



NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT
RUSSELL BEGAYE | JONATHAN NEZ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Navajo Nation Press Shop
press@operationyellowwater.com

September 1, 2015

PRESIDENT BEGAYE REQUESTS APPOINTMENT OF FEMA DISASTER RECOVERY COORDINATOR

Window Rock – President Russell Begaye has officially requested the appointment of a Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (FDRC) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist the Navajo Nation as it recovers from the Gold King Mine spill.

“The appointment of an FDRC by FEMA at this stage of the Nation’s response to this toxic chemical spill would greatly benefit the Nation. An FDRC could assist the Nation to effectively assess the short- and long-term impact of the disaster, determine priorities, and activate a recovery support strategy. As the primary, secondary, and tertiary impacts of the toxic chemical spill are already affecting crucial areas of the Nation’s land, waters, crop production, livestock raising, and economic resources, the authority of an FDRC to coordinate assistance from other federal agencies would enable a focus of federal resources and seamless coordination to effectively respond to this disaster,” wrote President Begaye in a letter to FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate.

Although the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been appointed as the lead federal agency responding to the disaster, FEMA is best positioned and structured to coordinate all available assistance, long term planning, assessment of impacted communities and developing a recovery support strategy.

President Begaye’s full letter to FEMA Administrator Fugate is below:

William Craig Fugate, Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street SW

Washington, DC 20472

RE: Navajo Nation Request of FEMA to Appoint an FDRC

Dear Mr. Fugate:

The Navajo Nation (“the Nation”) respectfully requests the appointment of a Federal Disaster Recovery Coordinator (“FDRC”) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) to assist the Nation as it responds to the August 5, 2015 toxic chemical spill into the Animas River and which has expanded into Navajo lands. This expansion into Navajo lands via the San Juan River has critically impacted the River and its dependent ecosystems including wildlife, fish populations, and the land base adjacent to the River. The nature of this toxic chemical spill will acutely and chronically impact the River and dependent ecosystem if immediate and effective corrective actions and remedies are not taken. The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management declared the toxic chemical spill a disaster on August 9, 2015, CEM 15-08-09, *see* attached.

The contamination of the San Juan River has affected not only the dependent ecosystem generally but specifically the crops and livestock of the Nation’s farmers and ranchers whose produce support families and communities. The River, when its waters are not contaminated, is critical in providing water resources to wildlife, fish, livestock and crops. Water is also an important element in Navajo traditional Lifeways and ceremonies.

The appointment of an FDRC by FEMA at this stage of the Nation’s response to this toxic chemical spill would greatly benefit the Nation. An FDRC could assist the Nation to effectively assess the short- and long-term impact of the disaster, determine priorities, and activate a recovery support strategy. As the primary, secondary, and tertiary impacts of the toxic chemical spill are already affecting crucial areas of the Nation’s land, waters, crop production, livestock raising, and economic resources, the authority of an FDRC to coordinate assistance from other federal agencies would enable a focus of federal resources and seamless coordination to effectively respond to this disaster. Furthermore, the additional resource of a team of recovery specialists that would accompany the FDRC would enable a simultaneous application of necessary skills and expertise to assist the Nation in effectively responding to this disaster.

For the above reasons, the Nation respectfully requests that FEMA appoint an FDRC to assist us in this time of our great need. Please contact Ms. Roselita Whitehair, who is the Director of the Nation’s Department of Emergency Management.

Sincerely,

Russell Begaye

President, the Navajo Nation

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 2, 2015

Navajo Nation Thanks Donors for Support

WINDOW ROCK – Reaching out to help the Navajo Nation.

That’s what individuals, tribes and entities are doing to assist Navajo chapters who have been impacted by the Gold King Mine contamination spill along the San Juan River.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye stated, “On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we are very appreciative for the outpouring of love and support for our people who have been impacted by this recent incident on the northern portion of our reservation. It’s times like these when we all need to come together and help each other. We are honored and say a humbling ‘thank you’ from the Navajo Nation for your generous support to help our people who are in need of resources to sustain themselves.”

Some of the individuals, entities and tribes include the Cherokee Nation of North Carolina who will deliver a diesel truck full of hay to the Navajo Nation. A Water is Life Walk/Run was held on August 29th in Tempe, Arizona, which was sponsored by Waylon Pahona who is Hopi/Tewa and founder of Healthy Active Natives. Participants in the Walk/Run donated 10 pallets of bottled water, which will be delivered to the Navajo Nation Emergency Operation Center (NNEOC) on Friday, Aug. 4. Digital Air Strike of Phoenix delivered approximately six pallets of bottled water to Shiprock Chapter. The Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) will issue one relief convoy to donate 22-25 tons of hay for Navajo ranchers and they will also donate bottled water.

Begaye added, “I would like to say a special thank you to the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) for notifying the Navajo Nation that they will help provide relief for our Navajo farmers and livestock owners. This will be the second time in Navajo history that CRIT will truck hay from Parker, Arizona. As tribes we have much in common, which includes precious natural resources. It is with great gratitude that we accept the blessing of other tribes.”

CRIT Tribal Treasurer Valerie Welsh explained, “At a recent Five-Tribe Colorado River Coalition meeting, the CRIT Tribes all wanted to provide some relief to assist the Navajo Nation. We have a farm as do other tribes along the Colorado River and we are currently working on what we can provide. As tribal nations banded together, we could provide so much more. We may not meet everyone’s need, but as five tribes, we cannot sit idly by and do nothing. We are Pipah AhaMakaav, People of the River, and wish to share blessings received because of it, the Colorado River.”

NNEOC Director Rose Whitehair is encouraging the chapters and the public to work directly with NNEOC regarding the donation of water tanks, delivery of livestock water, hay and bottled water.

“We are requesting that everyone work directly with NNEOC to help us communicate and coordinate assistance to the affected chapters in an efficient manner and to alleviate any confusion,” said Whitehair. “We also don’t want the public at large to donate to entities that may not be legitimate. If you have any questions regarding whether a donation source is legitimate or not, please contact the NNEOC.”

More than a dozen chapters in New Mexico, Utah and Arizona are directly impacted by the spill. Individuals, tribes and entities who are interested in donating bottled water, hay or livestock water need to contact the Navajo Nation Emergency Operation Center in Tse Bonito, New Mexico at [\(505\) 371-8414](tel:5053718414) or 8408. For monetary donations, go to any Wells Fargo Bank and make your donation to the attention of Navajo United Way: Operation Yellow Water with the account ending in 3176. You can also donate online at www.operationyellowwater.com/donate/

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**THE NAVAJO NATION
WORKERS' COMPENSATION PROGRAM**

Post Office Box 2489 • Window Rock, AZ 86515 • Phone: (928) 871-6389 • Fax: (928) 871-6083

**RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT**

MEMORANDUM

TO ALL DIVISION DIRECTORS, DEPARTMENT MANAGERS AND PROGRAM SUPERVISORS
NAVAJO NATION GOVERNMENT

FROM 
Laverne Lee, Program Supervisor
Workers' Compensation Program

DATE September 2, 2015

SUBJECT Workers' Compensation Coverage for Special Assignments (69th Annual Navajo Nation Fair)

This is in response to a memorandum dated August 31, 2015 from the Navajo Nation President Russell Begay and Vice-President Jonathan Nez. The memorandum pertains to workers' compensation insurance coverage for employees of the Navajo Nation Government, its departments and programs to continue their tour of duty during the 69th annual Navajo Nation Fair (Fair) from September 6 through September 13, 2015.

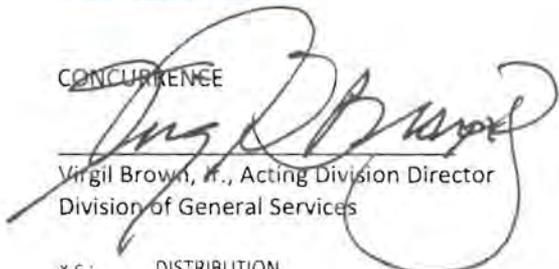
Upon review of the memorandum, here is our recommendation unless if a Department Manager wishes to identify an alternative method but it has to remain within policies: Complete a "Special Assignment" memorandum for the employees within the department/program who agree to work during the Fair. The memorandum should identify a list of the employees' names, work assignment/duties, date and time including temporary change in worksite to Window Rock if needed. It would help if the work is identified for example: carpentry to build floats, booths, float representative to distribute goodies and clean-up crew to name a few. The Special Assignment memorandum should come from the Department Manager and acknowledged by the employees' immediate supervisor and please submit a copy to my office. Ensure that a sign-in/sign-out sheet is available for the employees on Special Assignment. The special assignment memorandum will serve as acknowledgement of workers' compensation coverage availability during the course and scope of the assigned employees.

General Volunteers can be covered by workers' compensation insurance provided that the department/program completes a Personnel Action Form with a current *Employment Application* and submits the forms to Department of Personnel Management for approval and a premium fee will be assessed and invoiced thereafter.

The Workers' Compensation Act (Act) provides coverage for employees of the Navajo Nation government, its enterprises and political subdivisions, elected officials and volunteer as identified in 15 N.N.C. § 1002 (A)(12). The Navajo Nation Workers' Compensation Program is charged with managing the self-funded and self-administered workers' compensation and no other state jurisdiction is applicable to injuries sustained by insured members.

Please contact me at 871-6389 or email at lavernelee@navajo-nsn.gov if you have any questions or Marsha Joe at email mjoe_wcp@ymail.com.

CONCURRENCE


Virgil Brown, Jr., Acting Division Director
Division of General Services

x.c.: DISTRIBUTION



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

August 31, 2015



Greetings from the Office of the President and Vice-President,

It is again time for the Navajo people to come together and celebrate our progress and accomplishments for the past year at the 69th Annual Navajo Nation Fair. It takes months of planning and cooperation and coordination internally in the tribal government as well as with outside entities to put together a Fair that the people will remember and carry with them into the future. In order to do this I am directing the tribal programs, divisions and departments to do all they can to assist in the successful undertaking of this event and provide financial support and in-kind services. Tribal employees will be authorized to serve as coordinators, workers, volunteers as a part of their employment and shall be provided insurance coverage since it is the Navajo Nation that is putting on the Fair for the benefit and enjoyment of the Navajo people. We would like to iterate that providing service to the Navajo people is a general duty and obligation of all tribal employees.

Lastly, the Vice-President and I want to thank each employee of the Navajo Nation for their continued dedication and service to the Navajo Nation and people. Let us make this 69th Annual Navajo Nation Fair a safe and enjoyable gathering for all.

Handwritten signature of Russell Begaye in black ink.

Russell Begaye, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION

Handwritten signature of Jonathan Nez in black ink.

Jonathan Nez, *Vice-President*
THE NAVAJO NATION



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September 3, 2015

President Begaye Updates Senator Tom Udall on San Juan River Contamination

Asks For Continued Support From Bureau of Indian Affairs

SHIPROCK—Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez met with Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) today and spoke about the aftermath of the Gold King Mine breach that occurred on August 5.

Attorney General Ethel Branch, Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Delegates Tom Chee and Amber Crotty, and chapter officials Duane Yazzie and Gilbert Harrison were also in attendance.

President Begaye expressed that the immediate concern was the demobilization of water tanks owned by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Navajo Region. The tanks are in use at affected chapters to provide water for livestock and irrigation. BIA crews and equipment are scheduled to leave the area by Saturday.

“We still need the BIA support and their water tanks. We are very concerned about the loss of the water tanks, as our canals are still closed. Hence, we have requested FEMA to intervene and help us in our time of crisis,” said President Begaye.

Upstream, the San Juan River has been reopened for irrigation at Nenanezad, San Juan, Gadii’ahi and Upper Fruitland. Downstream, the river remains closed for both the Hogback and Shiprock chapters. Gaadii’ahi voted to reopen the river for irrigation and currently using electric pumps to draw water into the canal.

Senator Udall said that he has placed his field representative, Cal Curley, on the ground working since the mine spill occurred.

“We’ve done a number of things: scheduling the hearings and getting Administrator McCarthy out here immediately. She was out here within a week,” Udall said. “The spiritual and emotional toll is very important. The agencies, instead of being bureaucratic, need to be understanding,”

Vice President Nez said there is still no word from the White House since the spill occurred last month.

“President Obama and FEMA need to be more proactive and declare this as a disaster area,” Vice President Nez said. “The Navajo Nation should have the affected tribal lands designated as its own EPA region. There would be less confusion this way.”

President Begaye will testify and attend several Congressional hearings in Washington, D.C. to advocate for the Navajo farmers and ranchers impacted by the spill.

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September 3, 2015

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE ERIN BROCKOVICH TO TOUR NAVAJO NATION
WITH PRESIDENT BEGAYE**

Prominent Activist To Help Raise Awareness Of Devastation Caused By Mine Spill

Window Rock – President Russell Begaye today announced that prominent consumer advocate and environment activist Erin Brockovich will visit the Navajo Nation on September 8th. President Begaye and Ms. Brockovich will tour areas that have been devastated by the Gold King Mine spill that polluted the San Juan River.

“The Navajo Nation has been culturally and economically devastated by the impact of the Gold King Mine Spill and we need help to address this crisis,” said President Begaye. “We appreciate Ms. Brockovich’s willingness to visit our Nation to witness the damage first hand and help raise awareness about the plight of our people.”

Erin Brokovich stated "I am deeply concerned with the actions of the U.S. EPA and I stand by the Navajo Nation. Over 20 million gallons of contaminated water have poured out and are continuing to pour out from the Gold King Mine. This needs to stop, and the U.S. government needs to clean up the mess they caused."

As a legal clerk in the early 1990s, Ms. Brockovich helped investigate elevated illness in the town of Hinckley, California that was tied to the pollutant hexavalent chromium in their groundwater. Residents later settled a case against Pacific Gas and Electric for \$333 million, the largest settlement in a direct action lawsuit at the time.

Ms. Brockvoich's efforts served as the inspiration for the blockbuster 2000 film *Erin Brockovich* starring Julia Roberts.

Schedule details regarding President Begaye and Ms. Brockovich's tour will be released in the coming days.

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September 4, 2015

Statement by President Begaye regarding FEMA denying assistance for Gold King Mine Spill

"We are extremely frustrated with the news that both FEMA and the U.S. EPA have declined our urgent requests to continue assistance to the Navajo Nation. U.S. EPA caused this entire disaster, they have harmed the people, the water and the land. I appreciated the fact U.S. EPA took responsibility and I was hoping for the U.S. EPA to prove to the Navajo Nation they are willing to hold themselves accountable. This action clearly shows otherwise. For years, we have consistently been at the receiving end of toxic spills and contamination with no adequate relief as the United States Government and Private Companies became wealthy off of the natural resources of the Navajo Nation.

This is not the end but the beginning as I will continue to fight for my people."



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Navajo Nation Press Shop
press@operationyellowwater.com

September 6, 2015

**ERIN BROCKOVICH TO SPEAK AT THREE NAVAJO NATION HIGH SCHOOLS ON
TUESDAY**

Window Rock – Prominent consumer advocate and environment activist Erin Brockovich is set to speak at three Navajo Nation high schools during her visit on Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Ms. Brockovich will speak at Shiprock High School Chieftain Pit, Shiprock, N.M. at 12 p.m. MST; White Horse High School Auditorium, Montezuma Creek, Utah at 3:00 p.m. MST; and at Monument Valley High School Auditorium, Kayenta, Ariz., at 5:30 p.m. MST.

The high school speaking engagements will be streamed live on the Operation Yellow Water Ustream.tv channel.

“We appreciate Ms. Brockovich’s willingness to visit our Nation to witness the damage first hand and help raise awareness about the plight of our people,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

Erin Brokovich stated "The continuing situation resulting from the Gold King Mine spill is unacceptable. The EPA's actions and response reflect an organization that is drastically underfunded, understaffed and in need of overhaul. I stand with the Navajo Nation and call upon the U.S. Government to do what is right and clean up this mess."

As a legal clerk in the early 1990s, Ms. Brockovich helped investigate elevated illness in the town of Hinckley, California that was tied to the pollutant hexavalent chromium in their groundwater. Residents later settled a case against Pacific Gas and Electric for \$333 million, the largest settlement in a direct action lawsuit at the time.

Attending media are encouraged to get in contact for a lengthier schedule of the day’s events.

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SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

**PRESIDENT BEGAYE: PLACE UPPER ANIMAS MINING DISTRICT
ON “SUPERFUND” NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST**

Window Rock – In a letter sent to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, President Russell Begaye requested that the Upper Animas Mining District be listed as a “Superfund Site” pursuant to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CECLA). This designation on the National Priorities List will make EPA funding and resources available to remove and contain the long-standing risks to human health and the environment posed by the historic mining activities in the area. As the Gold King Mine spill demonstrated, the over 300 abandoned hard rock mines pose a serious public health threat.

“It is well past time for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to step in and remediate the site in a meaningful manner to protect downstream communities,” wrote President Begaye. “The first step in this process is to list the Upper Animas Mining District on the NPL. This will provide much needed funding and technical assistance to responsibly address the threats posed by the District.”

In addition to the Gold King Mine spill, President Begaye also pointed out that in the 1990s the EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment conducted a Superfund Site Assessment of the District and determined that “water quality standards were not achieved.” In 2008 the EPA performed another NPL assessment on the Upper Cement Creek area and confirmed, “that the area would qualify for inclusion.”

“The chemicals found in the District pose a significant human health risk,” said President Begaye. “The health and well-being of the region should be of primary importance to the EPA. The time has come for the Upper Animas Mining District to be given NPL status.”

President Begaye’s Full Letter is Attached

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THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

September 7, 2015

Gina McCarthy, Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of the Administrator, Mail Code: 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor
State of Colorado
200 E. Colfax Ave., #136
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Request to Place Upper Animas Mining District on National Priorities List

Dear Administrator McCarthy and Governor Hickenlooper:

We request your attention to the important and urgent matter of protecting the Navajo Nation from upstream threats of contamination coming from the 140-square-mile Upper Animas Mining District (District).¹ Specifically, we request that you immediately place the District on the CERCLA National Priorities List (NPL) so that prompt action may be taken to address and contain the long-standing risks to human health and the environment posed by the historic mining and processing activities in the District. As the Gold King Mine (GKM) spill demonstrated, the District and its over 300 abandoned hard rock mines² pose a looming threat to us downstream communities, and it is a threat that is far beyond the control of the local community. It is well past time for the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to step in and remediate the site in a meaningful manner to protect downstream communities. The first step in that process is to list the Upper Animas Mining District on the NPL. This will provide the much needed funding and technical assistance to responsibly address the threats posed by the District.

On August 5, 2015, the EPA and other potentially responsible parties caused millions of gallons of acid mine drainage—containing toxic substances such as aluminum, lead, zinc, arsenic, cadmium, manganese, iron, vanadium, and copper—to spill from the Gold King Mine outside of Silverton, Colorado into Cement Creek, which flows into the Animas River and ultimately reaches the San Juan River. In a flash the GKM spill illuminated the significant risk that District mines

¹ <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/upper-animas-mining-district>

² *Id.*

Letter to: Administrator McCarthy and Governor Hickenlooper

Re: Request to Place Upper Animas Mining District on National Priorities List

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present to the people, animals, culture, ecosystem and economy of the Four Corners region. Despite the very real and significant risk posed by the District, it is not currently NPL-listed. The current system of management of the hazardous substances in the District does not protect the people or the environment of the rest of the Four Corners region. The health and well-being of the region should be of primary importance to the EPA. The time has come for the Upper Animas Mining District to be given NPL status.

In the 1990s, “EPA and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) conducted a Superfund Site Assessment of the [District].”³ The assessment concluded “that water quality standards were not achieved” in the District⁴—which includes private, federal, and state lands, and the town of Silverton⁵—and identified the District’s “severe impacts to aquatic life in the Upper Animas and its tributaries.”⁶ Despite the serious harm being caused by the District, EPA postponed listing the District on the NPL because the local community asked for a “community-based collaborative effort” that would allow local cleanup and mitigation efforts to proceed “as long as progress was being made to improve the water quality of the Animas River.”⁷ In 2005, the “water quality ha[d] declined significantly” in the area despite the combined efforts of the local community and EPA.⁸

In 2008, EPA performed another NPL assessment, this time on the Upper Cement Creek alone, and the study again confirmed “that the area would qualify for inclusion” on the NPL.⁹ Despite the carve-out of Silverton from the area of study and the additional confirmation that the GKM area should be listed on the NPL, “EPA [again] postponed efforts to include the area on the National Priorities List,” “after receiving additional community input.”¹⁰ Yet the City of Durango, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, the State of New Mexico, the Navajo Nation, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, the State of Utah, and the State of Arizona are all downstream interested parties whose input matters with respect to toxic releases and the threat thereof from GKM and the District. Our input and concerns should matter to you as you contemplate listing the District on the NPL.

The chemicals found in the District pose significant human health risk, such as cardiovascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal and reproductive systems. One early post-incident report from the EPA indicated that “arsenic levels in the Durango area of the Animas River were, at their

³ <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/goldkingminewatershedfactsheetbackground.pdf> at 2.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ <http://www2.epa.gov/region8/upper-animas-mining-district>.

⁶ <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/goldkingminewatershedfactsheetbackground.pdf> at 2.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Id.*

Letter to: Administrator McCarthy and Governor Hickenlooper

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peak, 300 times the normal level, and lead was 3,500 times the normal level.”¹¹ Another report of EPA data indicated that “lead was found below Silverton's 14th Street bridge at more than 200 times higher than the acute exposure limit for aquatic life, and 3,580 times higher than federal standards for human drinking water. Levels of arsenic were more than 24 times the exposure limit for fish and 823 times the level for human ingestion. Cadmium was found at more than six times the aquatic limit, 33 times that for humans.”¹²

The GKM spill in the Animas and San Juan rivers has imposed an unmitigated crisis upon the Navajo Nation. Coursing through 215 miles of the Navajo Nation, the San Juan River is a critical water source and significant spiritual icon for the Navajo Nation. EPA’s determination that they “do not anticipate adverse health effects from exposure to the metals detected in the river”¹³ is premature because “[t]he effects of lead may not be seen right away or may not be noticed for many years,”¹⁴ and is indeed contradictory to the EPA’s statements to the Navajo Nation made immediately after the spill that we will be dealing with these effects “for decades.”¹⁵ The Navajo Nation is gravely concerned with the spill’s yet unknown impacts to river sediment and adjacent waterways, and is especially concerned about the ongoing releases from the District that U.S. Geological Survey measures to be at a rate of 610 gallons per minute.¹⁶ Due to the long-term risk that these chemicals present, as well as the continued significant releases coming from the GKM and the District, estimated to now exceed a total release of over 27 million gallons, an NPL listing is well warranted.

The threats posed by the District are felt by the many people connected to the District through the San Juan River watershed, a significant singular surface water supply to the Four Corners region. As one of the impacted jurisdictions, the Navajo Nation’s impacts are felt most significantly by our farmers and ranchers, and our traditional people. Many Navajo people rely on the San Juan River to sustain life through irrigating our farmed goods and watering our livestock. Our families then consume these fruits of their labor. The San Juan River also sustains our culture by watering the many unique species of Navajo corn plants that are critical to our prayers and ceremonies. Our traditions and culture are also kept alive by our San Juan River valley farmers’ growing of heirloom Navajo fruits and vegetables from seed strains steadily refined by our people since time immemorial. The River is also an important male deity to our people. Its contamination by the GKM has been a significant spiritual blow.

¹¹ <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/08/09/navajo-nation-epa-spill/31384515/>

¹² <http://m.startribune.com/nation/321518301.html>

¹³ <http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine/frequent-questions-related-gold-king-mine-response> EPA frequently asked questions

¹⁴ http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/csem/lead/docs/lead_patient-education.pdf at 1.

¹⁵ Telephone Call with Joan Card, Senior Policy Advisor for USEPA Region 8, and Shaun McGrath, Administrator for USEPA Region 8 (Aug. 7, 2015).

¹⁶ <http://fox6now.com/2015/08/13/gold-king-mine-owner-i-foresaw-disaster-before-epa-spill-into-animas-river-in-colorado/>

Letter to: Administrator McCarthy and Governor Hickenlooper

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Contamination of the River is also a blow to our economy. The Nation faces a daunting unemployment rate of 42 percent.¹⁷ Yet along the San Juan River, many of our people are able to make a life for themselves and support their families through farming and ranching. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture there are approximately 1,500 farms in the Shiprock Agency alone. The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimates that there are about 1,175 grazing permit holders in the region. Many of our farmers create additional economic value for themselves by carefully growing profitable organic crops. Some of our ranchers produce grass-fed and organic beef product. Their livelihoods have been significantly disrupted by the GKM spill.

The River has always been of the utmost import to our people. Indeed, when our leaders negotiated our release from internment by the federal government at Fort Sumner in the Treaty of 1868, they were certain to include the San Juan River and its adjacent rich farmlands within our Nation's boundary. The reliance of our people on the River and the significance of the River to our people cannot be overstated.

The waste from the mines in the Upper Animas Mining District is also harmful to wildlife found in the Animas River below Cement Creek. In April, EPA released a *Draft Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment Upper Animas Mining District*, which documented the harmful impacts from the combination of mining and naturally occurring hazardous substances.¹⁸ Among the various wildlife that are impacted, the report found that “[m]etals concentrations in the Animas River below Mineral Creek have eliminated virtually all fish down to Elk Creek and all cutthroat and rainbow trout down to Cascade Creek, where only a small community of brook and brown trout exist.”¹⁹ Further, the study found “that the benthic invertebrate community is impaired in most sections of the Animas River, Cement Creek and Mineral Creek.”²⁰ The Upper Animas Mining District is causing portions of the Animas River to be uninhabitable for certain wildlife—and the generally negative impacts on wildlife are even broader. The Upper Animas Mining District should be a candidate for listing on the NPL due to its impacts on wildlife alone.

The danger of a spill in the Upper Animas Mining District will continue to exist under the current management scheme, and the spill on August 5 was not an isolated incident. In fact, there were two previous releases of hazardous mine waste from the area in 1975 and 1978. In 1975, “50,000 tons of heavy-metal-loaded tailings” were dumped into the Animas River.²¹ And in 1978, “500 million gallons” of water contaminated with “tailings and sludge” spilled into the Animas

¹⁷ <http://navajobusiness.com/fastFacts/Overview.htm>

¹⁸ <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/upper-animas-bera-fact-sheet-april-2015.pdf>

at 1

¹⁹ *Id.* at 2.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ <http://www2.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-08/documents/goldkingminewatershedfactsheetbackground.pdf> at 1.

Letter to: Administrator McCarthy and Governor Hickenlooper

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Page 5

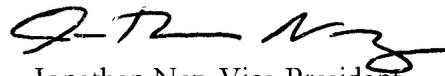
River.²² The damage caused by the Upper Animas Mining District has gone on far too long, and the health and well-being of our people cannot endure a repeat of the GKM spill. Please, do the right thing for us downstream communities. List the Upper Animas Mining District on the NPL. The current approach is inadequate to protect our people and environment. The delay in listing the site can only cause harm to our region. Please contact Jackson Brossy, Executive Director, Navajo Nation Washington Office, 202-682-7390 or jbrossy@nnwo.org.

Respectfully,

THE NAVAJO NATION



Russell Begaye, President



Jonathan Nez, Vice-President

Cc: Mayor Christine M. Tookey, City of Silverton, Colorado
Chairman Ernest Kuhlman, Board of County Commissioners of San Juan County, Colorado
Mayor Sweetie Marbury, City of Durango, Colorado
Chairman Clement Frost, Southern Ute Indian Tribe
Governor Susana Martinez, State of New Mexico
Chairman Manuel Heart, Ute Mountain Ute Indian Tribe
Governor Gary Herbert, State of Utah
Governor Doug Ducey, State of Arizona
U.S. Senator Tom Udall
U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich
U.S. Senator John McCain
U.S. Senator Jeff Flake
U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch
U.S. Senator Mike Lee
U.S. Senator John Barrasso
U.S. Senator John Tester
U.S. Representative Ann Kirkpatrick
U.S. Representative Paul Gosar
U.S. Representative Rob Bishop
U.S. Representative Jason Chaffetz
U.S. Representative Don Young

²² *Id.*



NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE
PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

RUSSELL BEGAYE | JONATHAN NEZ

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Navajo Nation Press Shop
press@operationyellowwater.com

SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

**NAVAJO EPA DIRECTOR TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS ON GOLD KING MINE
SPILL**

Washington, DC – Navajo Nation Environment Protection Administration (NNEPA) Executive Director Dr. Donald Benn today testified before the United States House Committee on Science, Space and Technology on the Gold King Mine Spill. Dr. Benn discussed the devastating effects of the chemical spill on the Navajo Nation and called for greater support from the Federal Government to address the crisis.

“The Navajo Nation’s impacts are felt most in the disruption of our cultural principle of *hozho*, which encompasses beauty, order, and harmony, and expresses the idea of striving to maintain balance in the Navajo universe,” testified Dr. Benn. “The impairment of the River and the adverse impacts to our farmers and ranchers, and our community as a whole, will mark a moment of community trauma that will be remembered for years to come. This modernized trauma will compound our already significant historical trauma.”

He also highlighted the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA) failed response to the spill.

“A good and close working relationship with USEPA has always been critical to the success of the NNEPA. However, recent events relating to this spill have led to a complete shift in that relationship as USEPA has sought to quiet our legitimate concerns, and has made repeated missteps in their response efforts relating to the incident triggered by their own actions,” testified Dr. Benn. “From day one, USEPA has assumed a posture of mitigating losses even while taking the lead on the incident investigation and emergency response. We have grave concerns about the strong conflict of interest USEPA has with respect to this investigation and the emergency response.”

Dr. Benn made the following specific requests of the Committee:

- Resources to address the immediate emergency.
- Resources to study and address the long-term environmental and health impacts of the spill.
- FEMA coordination.
- A critical, independent examination of the existing USEPA (defined below) organization with respect to coordination with the Navajo Nation, with serious consideration given to the creation of a Navajo USEPA Region or devolution of USEPA authority and funding directly to Navajo Nation's own Environmental Protection Agency to assume USEPA's responsibilities for the Navajo people.
- A fair and independent assessment of the role USEPA played in the events leading up to the chemical spill from the Gold King Mine.

This was the first of four Congressional hearings scheduled this month on the Gold King Mine Spill. Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye is scheduled to travel to Washington, DC and testify before the US Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on September 16th and before a joint hearing of the US House Natural Resources Committee and Oversight Committee on September 17th.

[CLICK HERE FOR DR. BENN'S FULL TESTIMONY](http://bit.ly/1UHnjYU) <http://bit.ly/1UHnjYU>

##

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Division of Community Development Newsletter

Newsletter

This is the September 2015 issue of the DCD newsletter. The newsletter is meant to be a resource for DCD employees to stay informed on DCD events, issues, and resources.

Did You Know...

On average, Window Rock, AZ has more days out of the year with low temperatures below freezing than Anchorage, Alaska and Caribou, Maine.

Upcoming Events

September 6-13: Navajo Nation Fair

September 24-27: Southwest Navajo Nation Fair

October 1-4: Northern Navajo Nation Fair

October 15-18: Western Navajo Nation Fair

October 20-22: DCD Project Management Training



Chavez John Appointed as DCD Acting Division Director

Effective Monday, June 1, 2015, President Begaye

appointed Mr. Chavez John

to be the Acting Division Director for the Division of Community Development. Mr. John replaces outgoing Executive Director, Carl Smith who was appointed under the Shelly-Jim administration.

Mr. John previously was the Department Manager for the Community Housing & Infrastructure Department. Mr. John has also previously served as division director for DCD, so the division is in capable hands until a permanent Director is appointed by the Office of the President/Vice-President.

Mr. John will be ensuring that all current projects and activities that DCD is responsible for, continue to fruition.

Division of Community Development • P.O. Box 1904,
Window Rock, AZ 86047 • (505) 371-8466 •
www.nndcd.org



ASU Offers Training to ASC Planners

During the two weeks from June 15-26, 2015, Arizona State University provided some much needed training to ASC planners and other DCD and chapter staff at the ASU Campus in Tempe, AZ. The ASC office coordinated with ASU's Dr. David Pijawka to host the training. This was based on an earlier project to study existing Navajo Chapter land use plans to determine what the problems are and how to improve them. The two-week training was very intensive and included lectures from prominent ASU professors.

The training will be followed up with additional trainings on the Navajo Nation and the project will culminate with the release of a land use planning guidebook for chapters.

DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT



Navajo Nation Addressing Authority

The Navajo Nation Addressing Authority is a program currently operating under the Division of Community Development Administration Department. Previously, it was a program under the Navajo Nation Telecommunications & Utilities Department as the E9-1-1 Office within the Division of General Services.

Based on the research results from previous attempts at rural addressing and the criteria for success agreed to with the State of New Mexico, it was determined that the Navajo Nation must establish a permanent organization and institutionalize the necessary processes to maintain the integrity and accuracy of Navajo Nation addressing data.

As a result, the Navajo Nation Addressing Authority (NNAA) was established in FY10 and transitioned to Division of Community Development. A Plan of Operation was developed to establish the roles and responsibilities of the organization, position descriptions were developed, personnel budgets approved, and staffing of those positions commenced in July 2008. The NNAA organization is administratively overseen by a Rural Addressing/GIS Coordinator who leads the rural addressing staff.

The NNAA was established to provide the overall program management and to develop consistency and continuity of processes for the rural addressing initiative Navajo Nation-wide in support of enhanced 9-1-1.

The NNAA is responsible for establishing the method of road naming and/or numbering and the standards for number assignment and works with the Local Rural Addressing Committees from each Chapter.

Open Positions within DCD

Administrative Service Center Accountants:

- Region 2, Crownpoint, New Mexico
- Region 8, Ganado, Arizona
- Region 9, Birdsprings, Arizona
- Region 12, Dennehotso, Arizona
- Region 15, Shiprock, New Mexico
- Region 16, Shiprock New Mexico

Administrative Service Center Planners:

- Region 4, Baca, New Mexico
- Region 9, Birdsprings, Arizona
- Region 10, Tuba City, Arizona
- Region 11, Shonto, Arizona
- Region 12, Dennehotso, Arizona
- Region 14, Chinle, Arizona

Administrative Service Center Attorneys:

- Window Rock, Arizona

Chapter Coordinators:

- Nahodishgish, New Mexico
- Shiprock, New Mexico
- Tohatchi, New Mexico
- Whippoorwill, Arizona

Chapter Accounts Maintenance Specialists:

- Navajo Mountain, Arizona
- Tolani Lake, Arizona
- Tsayatoh, New Mexico
- Tse' Alnaozt'ii (Sanostee), New Mexico
- Whippoorwill, Arizona



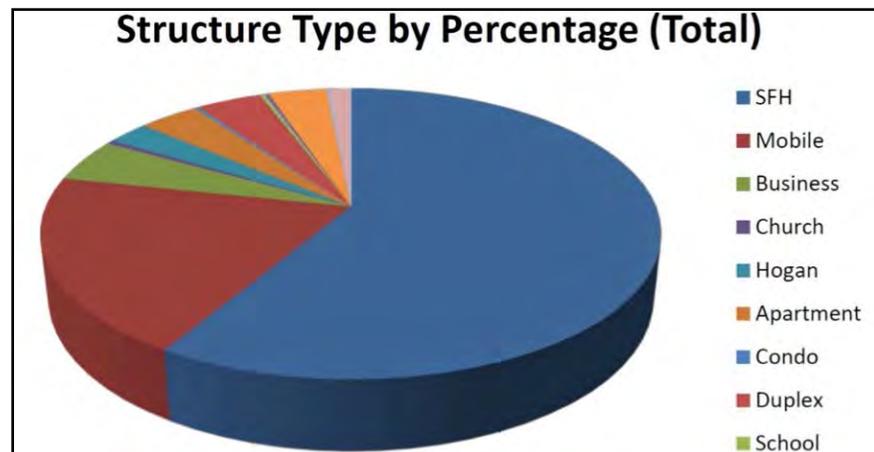


Fire And Water Makes Progress For Some LRACs

By: M. C. Baldwin

Since January 2015, NNAA (Navajo Nation Addressing Authority) has been working with AmeriCorps. The focus of the project was to conduct field work for Chapters who have not begun their FDC (field data collection) process yet based on information provided to the Navajo Nation Addressing Authority. Fieldwork included the task of identifying “addressable structures” and recording attributes (information) about that structure. Each structure visited was then captured spatially with the FDC Mapping Tool, an on-line web-resource mapping tool launched by Division of Community Development’s WIND System team under Mr. Arbin Mitchell’s directorship at Division of Community Development.

The pie chart indicates that more than half of the structures visited for Fort Defiance and Saint Michaels including Window Rock area are single family homes (SFH = 1871). With this type of information, NNAA can anticipate on establishing physical addresses for about 3,196 structures within Fort Defiance and Saint Michaels area including Window Rock. This would amount to an estimated sign material cost of \$86,292 without the over-head costs (each address point



Town	Total Entries	Phone #	No #	% with #	Address	No Address	% with Address	Phone Adj.
Ft. D	1623	298	1318	18.36105977	660	963	40.6654344	269
St. M	1573	290	1283	18.43610935	552	1021	35.0921805	276
Total	3196	588	2601	18.3979975	1212	1984	37.922403	545

Town	Structure #	Total	%
ST. M	SFH	851	54.10044501
ST. M	Mobile	343	21.80546726
ST. M	Business	74	4.704386523
ST. M	Church	12	0.76287349
ST. M	Hogan	53	3.369357915
ST. M	Apartment	109	6.929434202
ST. M	Condo	0	0
ST. M	Duplex	37	2.352193261
ST. M	School	7	0.445009536
ST. M	Barn	2	0.127145582
ST. M	RV	1	0.063572791
ST. M	Government	62	3.941513032
ST. M	Residential	4	0.254291163
ST. M	Other	18	1.144310235
		1573	

Town	Structure #	Total	%
Ft. D	SFH	1020	62.84658041
Ft. D	Mobile	290	17.86814541
Ft. D	Business	80	4.929143561
Ft. D	Church	3	0.184842884
Ft. D	Hogan	30	1.848428835
Ft. D	Apartment	10	0.616142945
Ft. D	Condo	9	0.554528651
Ft. D	Duplex	92	5.668515096
Ft. D	School	2	0.123228589
Ft. D	Barn	6	0.369685767
Ft. D	RV	0	0
Ft. D	Government	55	3.388786198
Ft. D	Residential	3	0.184842884
Ft. D	Other	23	1.417128774
		1623	

is \$27 ; delineator post is \$10 each).

The first group (Fire2) came into Fort Defiance in January to February. Fieldwork for this Troop included both Fort Defiance and Saint Michaels community with Window Rock and Tse Bonito area. Their term ended when they started on the north side of Oak Springs Chapter service area. While Fire2 was stationed in Fort Defiance, they got to witness the council delegate inauguration, visit Canyon DeChelly, play a Navajo shoe game, see Painted Desert, watch Super Bowl 49, participate in Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day event, and attend a Hopi dance in Shipaulovi village on Valentine's Day. While installing driveway posts by US-64 in Beclabito Chapter, the Troops visited the Four Corners Monument with melting snow near the San Juan River.

The second group (Fire6) came into Fort Defiance the weekend after Fire2 left in mid-February and stayed until the beginning of April. After the initial training, the Troop began their fieldwork from where Fire2 left off and moved into Oak Springs/Pine Springs community. The Troop moved into Kinlichii', Ganado, Lower Greasewood, the route along HWY-191 to I-40, Nazlini, and half of Chinle. Fire 6 got to hike in Canyon DeChelly and conducted some fieldwork inside the Monument Valley park on a Saturday while the presidential election date kept moving back.



After Fire6 left town, there was a two-week break before the third group (Water 1) came in to become Window Rockians between April and July. Unlike the Fire Units, the Water Unit team stayed for the entire round. In twelve weeks after their initial training, the Troop began with where Fire6 left off in Chinle and moved into Rough Rock



with remote lodging at the Chapter House as they collected residential information that included businesses, schools, and other structures. Water 1 also stopped in Jeddito near Hopi with remote lodging at the Chapter House before returning to Rough Rock Chapter House to tackle Chilchinbii'toh and covering the N-59 route to HWY-160 in Kayenta Chapter service area. The Troop returned to Chinle area to cover the route along N-64 into Tsaile community. With remote lodging at Cove Chapter House, the Troop covered remote regions of the Chuska Mountain foothills back toward Red Valley Chapter service area before taking a break to join in on the Partnership for Rural Addressing Summit in Crownpoint. After the summit, the Troop covered Nahat'adziil, Tsaile/Wheatfields, and finished up with Tiis Nos Bos with remote lodging at Beclabito Chapter House.



While stationed in Window Rock, the Troops planted cucumbers, leeks, corn, squash, sunflowers and bachelor buttons for the United Methodist Church. As Fire2 experienced, Water1 witnessed the inauguration Navajo Nation-style. They all walked away with bright orange long-sleeve shirts by participating in the JustMoveIt event in Blue Canyon in addition to another long-sleeve shirt from the DCD staff picnic event. There was one weekend where the Troops helped with construction work as part of the Habitat for Humanity of Gallup project in addition to other work with local non-profit organizations.

This project was made possible with the Apache County Recorder's Office partnership and Division of Community Development with NN Addressing Authority. With this project, the NCCC (National Community Civilian Corps) members engaged with community members of different background, culture and personality and allowed them to develop communication skills and professionalism. They even learned two-step

and skip dance at Apache County sponsored Song & Dance event. The nature of the work provided them with aerial map interpretation, map orientation for navigation, data entry, and public speaking skills. Members from Fire2 visited the Navajo Nation Office of Broadcast Services for audio broadcast recording and interviewed by Navajo Times in the field. Water Team Leader even had an opportunity to speak on KTNN during the live remote broadcast from the rural addressing summit.

Based on feedback from each group, the main challenge arose with lack of available field support staff and consistent schedules. Every morning, the teams had to structure the amount of groups or amount of team members in each group in order to accommodate the field work assignments. NN Addressing Authority was unsuccessful in coordinating with LRAC (local rural addressing committee) for the region that were schedule. Another challenge centered on the availability or reliability of wireless Internet access. Wireless access was crucial for data entry and the Troops also discovered the unpredictable and often bad phone service in many areas throughout the assigned field work region.



Next step for LRAC who have been visited would be to identify the existing road/street network that serve these “addressable structures” so that those that do not have official names can be given names with Chapter resolution process. This is where local Chapters can take ownership of their rural addressing project and make it their own product. This phase alone can enhance their land use planning document to the next level. The next level could be economic opportunities by way of updating their land use plan product as supporting documents for seeking funds. The structures (business, homes, schools, etc.) that need physical addresses need to have roads and streets with official names based on the NNRAID (Navajo Nation Rural Addressing Implementation Document) standards. naa.nndcd.org All Chapters that were visited will be encouraged to proceed with the next phase now that the labor-intensive portion of their rural addressing project has been completed by individuals who came to Navajoland from places like Kentucky, Louisiana, Virginia, Missouri, Ohio, California, New York, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Florida, Connecticut, and New Jersey.

Overall, this was noted by all parties involved to be very successful. With the support of Division of Community Development and the encouragement of Apache County Recorder’s Office, NN Addressing Authority hope that this project will continue to move forward and provide this important service to not only Apache County residence but to the rest of Navajo Nation.

Google Tip of the Month

Make a typo in your email? Forget to add a recipient? Change your mind about sending a message? Take back a message you just sent by enabling the Undo Send feature.

INSTRUCTIONS (from Google's support page):

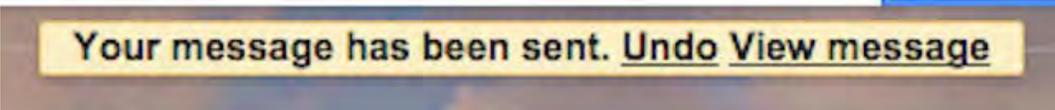
- To enable Gmail's Undo Send

1. In Gmail, click  and select **Settings**.
2. Select the **General** tab.
3. Scroll to **Undo Send** and click **Enable**.
4. At the bottom, click .

Then, if you send a message you want to take back, just click **Undo** at the top of the page.

Note: To give you time to undo, Gmail delays sending the message for a few seconds. So if you don't select "Undo" within the time limit, your message will be sent. "Undo send" may not work if you experience connection issues.

In Gmail, you will see the following after you've sent an email. Clicking "Undo" will allow you to take back your email.



Your message has been sent. [Undo](#) [View message](#)

Seven Ways to Spot a Phishing Email

In a recent ZoneAlarm article, titled "Seven Ways to Spot a Phishing Email," the author provided some great tips for identifying fraudulent emails called "phishing emails".

"Phishing emails are designed to look like legitimate messages from actual banks, businesses, and other organizations. In reality, though, criminals created the message, usually in an effort to steal your money, identity, or both. They want you to click links that will take you to a website that looks authentic but is really just there to capture your credit card or other personal information or perhaps to distribute malware.

Here are some ways to spot phishing emails, and what you can do to protect yourself.

```

n ping statistics ---
transmitted: 1 packets received, sht duplicates, 0% packet loss
10.2.2.0 | grep '^64' | awk '{print "nslookup "$4 " " $4}' | s
| csh |& grep address
10.2.1.0

sS -O 10.2.1.3
map 0, 2, 54BE1025
1.3 appears to be up ... good.
SVN Stealth Scan against 10.2.1.3
assuming that port 21 is open and port 1 is closed and neither
at responses for TCP sequencing (3), OS detection may be less
g ports on 10.2.1.3:
ports scanned but not shown below are in state: closed)
State Service
open ftp
open

```

1. The email has improper spelling or grammar

This is one of the most common signs that an email isn't legitimate. Sometimes, the mistake is easy to spot, such as 'Dear eBay Costumer' instead of 'Dear eBay Customer.'

Others might be more difficult to spot, so make sure to look at the email in closer detail. For example, the subject line or the email itself might say "Health coverage for the unemployed." The word unemployed isn't exactly difficult to spell. And any legitimate organizations would have editors who review their marketing emails carefully before sending it out. So when in doubt, check the email closely for misspellings and improper grammar.

2. The hyperlinked URL is different from the one shown

The hypertext link in a phishing email may include, say, the name of a legitimate bank. But when you hover the mouse over the link (without clicking it), you may discover in a small pop-up window that the actual URL differs from the one displayed and doesn't contain the bank's name. (You should be aware that not all email software would show the actual URL in a pop-up window, however). Similarly, you can hover your mouse over the address in the 'from' field to see if the website domain matches that of the organization the email is supposed to have been sent from.

3. The email urges you to take immediate action

Often, a phishing email tries to trick you into clicking a link by claiming that your account has been closed or put on hold, or that there's been fraudulent activity requiring your immediate attention. Of course, it's possible you may receive a legitimate message informing you to take action on your account. To be safe, though, don't click the link in the email, no matter how authentic it appears to be. Instead, log into the account in question directly by visiting the appropriate website, then check your account status.

4. The email requests for personal information

Reputable organizations don't ask their customers for personal information via email. If you have a checking account, your bank already knows your account number.

5. The email says you've won a contest you haven't entered

A common phishing scam is to send an email informing recipients they've won a lottery or some other prize. All they have to do is click the link and enter their personal information online. Chances are, if you've never bought a lottery ticket or entered to win a prize, the email is a scam.

6. The email asks you to make a donation

As unbelievable as it may seem, scam artists often send out phishing emails inviting recipients to donate to a worthy cause after a natural or other tragedy. For example, after Hurricane Katrina, the American Red Cross reported more than 15 fraudulent websites were designed to look like legitimate Red Cross appeals for relief efforts. Potential victims received phishing emails asking them to donate to the Red Cross, with links to malicious sites that stole their credit card numbers. If you'd like to make a donation to a charity, do so by visiting their website directly.

7. The email includes suspicious attachments

It would be highly unusual for a legitimate organization to send you an email with an attachment, unless it's a document you've requested. As always, if you receive an email that looks in any way suspicious, never click to download the attachment, as it could be malware."

