



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., says new Dilkon Courthouse a beautiful place where wrongs can be righted, hearts can be mended

DILKON, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., joined the three justices of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court, the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, Arizona Sen. Albert Hale, Council delegates, and Dilkon residents for the grand opening and dedication of the new \$4 million Dilkon Judicial District Courthouse here Friday.

“Within these walls, broken things can be put back together, wrongs can be righted and hearts can be mended,” the President said. “It is beautiful.”

The 14,000-square foot complex was completed in three years from concept through construction. Inside are three hogan-shaped courtrooms with log walls as well as modern administrative offices.

Throughout the building Navajo concepts are everywhere, from the chief blankets in tile on the floors to the log shades at all the entrances. The courtrooms contain no raised judge’s bench as in typical Western courtroom. Here, judges will sit at eye level with the case’s participants and will not wear the ordinary black judges robes.

“Let the things said be positive,” President Shirley said. “We don’t want negative. Let beauty and harmony make up the spirit of this place.”

The President said the new courthouse is like a home and came about through a lot of thinking and planning with a great amount of effort and time. The dedication was the culmination of all that went into it for good things

to be done here, and for all disputes that may occur to be resolved, he said.

The new courthouse will house the District & Family Court as well as the Peacemaking Program. Disputes that cannot be resolved by individuals can be done by the court. The Family Court hears cases such as domestic relations, probate, adoption, custody, child support, guardianship, name changes, and children’s matters.

The District Court hears civil cases, criminal cases, repossessions, small claims, and other “miscellaneous” cases. In the District and Family courts, the judges use the Navajo Nation Code, *Diné bi beena haz’áanii*, court rules and other court opinions to help them make decisions.

The Peacemaking Program is where people can get help to solve their disputes or problems themselves. It involves no judge or lawyers. The cornerstone of Diné Peacemaking is the Diné fundamental concept of *k’íé* or universal relations. It uses a method that can be loosely translated as “working together through relations.” It eases people’s minds, reinforces respect, fosters communication and promotes traditional planning and healing ways.

The Dilkon District Court serves the surrounding communities of Birdsprings, Dilkon, Greasewood, Indian Wells, Leupp, Teesto, Tolani Lake, Whitecone and Jeddito on the Arizona portion of the Navajo Nation. The court will also provide space for the Arizona State Judicial System as well.



Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr.