



The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Morgan reports to the Council

Third Quarterly Report

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan was honored to present his Third Quarterly Report to the 21st Navajo Nation Council on Monday, July 21, during the opening day of the Council's summer session.

Speaker Morgan highlighted a few of the ongoing projects and accomplishments of his office — the Office of the Speaker.

Speaker Morgan explained that his office has been extremely busy with various issues on behalf of the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation. He said, "Our work as tribal legislators, as legislative staff, as Navajo Nation employees and as citizens of the Navajo Nation does not end. Our continued advocacy on behalf of our Navajo people will always continue, in order to improve the quality of life for our people."

"Our advocacy is very strong, evident by our position nationally as leaders in Indian Country. Our Nation is continually being watched and observed by outsiders and it is extremely important that we continue to push our issues until someone hears our concerns," Speaker Morgan said. "As I have explained time and time again, our voices are powerful. We, as Navajo people and as Native Americans have the power to make a positive difference."



Speaker Morgan said that the Navajo Nation is known far and wide for its strong leadership — not only within our region — but, statewide, national and internationally as well.

"Our efforts to improve working relationships are tied closely to our accomplishments thus far. It is my belief that we are all tied in a political sphere of cooperation, which is an effort to improve the quality of life for all citizens," Speaker Morgan explained. "Our Navajo Nation voices are heard around the world, as we continue to strengthen our tribal government — our strong voices will grow even stronger if we continue to work together as a Nation."

Speaker Morgan added that the work that the Council does, will have a great impact for many years and even many generations beyond their time as council delegates.

"We must continue to look toward the future with long-range goals," Speaker Morgan concluded. I thank each of you (council delegates) for the foresight and vision that you contribute to this Council as you consider legislation and make decisions for the Navajo Nation and the Navajo people."

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SPEAKER'S REPORT TO THE COUNCIL

SPEAKER LAWRENCE T. MORGAN

~ THIRD QUARTERLY REPORT ~

PRESENTED TO THE
21ST NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

July 21, 2008

Ya'at'eeh, Honorable Council Delegates of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Honorable Chief Justice, distinguished guests, visitors and staff.

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to the 2008 summer session of the 21st Navajo Nation Council. I am honored to present the Third Quarterly Report for the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation. On behalf of the Council, I thank you for attending the summer session.

As always, we have a full agenda this summer session and I look forward to the deliberations that will once again occur within these historic council chamber walls. Within these past few months, the council's standing committees and the entire Legislative Branch have been immensely active. I am sure that you are looking forward to reading the many activities that the standing committees and legislative programs have undertaken this quarter.

Honorable Council Delegates, allow me to highlight a few of the ongoing projects and accomplishments of this past quarter. Administratively, I am pleased to announce the hiring of Mr. Eric F. Descheenie as a Legislative Staff Assistant to my office on June 30, 2008. Mr. Descheenie previously served as a tribal liaison for the state of Arizona and he worked with all Arizona tribes at the local, regional and state level. Descheenie brings years of experience in intergovernmental relations as one of Gov. Janet Napolitano's tribal liaisons. His focus was in housing programs and he dealt with issues involving tribal governments. Previous to working with the Arizona Department of Housing, he worked for the Office of Equal Opportunity.

While working under my administration, Descheenie will be responsible for capital improvement projects between the Nation and the state by streamlining existing and future capital improvement projects that are funded by the state of Arizona; he will also provide technical assistance to our tribal legislators that need assistance relative to their projects.



Descheenie will serve as the intergovernmental relations liaison with the state of Arizona and he will also be responsible for the development of the employee relations and recognition policies and the involvement of my office with tribal enterprises.

Honorable Council Delegates, during this past spring session of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, I presented Legislation No. 0202-08 to the Council, which was defeated by a vote of 54 to 21 and a second attempt it failed once again by a vote of 51 to 11 — the legislation needed 59 votes to pass. This legislation was the proposal to construct a new legislative branch building and the proposal sought to consolidate all offices of the legislative branch in one central building.

The new legislative branch building would have provided tribal personnel with the latest equipment for their use, while providing more space for our office personnel. This venture represented one of my many legislative projects, which I included on my 2007-2009 political platform when I ran for the Speakership of the Navajo Nation Council. Currently, there are no plans to pursue this project again.