WHAT TO DO?

- * Adjust your email settings to only allow email from senders that you trust
- * Make sure that you have antivirus software installed and that it is up to date.
- * Do not open any emails that you are not expecting.
- * Do not click on any links, documents, or photos in emails that look suspicious.

To read the full story, visit: <http://www.zonealarm.com/blog/2014/07/7-ways-to-spot-a-phishing-scam/>



Annual Division Employee Appreciation Day Gets Rained Out

The Division of Community Development held their annual Employee Appreciation Day at the Narbona Pass Picnic Ground on Tuesday, July 14, 2015. The DCD employee event started out well. A public address system was set up with a generator. Several grills were brought in for cooking the food. The majority of DCD departments were present including the AmeriCorps Water 1 team.

Each department gave a short overview of their programs and updated the crowd on what the department was doing. The lunch had just started when heavy rain began falling. People stood under tents or fled to their cars. Umbrellas were deployed. Luckily, most people were able to get their food before the rain started. After the rain subsided to a steady drizzle, the rest of the scheduled events were carried out while people were huddled under tents and other shelter.



Tse Daa K'aan Chapter Celebrates Parking Lot Project Completion



On Monday, May 28, 2015, the Tse Daa K'aan Chapter celebrated the completion of their chapter parking lot project. Sharon Clahchischilliaqe, New Mexico State Representative District 4, was instrumental in helping the chapter to secure the funding for the project and was present as a guest speaker. The project was funded with New Mexico Capital Outlay funds.

The new parking lot is able to accommodate approximately 77 spaces and covers the area from the Senior Center to east of the Chapter. This is a welcome solution for community members who have to deal with the seasonal problem of mud in the parking area. This will also be very helpful for disabled people, elderly, and others who have special needs to get better access inside the Chapter House.

Top: Community members attending the celebration; Bottom: Sharon Clahchischilliaqe, New Mexico State Representative District 4, speaking

NEWS FROM COMMUNITY HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT



EPA Funding for Navajo Nation Homes

The Navajo Nation Community Housing and Infrastructure Department, partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, are building homes for Navajo families. CHID is managing the construction of the homes and currently is constructing a hogan (pictured above) in Sweetwater, Arizona.

The hogan project is over 70% completed and projected to be completed soon. The project oversight is provided by Region IX San Francisco, Cal. Randy Nattis. The CHID Supervisor is Stanley Jones.

In the past EPA was using private contractors out of Albuquerque but they were not satisfied with the quality of work. EPA approached CHID to partner with them and construct these homes since they were already on Navajo Nation land.

CHID built nine (9) homes in the Haystack area and EPA was so satisfied with the quality of work and adherence to the time schedules that they continued the partnership and agreed to fund additional projects.



CHAPTER NEWS BRIEFS

New Mexico Project Receives funds from New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Fund (TIF) and New Mexico Capital Outlay

In May 2015, eleven Navajo Nation projects were presented to the TIF Board at the TIF Board Meeting at the New Mexico Capitol in Santa Fe. The projects including three planning projects--Red Rock, Chichiltah, and Mariano Lake Chapters; four design projects--Tohajiilee, Ramah, Shiprock, and Newcomb Chapters; and four construction projects--Red Rock, Twin Lakes, and Littlewater Chapters and the Navajo Nation Crownpoint wellness center. All these projects were awarded funds. Congratulations!

New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Funds	Type	Project	Amount
Red Rock (Tse' Lichii)	Planning	Red Rock Senior Center Building	\$50,000
Chichiltah	Planning	Drill Water Well/Chichiltah-Vanderwagen W/L	\$268,519
Mariano Lake	Planning	Mariano Lake Powerline Project	\$300,000
Tohajiilee	Design	Tohajiilee Water System Improvements	\$600,000
Ramah	Design	Section 21 Water Well Evaluation & Design	\$250,000
Shiprock	Design	Emerg. Response Incident Command Center	\$600,000
Newcomb	Design	Waterline Extension	\$200,000
Red Rock (Tse' Lichii)	Construction	Upgrade Sewer Line/sewer Lagoon	\$680,000
Twin Lake (Bahastl' ah')	Construction	Johnson Road Improvements	\$800,000
Littlewater	Construction	Heart Butte Electrical Power Line Extension	\$259,875
Navajo Nation	Construction	Crownpoint Wellness Center	\$2,200,000

The Navajo Nation also receive New Mexico Capital Outlay Funds From the New Mexico Legistive Special Session held on June 18, 2015. The funds are for 30 Chapter Projects, a Dine' College Project , a Navajo Technical University Project, a Navajo Division of Transportation Project for US Highway 491, and a Red Lake Charter School Project. Congratulations to the projects that received funds. The New Mexico Funds from both TIF and Capital Outlay will need to be accepted by the 164 Process of the Navajo Nation which will be handled by the Capital Improvement Office.

New Mexico Capital Outlay	Project	Amount
Baahaali Chaper	Senior Center - Equip	\$6,000
Baahaali Chapter	Bathroom Additions	\$45,000
Baahaali Chapter	Powerlines Extend	\$100,000
Baca/Prewitt Chapter	Powerline Extend Seawald Area	\$50,000
Chichiltah Chapter	Chapter House Construction	\$150,000
Coyote Canyon Chapter	Senior Center-Constuction	\$520,000
Coyote Canyon Chapter	Senior CTR Meals Equip	\$36,600
Crystal Chapter	Parking Lot	\$50,000
Crystal Chapter	Water Tank & Fire Pump	\$75,000
Mexican Springs Chapter	Deer Springs Rd Improvements	\$100,000
Dine College	Access Lanes & Sidewalks	\$700,000
Gadii'Ahi/To'Koi Chapter	Chapter Cmty Services CTRS	\$300,000
Lake Valley Chapter	Chapter House	\$100,000
Littlewater Chapter	Electrical Powerlines	\$40,000
Mariano Lake Chapter	Utility Line Connect	\$90,000
Mexican Springs Chapter	Multi-Purpose Center	\$75,000
Nageezi Chapter	Powerline Extend	\$50,000
Naschitti Chapter	Cemetery Expand/Improvements	\$50,000
Navajo Tech Univ	Health/Security/Safety Improve	\$535,000
Pinedale Chapter	Veterans Modular BLDG	\$75,000
Pueblo Pintado Chapter	Senior Center-Construction	\$100,000
Red Lake Chapter	Charter School	\$50,000
Red Rock Chapter	Chapter House	\$75,000
Rock Springs Chapter	Admin Office Extension	\$200,000
Shiprock Chapter	Wellness Center	\$100,000
Thoreau Chapter	Veterans Service Center	\$275,000
Toadlena/Two Grey Hills Chapter	Community Cemeteries	\$25,000
Tooh Haltsooi Chapter	Bldgs Demolition & Diposal	\$80,000

New Mexico Capital Outlay	Project	Amount
Torreon/Star Lake Chapter	EMS BLDG	\$90,000
Tsayatoh & Manuelito Chapters	Multi-Purpose CTR	\$75,000
Tsayatoh Chapter	Chapter House Improvements	\$60,000
Tse'ii'ahi Chapter	Vehicles & Equipment	\$50,000
Sanostee Chapter	US Highway 491 Safety& Bridge Design	\$25,000
White Rock	Veterans Admin CTR Addition	\$50,000
	Total	\$4,402,600

U. S. Social Security Administration Offers Computer Grants to Navajo Nation Communities

The U.S. Social Security Administration is offering 100 additional computers to Navajo Nation communities. In the first grant, the Social Security Administration donated 1 computer to each of 12 Chapters. The computers are meant to be used by the Navajo public to access Internet resources such as the Social Security Administration's own online services via its website.

DCD sent out email notifications to chapters and asked for additional information if they wanted to participate in the program. There are 2 main requirements: 1) That there is adequate space for the computers to be set up in a publicly-accessible location; and 2) that the chapter have enough broadband capacity to share with the public computer.

DCD has already received plenty of responses from chapters wishing to participate. DCD is in the process of finalizing the process with the Social Security Administration. Once finalized, installations will begin at identified locations to deliver and set up computers.

Tohatchi Chapter Gets Connected to NTUA Fiber Optic Line for High Speed Broadband Access

On Monday, June 29, 2015, Tohatchi Chapter began receiving high-speed broadband access from NTUA Wireless using NTUA's fiber optic network. NTUA's fiber optic network was constructed in 2012 using a combination of funding from the U.S. Recovery Act and NTUA's own funds in a \$42 Million project. Tohatchi Chapter is subscribing to a 5Mb/s broadband connection and now has the capability to tap into Internet services that their old connection would not fully support, such as video-conferencing or online cloud service and cloud storage.

Tohatchi intends to make good use of the new resource and look at creating a shared network with other chapters in the region and begin building some services that all chapters can benefit from.

Local Governance Certified Chapters

Chapter	Agency	LGA Cert. Date	Chapter	Agency	LGA Cert. Date
1 Nahata Dziil	Ft. Defiance	8/16/02	1 Newcomb	Northern	6/18/04
2 Steamboat	Ft. Defiance	5/30/03	2 San Juan	Northern	3/7/07
3 Cornfields	Ft. Defiance	7/14/10	3 Tse'Daa'Kaan	Northern	6/21/07
4 Naschitti	Ft. Defiance	11/22/10	4 Sheepsprings	Northern	8/24/07
5 Lupton	Ft. Defiance	11/24/10	5 Tolikan	Northern	11/29/10
6 Dilkon	Ft. Defiance	12/21/10	6 Toadlena/Two Grey Hills	Northern	1/10/11
7 Greasewood Springs	Ft. Defiance	12/21/10	7 Burnham	Northern	7/11/11
8 Kinlichee	Ft. Defiance	12/29/10	8 Beclabito	Northern	1/10/12
9 Teesto	Ft. Defiance	7/11/11	9 Mexican Water	Northern	2/7/12
10 Ganado	Ft. Defiance	12/2/14	10 Upper Fruitland	Northern	2/28/12
11 Houck	Ft. Defiance	12/2/14	11 Aneth	Northern	3/31/15
TOTAL: 11			11 Cove	Northern	4/5/15
			TOTAL: 12		

Chapter	Agency	LGA Cert. Date	Chapter	Agency	LGA Cert. Date
1 Shonto	Western	9/22/99	1 Chinle	Chinle	12/21/10
2 Tuba City	Western	12/27/04	2 Pinon	Chinle	2/21/12
3 Kayenta	Western	8/6/10	3 Whippoorwill Springs	Chinle	12/2/14
4 Bodaway/Gap	Western	12/21/10	4 Nazlini	Chinle	2/17/15
5 Birdsprings	Western	7/11/11	TOTAL: 4		
6 Chilchinbeto	Western	7/11/11			
7 Leupp	Western	7/11/11			
8 LeChee	Western	1/31/12			
9 Dennehotso	Western	2/14/12			
10 Tonalea	Western	12/2/14			
TOTAL 10					

Chapter	Agency	LGA Cert. Date
1 Littlewater	Eastern	11/15/07
2 Baahaali	Eastern	12/24/08
3 Whiterock	Eastern	12/21/10
4 Ojo Encino	Eastern	3/6/12
5 Baca/Prewitt	Eastern	12/22/14
6 Casamero Lake	Eastern	4/15/15
TOTAL: 6		

TOTAL CERTIFICATION : 43

Revised 5/7/2015 gjordan





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Operation Yellow Water

ATTENTION:

If you are interested in volunteering or donating to assist Navajo communities who have been impacted by the August Gold Mine spill on the San Juan River:

VOLUNTEER

www.OperationYellowWater.com

(505) 371-8408

DONATE

www.gofund.me/OperationYellowh20

Visit any Wells Fargo and donate to Operation Yellow Water with the account ending in 3176



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September 11, 2015

Navajo Nation Honors Lives Lost During 9/11 with Moment of Silence

Window Rock – Fourteen years ago today the United States came under attack in what has become known as 9/11. It was during this attack that two passenger airliners were hijacked and flown into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center complex in New York City.

Nationally, citizens across the United States watched in horror as the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center collapsed.

“Today we, the Navajo Nation, are in remembrance of the tragedy that happened on that day,” Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said.

At 10:45 a.m. today, the Navajo Nation and the United States will take a moment of silence to remember those who lost their lives that day. President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez would also like to remember all the Navajo Nation firefighters and law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

“Approximately 3,000 people lost their lives that day. Out of that number, 343 were firefighters which is the largest loss of firefighters in history. Law enforcement lost 72 officers.” President Begaye said. “We honor them today for putting their lives on the line.”

The President and Vice President are asking for continued prayers for those who had lost their lives on 9/11 and those who continue to defend the Navajo Nation and the United States.

“During 9/11, the United States was involved in a war in the Middle East. As always our Navajo people have enlisted and accepted the call to serve their country,” said Vice President Jonathan Nez. “We continue to pray for our children who have been to war and are still out protecting the United States and the Navajo Nation within our Four Sacred Mountains.”



September 11, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, HUD Assistant Secretary Lourdes Castro-Ramirez Meet With Navajo Veterans on Housing Issue



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary Lourdes Castro-Ramirez met with Navajo veteran commanders, Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs and NHA to discuss housing opportunities. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

FT. DEFIANCE, Ariz. September 11, 2015—Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez remain committed to addressing the housing need of Navajo veterans and to that end, they brought together tribal and federal resources to find solutions to the housing crisis.

On Friday, Navajo veterans, Office of the President and Vice President, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Navajo Housing Authority, Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs, and the Southwest Office of Native American Programs met to discuss the homeless veterans issue.

President Begaye introduced Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, assistant secretary for HUD.

“We wanted to provide you

an opportunity to hear from her on where she stands on bringing HUD monies into the VA and on helping our veterans,” he said.

Speaking in Navajo, Vice President Nez said, “We appreciate our veterans and we remember you. We met with leaders in Washington, D.C. and told them our Navajo veterans and their families want homes.”

He said veterans are not shy about reminding the Begaye-Nez administration that Navajo veterans are number one on the four pillars of the administration.

“That’s the reason why we invited HUD. We look forward to your support for the Navajo Nation Veterans Act for approval by the Navajo Nation Council and getting it signed into law by President Begaye,” said Vice President Nez.

Castro-Ramirez

reaffirmed that HUD is committed to ending veteran homelessness. In 2010, the Obama administration launched Opening Doors, a comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and end homelessness.

“As we saw today, the funds allocated for affordable housing opportunities can be used to strengthen the community, like a new youth center, creation of a veterans home or a facility that is accessible by the community,” Castro-Ramirez said.

Since 2011, statistics indicate that numbers have decreased and veterans’ homelessness is down by 33 percent, she said. In 2014, Congress appropriated \$4 million for Tribal HUD Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing.

The partnership is a pilot project between HUD and the VA.

“Tribal HUD VASH is our first attempt at proving housing opportunities to veterans in Indian Country. It’s a pilot project with only \$4 million but it’s a start and we expect 600 veterans to be served,” Castro-Ramirez said.

HUD is allocated \$650 million for Native American programs, she said, which is not enough to address the need that exists. The funding amount has remained the same for the past 14 years.

The agency veteran commanders spoke about issues they faced with housing.

A common thread throughout was the trust land status of the Navajo Nation and the reluctance by banks to approve home loans on the reservation.

The commanders also raised the need for infrastructure and appliances for the homes, rather than just providing shells that must be completed by the veterans occupying the houses. The quality of the housing material was also questioned.

Aneva Yazzie, chief executive officer for NHA, said NAHASDA funding has strict eligibility guidelines with regard to income that must be complied with by applicants.

“The need is so much greater in Indian Country and that’s even more so with Navajo being the largest tribal land base,” Yazzie said.

“We look forward to working with President Begaye and NHA. We look forward to rolling out the Tribal HUD VASH in the next few months. We commend you all on keeping the focus on this important effort,” Castro-Ramirez said.





THE NAVAJO NATION

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September 11, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, HUD Assistant Secretary Lourdes Castro-Ramirez Open Ft. Defiance Multi-Purpose Youth Center



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez watch local Navajo youth cut the ribbon to the \$6.7 million Office of Dine' Youth Multi-Purpose Youth Center on Friday morning. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

FT. DEFIANCE, Ariz.— The ribbon has been cut and the new Ft. Defiance Multi-Purpose Youth Center is open to provide local and regional Navajo youth an opportunity for healthy activities in a safe atmosphere.

The 17,000 square foot facility was designed by Dyron Murphy Architects, P.C. and was constructed by Arviso Construction. The team broke ground for the \$6.7 million project on March 11, 2013.

The Ft. Defiance youth

complex features the new multi-purpose center, a skate park, playground, three baseball fields and the building for the Office of Dine' Youth on 23 acres of land located east of Tsehootsoi Middle School.

The price tag for entire complex is just under \$10 million.

On Sept. 11, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez joined Navajo Housing Authority, visiting officials from the U.S. Department

of Housing and Urban Development and others to celebrate the new facility.

Navajo Nation Council delegates Ben Bennett and Amber Kanazbah Crotty were also in attendance to celebrate area youth.

Alisha Damon, a staff member of Ft. Defiance ODY, provided the welcome address.

She said the new building is going to allow the office to do a lot more work to empower youth and emphasize physical fitness and living a healthy

lifestyle.

“We try to implement a variety of programs to the youth to grow. As they develop, our mission is to help them strive forward in the right direction,” said Damon.

Ashley Mitchell, former basketball standout for Window Rock High School, gave the youth perspective on ODY and the services provided to Navajo kids.

“When I see this building, I see a place where children can go, a safe place. I grew

up around the people from the Office of Dine' Youth. It's a place where I felt safe and I felt wanted," Mitchell said.

"I encourage the students to take advantage of this building and make the best of it. Be thankful you have someplace to go," she added.

Guest speaker Harold Wauneka gave a community outlook on the youth complex and how the puzzle came together one piece at a time in interests of area kids.

He said during his tenure on the Navajo Nation Council, ODY did not have a place to go and they approached the Ft. Defiance Chapter in search of a building. Eventually the BIA was invited to the table and the group asked about the land.

"We had to start from scratch," Wauneka said, adding that the 23-acre tract was surveyed, including archaeological and biological clearances.

The Navajo Nation Council provided \$800,000 for the clearances. Next, Wauneka returned to the tribal council for the second phase: the design of the office building and the skate park, funded at \$2.4 million.

To this day, we got another allocation of \$6.7 million from NAHASDA, he said.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez introduced Lourdes Castro-Ramirez, assistant secretary at HUD. They presented her with a shawl and thanked her for traveling to the Navajo Nation to celebrate the new center and see the housing crisis firsthand.

Vice President Nez said the new building is going to empower the future leaders of the Navajo Nation.

"Take care of it, be sure you parents tell your kids and grandkids. Take care of it and it will last 50 years. We don't want any graffiti. We don't want any broken glass here. This is yours," Vice President

Nez said.

"We're really honored to have Lourdes Castro-Ramirez with us," President Begaye said, adding that she oversees more than 1,300 employees and \$26 billion in housing funds.

He said the main request from Navajo people is housing and that the Begaye-Nez administration is looking forward to working with HUD and NAHASDA to address those needs.

Castro-Ramirez said HUD is committed to expanding opportunities and working with partners.

"Community projects, community facilities, the Ft. Defiance Youth Center are essential in lifting up youth and families," Castro-Ramirez said. "We know that safe, affordable housing and economic opportunities are core necessities in every community and Indian Country is no exception.

"We work with 567 federally recognized tribes to support their efforts to preserve and expand the supply of housing for low income families and to develop community development projects like this youth center," she added.

The commitment by the Obama administration to improve the quality of life in Indian Country will continue and focus on three areas, she said.

"Preparing the youth for the higher education and the workforce, creating and supporting native communities and expanding economic opportunities," Castro-Ramirez said.



President Begaye and Vice President Nez presented U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary Lourdes Castro-Ramirez with a shawl. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



President Begaye and Vice President Nez sat with visiting dignitaries from HUD, Navajo Housing Authority and the Southwest Office of Native American Programs. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Harold Wauneka, former council delegate for Ft. Defiance Chapter, provided a history of the entire youth complex and said the vision has now been realized for the \$10 million complex. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



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September 15, 2015

President Begaye Asks Secretary Burwell's Tribal Advisory Committee for Cancer and Mental Health Facilities

WASHINGTON—Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye called for the establishment of cancer treatment and mental health facilities on the Navajo Nation in a tribal caucus held today by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC).

“With 330,000 Navajo people, we could save money and provide our own immediate treatment,” he said. “For services, many Navajo people go off reservation. We don't need to farm these services out.”

President Begaye told the tribal caucus that cancer is the second highest cause of death on the Navajo Nation which emphasizes the Nation's need for cancer treatment facilities.

He noted that in-patient mental health facilities are needed to serve veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and the Nation's high suicide rate.

“We've recently had three suicides in communities that were affected by the Gold King Mine spill,” he said. “It has created great concern for people in these areas.”

President Begaye then addressed concerns the Nation has faced in dealing with the consequences of the recent Gold King Mine contamination spill.

“The next five generations will still be dealing with the effects of the river spill on our water and food systems,” he said. “Our rivers and lands are contaminated. Even now we are feeling the impacts on our health.”

President Begaye noted that he has sent a letter to Robert McSwain from Indian Health Services (IHS) asking for assistance in drilling wells in areas affected by the Gold King Mine spill. The letter also requested assistance with well water testing, the construction of a water treatment facility and a 90-day reservoir.

According to the president, McSwain has yet to respond.

“We have asked McSwain for help and he has given us a verbal affirmative but he hasn’t acted on it. We want a letter from him.”

President Begaye also expressed concern over how the Navajo Nation Health and Social Service programs are funded.

“We should not be in the category of discretionary funding as if we were a program within the Federal Government,” he said. “These funds should be provided to the Nation because we signed a treaty. It is the trust responsibility of the government and we should not be treated as a program.”

Tribal leaders convened at the tribal caucus to discuss budget updates, IHS issues and outreach efforts. The day’s session also saw updates from the Administration for Children and Families on the Indian Child Welfare Act, the National Institute of Health on the Precision Medicine Initiative and the Center of Disease Control on the work of CDC’s Tribal Advisory Committee.

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September 16, 2015

**BEGAYE CALLS FOR INCREASED FEDERAL SUPPORT IN TESTIMONY BEFORE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS**

WASHINGTON-President Russell Begaye today called for increased support from the Federal Government to address the recent Gold King Mine spill in testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. President Begaye also discussed the failed response from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to the crisis.

“In light of the devastating impacts from this spill, both known and yet unknown, we need to act quickly and thoughtfully to protect our Navajo citizens, our natural resources, the Navajo way of life, and most importantly our future generations,” testified President Begaye. “We need assistance from the responsible parties to address the short- and long-term impacts, to make us whole, and to return the beauty and *hozho* to our River and our people. In addition to oversight and national attention, Congress can provide forward-thinking legislative solutions to some of these issues.”

To address the serious impacts of this spill and the continued threat to the Navajo people from future contamination, President Begaye made the following requests of Congress:

- Resources from USEPA, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to address the immediate emergency;
- Assurances that USEPA will fairly and timely compensate the affected farmers and livestock owners for their damages, both in the near term and long term.
- Resources to conduct our own water, sediment, and soil monitoring, and recognized authority for the Navajo Nation EPA to do the necessary work.
- That the USEPA address all the contamination that is flowing into the River.

- Resources to address near- and intermediate-term environmental and health impacts;
- Resources to study and address the long-term environmental and health impacts of the spill, and to restore the River to a safe and healthy state; and
- A fair and independent assessment of the role USEPA, and others, played in the events leading up to the Gold King Mine spill, and the establishment of a different lead agency.

President Begaye strongly criticized USEPA's response to the spill and its complete lack of transparency.

"It took the USEPA almost two full days to notify us of the spill. We view this as a violation of the government-to-government relationship between the federal government and the Navajo Nation," testified President Begaye.

Tomorrow, President Begaye will testify before a joint hearing of the U.S. House Natural Resources and Oversight and Government Reform Committees.

