



# THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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## Navajo Vice President Ben Shelly expresses appreciation to N.M. transportation commission for Highway 491 support

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.** – Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly has thanked the New Mexico State Transportation Commission for its support of the expansion of U.S. Highway 491, which will become the first four-lane highway in the northern portion of the Navajo Nation.

“I came here to tell you that we, the Navajo Nation, delivered on the words you gave me,” the Vice President told the commission here Wednesday.

The Navajo Nation will contribute \$8 million over the next four years and \$2 million in in-kind services toward the highway’s completion, he said.

In November, the transportation commission asked that right-of-way approvals be completed between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico by January 14. The commission also required that state funding for Highway 491 be spent by May 2008 to keep ahead of inflation costs.

Vice President Shelly expressed appreciation to New Mexico Senator John Pinto, New Mexico State Transportation Commissioner Greg Ortiz and Navajo Nation Council delegates Leonard Tsosie, Danny Simpson, Jerry Bodie, and David Rico for assisting with negotiations, and local Navajo communities for expressing their support.

The agreement and negotiation process “stands as one of the great achievements of government-to-government relationships,” Commissioner Ortiz said.

Negotiations were completed with the assistance of the Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Department of



*Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly, New Mexico Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught and Navajo Nation Council delegate Leonard Tsosie were pleased with the outcome of the N.M. Transportation Commission meeting on Wednesday.*

Transportation Department Manager III Tom Platero, Navajo Division of Natural Resources Director Arvin Trujillo, Navajo Division of Community Development Director Arbin Mitchell, Navajo Tax Commission attorney Amy Alderman, Navajo Assistant Attorney General for Natural Resources John B. Rutherford, and Marjorie Johnson, executive staff assistant to the Vice President.

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