Politically and administratively, my office is pleased to report the movement of the Diné Green Jobs Coalition. Recently, my office met with the Diné Policy Institute and the Black Mesa Water Coalition to pursue and develop plans to secure support for creating “green” jobs on and near the Navajo Nation.

Simply put, “green jobs” are occupations that are environmentally friendly and they are jobs that promote harmony and sustainability of our land, our water and our air. In order to achieve these goals, two staffers from my office — Dr. James Davis Jr. and Joshua Lavar Butler — have engaged these groups to assess and evaluate the Green Jobs Act of 2007. This Act created \$125 million for the “green collar jobs” program.

My office was directed to position the Navajo Nation as applicants for funding from the federal green jobs program for 2009. With the help of my office, we hope to lead other Native American tribes in this new direction on behalf of the Navajo Nation. I strongly believe that our Nation should become less dependent on fossil fuels and make a shift to taking care of our Mother Earth. My office will continue discussions with all the involved groups to develop a legislative proposal and budget for this project.

Honorable Council Delegates, I am also pleased to report that the Department of Economic Security's Division of Aging and Adult Services with the state of Arizona received an appropriation of \$1 million for fiscal years 2007-2008 and for 2008-2009 through H.B. 2783. Part of this money will be distributed to the Navajo Nation for the construction of the much-needed Dilkon Multipurpose Center, which will also house the Dilkon District court house.

The first appropriation for the 2007-2008 fiscal year has been delivered to the Navajo Nation and has already been expended accordingly. Currently, the Navajo Nation is processing the proper documentation in order to draw down the second \$1 million appropriation.



Under my direction, my office will continue to work diligently with officials from the Navajo Nation, the state of Arizona and key stakeholders to ensure the funds for our Navajo Nation projects remain dedicated to its intended purpose.

In other projects, on April 21, 2008, during my last report to the 21st Navajo Nation Council, I reported that several entities were working together to develop the Nation's statement on the proposed Indian Country Crime Bill and to recommend language to amendments to the bill.

The target date for this development was April 30, 2008, and with the collaboration from my office, the Navajo Nation Chief Justice Herb Yazzie and his judicial staff, and from the Office of the President and Vice President, we accomplished our Navajo Nation position to this bill.

On April 21, 2008, an inter-tribal workgroup that included the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe and the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation delivered the memorandum titled "Accountability and Returning the Offender to the Community: Core Responsibilities of Indian Justice" to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on the Proposed Indian Country Crime Bill.

The memorandum offers three points; the first point explains the definitions of the unique sense of Indian justice, which requires offender accountability and facilitation of return to the community through a holistic approach.

The second point explains our recommendations on restorative justice concerns, as it relates to the concept paper on the bill. Our third point explains our recommendations on the needed amendments upon reauthorization of the Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

I send my appreciation to the 14 individuals from the Navajo Nation who participated in the intertribal workgroup, including the Honorable Chief Justice Herb Yazzie and the Honorable Ben Shelly, vice president of the Navajo Nation.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council, the Navajo Nation has been major participants in meetings regarding gaming here in the state of Arizona. The Honorable Lawrence Platero and members of the subcommittee on gaming, through the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, have attended the meetings on behalf of the Navajo Nation. Subcommittee members that have consistently attended the gaming meetings include council delegates Leonard Chee, George Arthur and Ervin Keeswood Sr.

In other events, my office has also been involved in various meetings with the Black Mesa Review Board. It has been revealed that the Black Mesa Review Board may be seeking nonprofit status as a result of various financial cuts. The plans to involve citizens from its service area in its decision making process.

Most recently, the BMRB's continued existence has been questioned as duplication of services and therefore, the formation of one Energy Board is currently being researched by my office. In preparation and anticipation for any such changes, the BMRB is making changes for fiscal year 2010. Currently, the BMRB is researching ways to renew its plan of operation, which will include the participation of community appointees from the mining areas.



Honorable members of the Council, my office has also been engaged with members from the Health & Social Services Committee to assist them with the development of legislation, which plans to prohibit smoking in public areas on the Navajo Nation. Legislation No. 0311-08 will be considered during this summer session. Educational materials have been distributed to the Council to promote the importance of its passage for the benefit of the Navajo people.