CLICK HERE FOR FULL TESTIMONY

<http://www.indian.senate.gov/sites/default/files/9.16.15%20Begaye%20Testimony%20.pdf/>

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September 17, 2015

BEGAYE TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEES

WASHINGTON – President Russell Begaye today testified before a joint session of the House Committees on Oversight and Government Reform and Natural Resources on the Gold King Mine Spill. President Begaye asked the committees for more Federal support to cope with the disaster.

“Today we come to ask for your help. The White House is silent. FEMA, DOI and other federal agencies are being told by the USEPA to not use their own resources to help us,” testified President Begaye. “USEPA has made promises but we have not seen any of these promises fulfilled. The promises remain empty. They are like the thunder we hear over our land but with no rain.”

In his opening statements, Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) told USEPA Administrator Gina McCarthy that making sure USEPA was held accountable was the primary cause and reason for the hearing.

“We want to find out what happened, how to solve it and to make sure it doesn’t happen again,” he said. “We want to find out why EPA was so slow to notify downstream users of what was happening. I’m very proud of the tribes in the area that were effective with the resources that they had.”

Congressman Stephen F. Lynch (D-MASS) told the joint committee that he used to live in Farmington, N.M. He said he knows the Navajo people are intensely invested spiritually in their land.

“What are we going to do to make things right with the Navajo?” he asked Administrator McCarthy. “They are a sovereign nation and we have a huge responsibility to rectify this situation.”

Representative Paul A. Gosar (R-AZ) asked President Begaye if he felt the EPA's coordination was adequate in notifying the Navajo Nation.

"If coordination is waiting a day before notification happens, I don't think that is coordination at all," President Begaye answered.

Congressman Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM) asked that a memo from EPA be added to the record in which the EPA itself stated that they waited 24 hours before notifying their very own agency in Region 8 about the spill. This was before the EPA had ever notified any of the surrounding states or the tribes.

President Begaye outlined the following requests for Congress:

- First and foremost is compensation. The farmers and ranchers cannot wait months before they are compensated for their damages. Have the EPA setup an Emergency Compensation Fund and provide ongoing repayment of losses as they are submitted.
- Alternative water source for drinking, for livestock and for irrigating farms. We need wells to be drilled, a reservoir built and water piped from the Navajo Dam.
- USEPA must build a laboratory on the Navajo Nation so we can continuously test our water, soil, plants, and livestock.
- The Committee should tell President Obama to declare the San Juan River a disaster area. Only then will other federal agencies beside EPA provide services we need. This will allow FEMA, USDA, DOI and other federal agencies to provide resources we need now.
- The Committee should hold a follow up hearing 6 months from now to keep USEPA accountable for this crisis.

President Begaye also testified yesterday before the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

President Begaye's full testimony is enclosed:

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TESTIMONY BEFORE CONGRESS

Good Morning. Chairman Chaffetz (Oversight and Government Reform)
Chairman Rob Bishop (House Committee on Natural Resources) and ranking members of
the committees.

My Name is RUSSELL BEGAYE of the KINLICHIIINII and BITAHNI clan and I am the
PRESIDENT of the NAVAJO NATION.

I was born and raised along the San Juan River in Shiprock, NM. Years ago, when I was a
little boy, we saw hundreds of dead fish floating down the river. As boys we jump in the
river catching the dying fish. I have been wondering for years, what happened and why
were those fish were dead.

Just a month ago, I finally got an answer. On August 13 when Administrator McCarthy came
to visit our Nation, I learned 1.5 million gallons of radium 226 spilled from the Uranium
Mill Site located by the bridge in Shiprock. We not only swam in that radioactive water but
my brothers, my community ate the contaminated fish. USEPA did not warn the people
when that spill occurred or helped the community recover, instead kept quiet.

I am asking members of these two committees to not allow history to repeat itself. Hold the
EPA accountable for the toxic spill that occur on August 5th about a month and half ago.
Don't let them get away with their negligence.

My people are suffering. Much of the organic crops have been lost. Our livestock are penned
up. Our farmers and ranchers are exhausted from hauling water. Our children are afraid of
the river. We have been told by the EPA that clean up will take decades. This is what we
will have to live with for years to come.

So, today we come to ask for your help. The White House is silent. FEMA, DOI and other
federal agencies are being told to not use their own resources to help us by the USEPA.

USEPA has made promises but we have not seen any of these promises fulfilled. The
promises remain empty. They are like the thunder we hear over our land but with no rain.

Our people need...

1. First and foremost is compensation now. The farmers and ranchers cannot wait months
before they are compensated for their damages. I know this year bills will not be paid,
clothing for children will not be bought, and food will be scarce. Have the EPA setup an
Emergency Compensation Fund and provide ongoing repayment of losses as they are
submitted. Don't be a party to this injustice by having our farmers waive future claims after
they get their first compensation checks.

2. We need an alternative water source for drinking, for our livestock and for irrigating our farms. We are asking that wells be drilled, a reservoir built and water be piped from the Navajo Dam.
3. We want the EPA to build us a laboratory on the Navajo Nation so we can continuously test our water, soil, plants, and livestock.
5. We are asking this Committee to tell President Obama to declare the San Juan river a disaster area. Only then will other federal agencies beside EPA provide services we need. This will allow FEMA, USDA, DOI and other federal agencies to provide resources we need now.
6. We are asking this Committee to hold a follow up hearing 6 months from now because we do not want this to become old news a week from now.

The Navajo Nation will not let any and all negligent parties to get away with this disaster. We will stand our ground until our River and river beds are safe once again for our children to play in and our people to use as a drinking source.

The Navajo Nation will no longer stand back when these types of atrocities are done to our people, our land, and our water for WATER IS LIFE.

I thank you for your time and attention and we will look to your leadership to right this injustice. Ahehee.



THE NAVAJO NATION

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September 18, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Begaye-Nez Administration Promotes Suicide Prevention



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez reported before the Health, Education and Human Services Committee of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council to report on the suicide prevention effort by the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On Sept. 16, by a vote of 4-0, the Health, Education and Human Services Committee of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously agreed to accept the report by the Utah Navajo Health Systems, Inc.

UNHS Board of Directors declared a state of emergency after the recent spate of suicides that gripped the community. The organization is located in Montezuma Creek, Utah.

“The rash of suicides has shaken the communities that we serve. The emotional toll on everyone has been significant,” said Robert Whitehorse, board chairman.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month and a call to action by the UNHS to

work with the Navajo Nation on creating a safety net against the effects of suicide.

“We will work with other agencies to increase awareness, provide additional educational tools, de-stigmatize the illnesses and treatments, network with healthcare and mental health professionals and increase our presence with primary and secondary schools,” Whitehorse said.

The root causes of suicide include poverty, depression, bullying, alcoholism, drug abuse and other social conditions.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez have raised awareness on suicide prevention since taking office in May.

Vice President Nez spoke of a young Navajo male, set to graduate from high school in May, but instead took his own life.

“Suicide is just not a problem on Navajo, it’s a problem throughout Indian Country,” he said.

Vice President Nez said the declaration of emergency issued by the UNHS was proactive.

He encouraged the HEHSC to submit a letter of support to OPVP requesting an emergency declaration to release funding to UNHS for suicide prevention efforts. OPVP will begin the emergency declaration process.

In June, Vice President Nez reported before the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary

Sylvia Burwell and provided suggestions on fighting suicide, namely the establishment of a national workgroup to begin planning.

He recommended that the workgroup not just be comprised of bureaucrats, but include tribal leaders from around Indian Country. The appointments to the workgroup are forthcoming, he added, and encouraged a member of the HEHSC to join.

Suicide is an unacceptable subject matter for Navajo people, but the discussion must take place, Vice President Nez said.

“Everywhere I go, I try to bring up suicide prevention for our young people. It’s mostly our young Navajo men that are taking their own lives,” he said. “How do we address that?”

He said intergenerational teaching between the elders and youth is the answer.

“Many of us were probably raised by our grandparents talking to us in Navajo, letting us know that this is how life is to be. But now, our younger generation does not understand the language and there’s a gap,” Vice President Nez said. “Language is the foundation.”

The next interdisciplinary team meeting on suicide response and post intervention will take place on Sept. 22 at the Division of Dine’ Education Center.





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September 18, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vice President Nez Celebrates Dine' College Housing, SUB



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez joined Dr. Maggie George, Dine' College President, for the ribbon cutting ceremony and celebration of new student housing and renovations to the student union building. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

TSAILE, Ariz.—Students at the main campus of Dine' College now have new housing.

On Sept. 18, college faculty, administration, special guests and the general public celebrated 32 new housing units and the newly renovated Student Union Building.

A Title III grant from the U.S. Department of Education funded the new housing units and building renovations, at a cost of more than \$15 million. The housing units totaled \$13 million and the SUB renovations were completed at a cost of \$2.1 million.

The housing complex incorporated Navajo cultural elements and are a mix of two

and three-bedroom units with a full service kitchen, bathroom, washer, dryer, microwave, refrigerator and stove.

Additionally, each unit will have wireless Internet access for students to work on their studies. Perimeter fencing around the complex was included for child safety and security.

Dr. Maggie George, Dine' College President, said the SUB was constructed in 1972 and a lot of work went into making it shiny and new. The college utilized the "one stop shop" concept and the SUB now houses student services, admissions, financial aid, registrar, and student advisors.

"It's still a work in

progress. We have some monies that we will be putting into the auditorium and we're hoping to have that done by December," George said.

She reported that Dine' College received another \$16 million grant from DOE three weeks ago, which will be split and used for student success and programming focused on access to higher education, retention, persistence and graduation rates.

The other \$8 million will go to building renovations and for fiber optic connection from the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority last mile project.

Additionally, Dine' College received word earlier in the week about their selection for a

\$2.5 million grant for a STEM initiative from the National Science Foundation.

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez provided the keynote address.

"On behalf of my na'ii, President Russell Begaye, we congratulate you on this milestone for the college. Take care of your renovated student union building and family housing units," said Vice President Nez.

The new housing units are going to provide Navajo families an opportunity to return to school and reach their educational goals, an admirable goal in step with self-determination and self-reliance, he noted.

The one stop concept should be replicated throughout the Nation, he said, adding that Navajo youth and senior citizens need to come together in a centralized location for intergenerational opportunities," he said.

Vice President Nez attended Dine' College as a student and as an adjunct faculty member, teaching classes in history and government.

A ribbon cutting ceremony, barbecue luncheon and a tour of the housing units concluded the celebration.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NATIONAL INDIAN HEALTH BOARD 32ND ANNUAL CONSUMER
CONFERENCE UNITES TRIBES FOR POLICY, ADVOCACY, HEALTH**

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 23, 2015—This week, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the National Indian Health Board 32nd Annual Consumer Conference and spoke on issues important to the Navajo Nation.

In particular, they took the opportunity to advance the need for suicide prevention awareness on tribal nations, especially on the Navajo Nation. Based on the 2006 to 2009 Navajo Nation Mortality Report, the suicide rate is 17.48 persons per 100,000.

There is an average of 29 suicides per year. The Navajo Nation Epidemiology Center is working on implementation of a suicide surveillance system to address the issue. Most recently, an interdisciplinary team for suicide prevention, response and postvention has been established.

The mission of NIHB is to provide one voice affirming and empowering American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples to protect and improve health and reduce health disparities.

Various tribal leaders from Indian Country united to speak on issues ranging from suicide, drug addiction, alcoholism, domestic violence, post-traumatic stress syndrome and other social maladies afflicting American Indians.

On Sept. 20, Vice President Nez attended the board meeting and magnified the need for suicide awareness, especially after four suicides in Montezuma Creek gripped the Navajo Nation recently.

“This suicide epidemic isn’t just on Navajo, it’s across Indian Country,” he said. “We had four suicides in the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation in the past few weeks, an area affected by the Gold King Mine spill.

“The San Juan River is a vital lifeline to the Navajo people and we do not know if the water contamination was responsible for them taking their lives, our young people,” he added.

Robert McSwain, director of Indian Health Services, provided an update on the budget and possible government shutdown. He spoke at length about the

IHS FY 2016 reprogramming of funds, in particular, the use of \$1.8 million to purchase modular buildings for Rapid City Indian Hospital to establish outpatient therapy for at-risk individuals. In the past six months, Pine Ridge Reservation had 19 suicides.

