selection of Dr. Donald Benn as the director of Navajo EPA. His education in chemistry is extraordinary and we know he will do a good job leading an important division for the Navajo Nation," said President Begaye.

Vice President Nez was also excited with the selection for Navajo EPA.

"We have a scientist joining the team, a man who has worked with NASA during his professional career. We are excited to see his leadership style with Navajo EPA," Vice President Nez said.

Benn earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of New Mexico in 1997. He obtained a master's degree in chemistry from New Mexico State University in 2000. In 2005, Benn earned his doctoral degree in chemistry at NMSU.

Benn said he was thankful for the selection to work with President Begaye and Vice President Nez and that he has returned home to help the Navajo people.

From July 2010 to May 2015, Benn worked as a research science consultant for Nihidah Nidii DaL, LLC in Lukachukai, Ariz. from May 2010 to July 2010, he successfully wrote

and received a NASA-MIRS research grant to use at the Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, N.M.

From May 2009 to May 2010, he worked as director of the Native American Research Laboratory at the University of Montana in Missoula. From August 2008 to May 2009, Benn taught chemistry, biology and nutrition at Diné College in Tsaile, Ariz.

He did post-doctoral work for UNM from May 2005 to August 2008. From Jan. 1997 to May 2005, he worked for the NMSU as a lead research manager.

"Historically, Native Americans did not need an environmental protection service because we were not destructive, but now that we have one it is my pleasure to serve as its director with the Begaye-Nez team," Benn said. "I came back to the reservation to help Diné people and thanks to both President Begaye and Vice-President Nez, I am have been given the unique opportunity to do just that."

Over the years, he has received a number of academic awards and honors, including the GK-12 National Science Foundation Inquiry Based Scientist Award from NMSU from 2003 to 2004, designation as an Alfred P. Sloan fellow for NMSU from 1997-1999, and the Presidential Scholar Award from UNM from 1987-1989.



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



CONTACT:

Delilah Goodluck, Sr. Public Information Officer
delilah.goodluck@nntanf.org | 928.810.8553

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 27, 2015

Notice of Temporary Closure – Department for Self Reliance

Greasewood, Ariz. - The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) is releasing this notice to make it known that the Greasewood DSR Office location will **be temporarily closed beginning Wednesday, May 27th, through June 30th, 2015** due to water damages from flooding.

The Greasewood staff will be temporarily relocated to DSR's St. Michaels location within the Navajo Nation Oil & Gas building at 48 West HWY 264. To reach the Greasewood DSR staff, contact the DSR's St. Michaels location at (928) 810-8592 or toll free at (866) 860-9549.

The DSR apologizes for any inconvenience this unforeseen closure may cause. For more information please call the Support Services office at (928) 810-8553 or toll free at (866) 347-2403.

###



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

CONTACT: Rick Abasta, Press Officer
Office of the President and Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION
Phone: 928-871-7000
Fax: 928-871-4025
Email: rickyabasta@navajo-nsn.gov

May 28, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vice President Nez attends Birdsprings Memorial Day event



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez paid respect and honored veterans killed in combat during the Birdsprings Chapter Memorial Day event. The day before, he honored the fallen warriors by dedicating his 50-kilometer ultra marathon at Los Alamos to the veterans lost in battle. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

BIRDSPRINGS, Ariz.— The Birdsprings Chapter honored their fallen warriors on Memorial Day. The daylong event brought in veterans from the surrounding communities of Leupp and Tolani Lake.

While many gathered for the event, the mood was not celebratory.

“I wouldn’t really call this a celebration. In a Memorial Day event, we honor all of our fallen soldiers: POW, MIA, KIA. That’s what this event is all about,” said Randolph David, commander of the Birdsprings Chapter Veterans Organization.

He said people seem to forget the purpose of Memorial Day, instead focusing their attention on cookouts and celebrating the start of summer.

“It’s about the men and

women who gave their lives for our freedom. You guys are very lucky and fortunate that we have men and women willing to give their lives for our freedom and our rights,” David said.

Those words set the tone for the event, as more than 100 people packed into the domed confines of the Birdsprings Chapter House on May 25. A wall on the south side of the facility featured photos of veterans killed in action. The community also had framed photos of veterans that served in the military.

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez was in attendance and said he was proud to honor the fallen heroes that died in service to the U.S. Armed Forces.

He said veterans fought for

Navajo culture, for preservation of *Diné bizaad*, which was used to end the atrocities of World War II.