Initially, concerns from several organizations from off the reservation and the Division of Health prompted a response from the Council to help provide a healthy environment for the Navajo people. Another factor in the movement of the legislation is the alarming rate and increase of tobacco use amongst our Navajo youth. The statistics provided by the Division of Health will validate any concerns about this issue.

In other projects, the Diné Medal of Honor continues to be a work in progress for my office. This project began on January 21 and my office solicited a designer for this medallion — a design that would be admired for many years to come.

In March 2008, the request for proposals concluded and a selection of a design was made. The design that was selected encompasses and reflects a Navajo cultural design that would match the cultural environment of the Navajo Nation. The selection committee requested that the design include Navajo cultural representations, while representing our military personnel in the most positive way.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council, I am pleased to report that Mr. Sheldon Preston – a Navajo artist – was the chosen artist. Mr. Preston's design was presented to the public and he will always be part of a medallion designed to honor the legacy of our Navajo soldiers. Mr. Preston was selected amongst 13 other competitors.

This project comes in two phases, the selection of the artist to design the medallion was phase one. It was Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom's suggestion to have this project in two phases, with the artist selection as phase one. The second phase of the project would be the foundry process to cast the medal for the medallions. This legislation will be presented to the Council during this summer session.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council, I am also pleased to report that the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission has been established. The commission operates under the auspices of the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation. This commission is responsible for conducting public hearings in and near the border towns of the Navajo Nation, in order to assess the state-of-affairs between Navajos and non-Navajos. The commission will also investigate written complaints that involve discrimination of our Navajo citizens.

The commission will also network with local, state, national and international groups to advocate for the recognition of Navajo human rights. The commission will also be tasked with educating the general public about human rights and the Navajo Nation's intolerance of its violation.

Recently, the plan of operation to establish this office was approved by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee on Feb. 20, 2007. Since its approval, my office has set forth efforts to present the plan of operation to the Council, so that the program can be officially established. The plan of operation was presented during the Council's



spring session, but the session concluded before the Council was able to address it. Therefore, Legislation No. 0174-08 was entertained during a special session of the Council on June 30 where it was unanimously approved. It was my pleasure to sponsor this much-needed legislation and I am very happy to see it launched off the ground.

It is important to note that when this legislation was discussed in the Council, many council delegates expressed the need to protect our Navajo people and it was their firmest belief that this newly established office help address discriminatory acts that our Navajo people are sometimes subjected to.

The commission will consist of five commissioners that are appointed by the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council and they are confirmed by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. The members of the commission are to be a diverse group of professionals in the fields of education, business, law enforcement, social services and one member-at-large from the Navajo Nation.

Four of the five commissioners were confirmed on July 14; they are Irving Gleason, Clarence Chee, Duane "Chili" Yazzie and Steve Darden.

The newly selected commissioners will work to hire an executive director for the program in early August 2008. Currently, I have appointed Leila Help-Tulley as the acting director and she has been working in this capacity since June 9. Help-Tulley's appointment was made to address the immediate attention that the program needed. Thus far, under her supervision, she has addressed several key areas.

The advertisement for seven new positions for the Human Rights Office has been advertised; the ads began on July 7 and ended on July 18. Office supplies, furniture and computer equipment have been ordered for the new office in St. Michaels as well. The installation of necessary utility services for phone and Internet connections has been completed. We have also ordered new signs to mark directions to the office. There is still a lot of work in progress to make sure that the office is fully staffed by August 2008.

Honorable Council Delegates, my office has also been involved in several outreach projects that will help improve the quality of life for many Navajos and Native Americans throughout the state of Arizona. Among the outreach projects is the collaboration with Summit Health of Show Low, Ariz. My office has been heavily involved in an on-going effort with the Summit Health Medical Organization, which began on Nov. 20, 2007.

In working with the officials from Summit Health, my office stressed the important message to consider building a medical environment that is culturally sensitive to Navajo patients. The hospital officials have been very receptive to such an idea and they are very interested in forming a partnership with the Navajo Nation.