The current federal budget discussions are another major concern, he said.

“IHS has gone into preparation mode. We’ve made numerous calls to tribal leadership and programs across the country because we wanted people to understand the mechanics of a possible shutdown,” said McSwain.

IHS discussions on the 2018 budget are set to begin in November and McSwain said his staff is reaching out to other federal agencies like the U.S. Department of Health and Urban Development, Department of Interior and Department of Education to assist with addressing the suicide issue throughout Indian Country.

On Sept. 21, President Begaye and Vice President Nez participated in the IHS listening session and spoke of the need to retain funding for Gallup Indian Medical Center and additional funding to address the suicide issue on Navajo.

“We would like to be considered for the suicide funds from the White House and their emphasis on Generation Indigenous. We had four suicides in the last few weeks and I know the area where they occurred do not have facilities,” said President Begaye.

He added that Navajo is in need of a similar facility as the Rapid City modular building to address the mental health need on the Nation.

Vice President Nez said he didn’t know if there was a correlation between the four suicides and the Gold King Mine spill, especially since Montezuma Creek is located along the San Juan River.

“We need to have inter-agency, inter-department discussions on the epidemic of suicides in Indian Country,” he said.

On Sept. 22, President Begaye spoke to Native American youth during the 5th Annual Youth Film Festival. A number of Navajo youth were also in attendance to showcase their films.

“Stay true to who you are, follow your vision, you dreams,” said President Begaye.

The films were three to five minutes at length and focused on various health issues in tribal communities. More than 30 films were screened.

Vice President Nez addressed the NIHB members on Sept. 23 and said the intergenerational connection between elders and youth needs to be explored to end the suicide epidemic across the nation.

He touched on issues such as home healthcare services and emergency medical transport companies, often operated by non-Navajo organizations, proliferating throughout the Navajo Nation and need for regulations.

“We really need to exercise our sovereignty as a nation and begin to promote more Navajo business owners on our tribal lands,” Vice President Nez said.

The conference ends on Sept. 24.

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THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

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September 23, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye Speaks at NIHB 32nd Annual Consumer Confab



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye addressed the attendees of the National Indian Health Board 32nd Annual Consumer Conference on Sept. 22. He said the Navajo Nation is ready to work with other tribes and agencies to combat the suicide epidemic. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

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affected by the Gold King Mine spill.

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He added that Navajo is in need of a similar facility as the Rapid City modular building to address the mental health need on the Nation.

Vice President Nez said there is potentially a correlation between the four suicides and the Gold King Mine spill, especially since Montezuma Creek is located along the San Juan River.

He noted that IHS needs to fund a long-range study of the impacts from the spill, something like the Navajo Birth Cohort Study for uranium contamination.

“We need to have inter-agency, inter-department discussions on the epidemic of suicides in Indian Country,” he said.

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“We really need to exercise our sovereignty as a nation and begin to promote more Navajo business owners on our tribal lands,” Vice President Nez said.

The conference ends on Sept. 24.



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye encouraged the young native filmmakers to stay committed to themselves and follow the vision and dreams they set for themselves. Stay true to who you are, he said. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Vice President Jonathan Nez was on the panel discussion group on Sept. 23 and thanked the staff and employees of Indian Health Services. It's not too often that people commend you on the services you provide, he said. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Indian Health Services Director Robert McSwain facilitated a listening session with the National Indian Health Board. President Begaye brought up concerns about Gallup Indian Medical Center and suicide prevention. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



September 25, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vice President Nez Shares Message of Empowerment at COPE Symposium



Vice President Jonathan Nez said families need to get back to basic concepts like sitting down together at the dinner table to have a meal and discuss the events of the day. He said this is especially important now, during a time of suicides across Indian Country. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. September 24, 2015—The 3rd Annual Partnerships in Community Health Symposium is underway at the Navajo Nation Museum.

Sponsored by the Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment, the two-day symposium featured a number of professionals advocating for food sovereignty and the future of Native American youth participating in the effort.

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez provided the keynote address, welcoming participants and encouraging their important work.

According to statistics from Partners in Health, there are

more than 26,000 Navajos with diabetes living on the Nation, amounting to 22 percent of the 176,604 people who live on the reservation.

Vice President Nez said the Healthy Dine' Nation Act was an unprecedented initiative for a sovereign government. The two percent sales tax on unhealthy foods across the board was a response to diabetes, he said.

Foods like vegetables and fruit are not subject to any tax, including standard sales tax.

"These tax dollars go directly to the communities for projects like running trails, wellness centers and other healthy initiatives," Vice President Nez said. "This was a grassroots community effort and I appreciate the Council for passing the Healthy Dine' Nation Act."

During their tenure on the 22nd Navajo Nation Council, President Begaye and Vice President Nez both supported the Healthy Dine' Nation Act and voted for its passage.

The food distribution program by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is another area the Navajo Nation is exploring to grow food sovereignty.

"President Begaye and I challenged the USDA to consider Navajo Beef for their products, it's the livestock from our Navajo ranchers. It's also time that we utilize Navajo Agricultural Products Industry to provide the food distribution program produce from their farms," Vice President Nez said.

By utilizing products from NAPI for the food distribution program and canning these foods for distribution is going to create new jobs, he added.

"We grew up with our own foods from our farms and livestock. There was no diabetes until processed foods were introduced. We need to reconnect people with the land," he said.

The preparation of food and its consumption by families is another important component Navajo people must return to strengthen relations.

"We need to cook and eat as a family. It brings a sense of community to those we invite to the table. We need to return back to eating together at the table and having conversations with our young people," said Vice President Nez.

He spoke of the four suicides in Utah recently and said young people are losing hope. We need to have this dialogue and address the suicide epidemic that is happening across Indian Country.

"I am hopeful and I have faith in each of you. The bottom line is really empowering our people. It's a generational thing. It might not happen in our lifetime but the next generation. We need to re-educate our people to self-sufficiency and self-reliance," he said.

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September 25, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vice President Nez Joins Council to Hear Concerns of Bennett Freeze Residents



Top, Vice President Jonathan Nez provided the opening address and said the Office of the President and Vice President will work closely with Council to address the former Bennett Freeze area. Bottom, residents of the Bennett Freeze listen intently to the discussions. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

TUBA CITY, Ariz.— *Woli beę ádahtł.* We are trying really hard is what residents of the former Bennett Freeze area told tribal leaders recently.

The people affected by the former Bennett Freeze area want homes that are resistant to the elements and have the modern day

conveniences like walk-in closets.

This was revealed during the Naabik'iyati' meeting in Tuba City on Sept. 24 at the Grey Hills Academy Auditorium. Hundreds filled the facility to listen to the discussions from the Office of the President and Vice President, 23rd

Navajo Nation Council, and residents directly impacted by the freeze.

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the meeting and began by thanking the tribal council for passing the FY 2016 budget.

With the former Bennett Freeze area development, Vice President Nez said the Executive and Legislative branches are again working together to address a black eye on the face of the Nation's history for more than 40 years.

"It's time we sit down, listen, strategize and begin developing a plan of action to address the Bennett Freeze," Vice President Nez said.

He said the countless studies on the area need to be dusted off and consolidated into one document.

"Then we'll put it on the table and discuss the development. President Begaye and I directed our staff to get those plans ready to present before the Council. That's the purpose of our meeting today," he said.

Don Yellowman, a representative from the

Forgotten People, began discussions with an outline of the Declaration of the Foundation of Dine' Law.

"This is who we are as a people, the foundation," he said.

Joe Ellis, a 90-year-old Navajo resident of Coalmine said he did not understand what the officials meant when they told him the land was "frozen."

"It seems that our past leaders had no idea, no interest or understanding on what we were talking about. We are holy earth people with our roots planted here," said Ellis in Navajo.

Tribal leaders and officials need to understand how these families in the affected areas think, he said, adding that he has hope in the new tribal leadership.

"I believe with all my heart, that these new leaders we selected will be the ones to handle the Bennett Freeze. I know you can do the job because you have a bilingual education," Ellis said.

His wife, Rena, spoke next and gave her account primarily in Navajo.

“There are elders here that are barely surviving. I’m speaking on their behalf and for the Navajo women. We want homes that won’t be blown over in the wind. We don’t want trailers, we want good homes,” she said.

Rena walked before all of the leaders seated in horseshoe pattern on the auditorium floor. Families with meager means pay out of pocket to build a one-bedroom structure one cinder block at a time, she said. Their kids are moving away to look for work, she added.

“I’ve been through hunger, poverty and walked along the road trying to get somewhere. We are poor. We want quality homes with a walk-in closet, where you can see your clothes and valuables stored inside. That’s what we want,” Rena said.

Eighty-year-old Cecilia Joe from Coalmine agreed with Rena and spoke of living inside tents to survive.

We’re survivors, Joe said, we were born here and were raised sleeping on sheepskin.

“I went through hunger, thirst and walking without shoes. I was raised with spankings and punishment. That’s how we were raised here. We are survivors,” Joe said in Navajo.

She said her children slept outdoors in campers or under a shade house. They woke up in morning

and went straight to school and eventually, upon graduation they left Coalmine to look for employment across the country.

“Today, I’m thinking my kids will finally have a home, a good home, just like Rena said. We want you to provide employment opportunity for our kids too, she said.

The Nabik’iyati Committee outlined a plan of action for the Bennett Freeze development and listed 33 items to begin bringing the needed infrastructure and housing to the Forgotten People after more than 40 years of struggle.

OPVP is developing a Bennett Freeze working group comprised of elected leaders from Executive and Legislative branches, local officials and affected residents to begin consolidating the Bennett Freeze studies and execution of the plan of action.

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Navajo resident Cecilia Joe said the residents of the former Bennett Freeze area are survivors of the highest caliber. She said her kids slept outside in a camper or under a shade house and upon waking up, went straight to school. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Vice President Nez walked throughout the auditorium and spoke to residents one-on-one to gain a better perspective of what they faced with the development crisis and the resources they needed for development. Housing was the number one request. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Wenona Benally, executive director of the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office, spoke about the need for Executive Branch divisions, departments and programs to come together to unite their resources and efforts on behalf of former Bennett Freeze area residents. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
NAVAJO NATION
Window Rock, Arizona



HONORABLE ALTON JOE SHEPHERD
Cornfields, Ganado, Steamboat, KinDahLichii, Jeddito
23rd Navajo Nation Council

FROM THE DESK OF
COUNCIL DELEGATE ALTON JOE SHEPHERD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2015
Window Rock, Arizona

DELEGATE SHEPHERD PETITIONS HIS COLLEAGUES FOR A SPECIAL SESSION
TO ADDRESS LEGISLATION 0284-15, RATIFYING RESTATED FEDERAL CHARTER FOR THE
NAVAJO NATION OIL AND GAS COMPANY

Window Rock, Arizona – On September 30, 2015, Honorable Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd, (Cornfields, Ganado, Steamboat, Kin Dah Lichii and Jeddito) who serves as Chair of the Resources & Development Committee, introduced a petition to the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for Monday, October 5, 2015 to have the Navajo Nation Council convene and conduct a Special Session at 10:00 a.m., in the Navajo Nation Council Chambers, Window Rock, Navajo Nation (AZ), pursuant to 2 N.N.C. §162(B).

This legislation will ratify the current Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company (NNOGC) Federal Charter. Delegate Shepherd stated, “I realize this is a politically influenced matter that will have the current NNOGC Board of Directors to lobby against the legislation, BUT I know this corporation has the potential to be a One Billion Dollar Company, do we maintain status quo or do we bring change and accountability.”

The 22nd Navajo Nation Council established the Navajo Transitional Energy Company (NTEC), which is structured of limiting politics from business on the Navajo Nation. The approval of this legislation does not impugn the countless efforts of prior leadership, but rather negates the political influences and provides compliance outlined in the federal charter for NNOGC.

Delegate Shepherd is thankful and appreciates his colleagues’ signatures to petition for a Special Session. This is a very important matter that is in the best interest of the Navajo Nation to promote accountability, streamline, and checks & balances.

The agenda will be forthcoming, as of September 30, 2015 at 3:10 p.m. delegate Shepherd was able to secure the necessary signatures of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for a special session of the Navajo Nation Council.

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