“Our prayers are our foundation. We pray for our people throughout the Navajo Nation, especially our military men and women,” Vice President Nez said. “That’s what makes our Navajo Nation so unique, we are a spiritual people.”

On May 24, Vice President Nez participated in the Jemez Mountain Trail Run in Los Alamos, N.M. in honor of veterans that died in combat.

The 50-kilometer ultra marathon was a distance of about 32 miles, beginning at an elevation of 7,000 feet and increasing to an elevation of 10,000 feet.

“I wanted to run for our veterans and those that lost their lives in the military. I dedicated that run to each and everyone of you throughout the Navajo Nation,” Vice President Nez said.

He said that participating in endurance sports like ultra marathons provides plenty of time to think. The incessant urge to quit is also always there, but prayer and perseverance overcome those doubts, he added.

“Sometimes, I feel like giving up and stopping, but I say to myself that our veterans push their bodies to the ultimate limit. If they can do it, I can do it. I ran 32 miles for (them) and it took me nine hours to finish,” Vice President Nez said.

He said President Russell

Begaye was in Washington, D.C. and that he sent a message of gratitude and respect to honor the fallen warriors on Memorial Day.

Navajo veterans are one of the four pillars of the administration and plans include appointing a veteran within the Office of the President and Vice President to work solely on veteran issues.

“We know that you need a veteran in our office. They know what you’ve been through and what you’re facing on a daily basis. We’re going to put a good person in there who knows the veteran issues,” Vice President Nez said.

Melvin Nez, adjunct for Post 112 of the American Legion in Leupp, praised the Birdsprings event in memory and honor of those who died in battle.

“It’s really humbling to experience where the chapter veterans organizations are taking the lead,” Nez said.

He noted that previously, it was the American Legion that coordinated events such as the

branches of service and died fighting in the battles of World War II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam War, and Desert Storm.

The Birdsprings church choir performed “Amazing Grace” in Navajo and English to honor the fallen veterans.

Families that brought the flags of loved ones who died in battle participated in the flag folding ceremony with the honor guard from Birdsprings and Tolani Lake.

The veterans unfolded the flags, shook them out, inspected them and refolded the flags before presenting them back to the families. Nez read the 13 folds of the American flag to the audience, detailing the significance behind each fold.

The flags were refolded for veterans killed in action from the local communities: Tony Kenneth Begay, John W. Redsteer, Murphy Tsosie, Joe K. Wagner, Fred Chee, Billy Thompson, Nathan Curtis and Robert Williams.

The American and Navajo

“We know that you need a veteran in our office. They know what you’ve been through and what you’re facing daily.”

Memorial Day recognition of veterans lost in battle.

He asked for two minutes of silence in honor of veterans in the area that lost their lives in service to the U.S. Armed Forces. He then read their names to the audience.

Alvin Begay, John C. Begay, Stephen K. Begay, Delfred B. Bitsuie, Joseph H. Curley, Ben Joe, Leon Jones, Riley Jones, David Kelly Sr., Michael Lee, Jack D. Nelson, John Redsteer, R. Riggs, Arliss Sloan, Yoland Tom Swift, Elwood Thompson, Virgil H. Todakoozie, Murphy Tsosie, Austin Williams, Lesley Williams and Alex Williams Sr. were all honored.

They were from different

flags were also refolded for Loren Whitehat Sr., a Navajo Police officer killed in the line of duty.

At the conclusion of the flag folding ceremony, the honor guard stepped outside the chapter house to perform a 21-gun salute for those who died in combat.

Other dignitaries in attendance included Sen. Carlyle Begay and Navajo County Supervisor Jesse Thompson.



Vice President Nez was well received by the residents of Birdsprings Chapter, many of which said it was the first time in a long time that a Navajo leader came to break bread with them and take time from their busy schedule to honor the fallen Navajo veterans. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Current and former veterans lined the southern wall of the chapter house to be honored by the audience. The people in attendance were invited to meet the veterans and shake hands with them to personally thank them for their service to their country. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Two groups of honor guard members unfolded the American flags of veterans killed in combat, shook them out, inspected them for tears or frays, and then refolded them before presenting the flag back to family members. Upon return to the families, they saluted the flag before executing an about face. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



CONTACT:

Delilah Goodluck, Sr. Public Information Officer
delilah.goodluck@nntanf.org | 928.810.8553

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 27, 2015

Notice of Temporary Closure – Department for Self Reliance

Greasewood, Ariz. - The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) is releasing this notice to make it known that the Greasewood DSR Office location will **be temporarily closed beginning Wednesday, May 27th, through June 30th, 2015** due to water damages from flooding.

The Greasewood staff will be temporarily relocated to DSR's St. Michaels location within the Navajo Nation Oil & Gas building at 48 West HWY 264. To reach the Greasewood DSR staff, contact the DSR's St. Michaels location at (928) 810-8592 or toll free at (866) 860-9549.

The DSR apologizes for any inconvenience this unforeseen closure may cause. For more information please call the Support Services office at (928) 810-8553 or toll free at (866) 347-2403.

###



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

May 28, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Rick Abasta, Press Officer
Office of the President and Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION
Phone: 928-871-7000
Fax: 928-871-4025
Email: rickyabasta@navajo-nsn.gov

MEDIA ADVISORY

WHO : President Russell Begaye
THE NAVAJO NATION

Vice President Jonathan Nez
THE NAVAJO NATION

Rex Lee Jim, Former Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION

Gabriel Yazzie, Town Manager
KAYENTA TOWNSHIP

Carol Todecheene, Chairperson
KAYENTA TOWNSHIP COMMISSION

Nate Brown, Delegate
23 RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

WHAT : Grand Opening Celebration
Kayenta Correctional Facility

WHERE : Kayenta, Ariz.

WHEN : May 29, 2015
10 a.m.

CONTACT : Rick Abasta, Press Officer
Office of the President and Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION
Phone: 928-871-7204
Fax: 928-871-4025
Email: rickyabasta@navajo-nsn.gov



May 30, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez address San Juan County fire protection services



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez said Navajo citizens residing within San Juan County boundaries deserve the same fire protection services as the rest of the county. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Earlier this week, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez met with representatives from San Juan County regarding the fire protection services provided for the Navajo chapters located within the county boundaries. It was a follow up discussion to last week’s initial meeting between the Navajo Nation and San Juan County, which was organized by county commissioner Wallace Charley to address the loss of fire defense services from the county to the Navajo Nation on Sept. 1, 2015. Other tribal officials in attendance included tribal corrections director Delores Greyyeyes from the Navajo

Division of Public Safety, attorney Regina Holyan from Navajo Department of Justice and Navajo Nation Fire Chief Larry Chee. President Begaye said, “There is a shortage of funds to enable our Navajo Nation Fire Department to take over the response and we are exploring temporary options with the county to continue adequate response and protection to these locations.” Temporary options include the transfer of needed equipment from the county to the tribe and mutual aid response with the county for which the tribe would reimburse the county for each emergency fire response. “We will plan on a more

permanent possibility for next fiscal year,” he added. The affected Navajo chapters located within county lines include Newcomb, Ojo Amarillo and Shiprock. From the perspective of a former county supervisor, Vice President Nez said the economic benefit Navajo citizens provide the county through the purchase of goods and services is undeniable. “The myth is that Navajos don’t pay taxes,” Vice President Nez said. “Navajos visit the border towns and infuse millions of dollars. “We need to remind the commission that if it wasn’t for the economic power of Navajos, the county budget crisis would be worse than it is,” he said. Although deadlines set by the county expired under the previous administration, President Begaye and Vice

with the Navajo Nation and the commissioners need to protect all of their constituents within the county. “When I was a county supervisor, my job was to advocate for the citizens who voted me into office, including tribal members who were both county and Navajo Nation citizens. I advocated to provide services for their communities,” Vice President Nez said. The fire tax appropriation is based on statistics for fire services, including the calls for assistance on the Navajo Nation. To say the county tax base decreased and the need to cut services for tribal communities is not only unfair, but also illogical, President Begaye said. “These are critical services,” President Begaye said. “Our people go to Farmington and shop, paying taxes in the process. Those taxes benefit the county,

“If it wasn’t for the economic power of Navajos, the county budget crisis would be worse than it is.”

President Nez reminded the county of the dire situation facing tribal members, who are also residents of San Juan County in need of fire defense. “San Juan County receives taxes to benefit the entire county, including residents that reside on the Navajo Nation. We need more advocacy from our commissioners to ensure these Navajo people have fire protection services,” said President Begaye. He said the county must work

including the fire tax. Quite a number of our people also own homes and pay property taxes. “The county must take that into consideration,” he added.