This partnership will embrace concepts, such as building a traditional Navajo hogan on the grounds of the hospital. The existence of a hogan will open up opportunities to experience the use of alternative medical and holistic treatment. Some other proposals that are being considered include the creation of facilities that would house visiting family members of patients that are in recovery. Currently, there is continued advocacy by the Health & Social



Services Committee and my office to address the distance that Navajo families have to travel when visiting loved ones that are sent to hospitals in Phoenix, Albuquerque and other distant places to receive needed medical treatment.

The long distant travels to visit loved ones often causes tremendous hardship for our Navajo people, the cost for fuel and hotel accommodations can certainly add up quickly.

On June 24, my office met with the chief executive officer of Summit Health here in Window Rock. The hospital officials presented some information about building bridges between the Navajo Nation and Summit Healthcare. In August, the Health & Social Services Committee and my office will travel to Show Low to visit the hospital facilities to enhance the partnership that has been established.

As the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, I often receive invitations to various meetings and events. This next section of my report will highlight some of those events that my office has participated in.

On April 2-3, I was involved in the Eastern Navajo Agency's Local Governance Support Center's two-day conference at the Route 66 Hotel and Casino near Albuquerque, N.M. The conference was held for chapter officials and staff from the eastern chapters of the Navajo Nation to enhance the knowledge of chapter officials and staff in areas of resolution writing, maintenance of meeting minutes, financial record keeping and other relevant topics to improve chapter operations.

On April 12, the Diné Land Senior Rodeo Association officers held their 2007 awards banquet at the fairgrounds of Holbrook, Ariz. Top contestants and grand champions in several event categories were recognized and they received awards for their achievements during the 2007 rodeo season.

Charles Long, legislative staff assistant with my office, delivered a speech on my behalf to the banquet attendees. I commended all the cowboys and cowgirls, and I encouraged them to continue to be exceptional role models for our children.

On April 11, Charles Long attended a groundbreaking ceremony at the Ft. Wingate High School on my behalf. The event was attended by school board members, local chapter officials, school staff, parents and individuals that were involved in obtaining project funds for a new high school that will be constructed on the south side of the existing school.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council, my office has also been involved in an opportunity that the Navajo Nation could benefit highly from. The Navajo Nation has an opportunity to purchase a Network Operating Center (NOC) from PNM out of Albuquerque, N.M.

Several Navajo Nation employees from the Division of Natural Resources, along with Charles Long, traveled to Las Vegas, Nev. on April 14 to tour the Marquis Data Center. The group met with Paul Reynosa, director of business development and strategies for the Marquis Data Center, and he answered questions about possible revenues that a NOC can provide. Reynosa provided rough revenue figures of \$600,000 per month; this information was based on the estimated square footage of the building — information provided by Elroy Drake.



The visiting group concluded that the Navajo Nation did not have the necessary expertise to operate a NOC system and a management team may need to be hired to help run a system of that sort – discussion will continue.

On April 17, my office was involved in a meeting with the Eastern Navajo Land Commission to tour a sheep laboratory. Charles Long attended this meeting on my behalf to tour the lab. It was reported that the lands are managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and it is administered by the Navajo Regional Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Iyanbito Chapter with my assistance, requested 5,298 acres from the BLM to be conveyed to the Navajo Nation.

In other events, I sent Charles Long to Crownpoint, N.M., to attend the Justice Day activities at the Crownpoint District Court on my behalf on April 18. It was reported that several presenters provided instructions on gang and drug awareness, substance abuse and juvenile delinquency on court procedures. A general session of the event provided presentations about methamphetamine and the impacts it has created among our Navajo youth.

On May 16, I sent Charles Long to the Oljato community near Monument Valley, Utah. An early morning traditional Navajo dedication and grand opening ceremony was held for the new Monument Valley Community Health Center. A ribbon cutting ceremony was also held to officially open the facility up, so that community members and visitors could tour the facility. Mr. Long congratulated the community on my behalf and he commended all those who helped to make the health center become a reality.

My office also participated in a one-week training session with personnel from the Navajo Nation Workforce Development program. The session attracted employees from throughout the Navajo Nation. The conference participants received instructions in resume writing, interview preparation, career development planning and job searching techniques to help them gain meaningful employment.

Mr. Long delivered my speech to the participants at a banquet; I encouraged the participants to continue their education and to be the best at whatever careers they chose to pursue.

My office also participated in the celebration and groundbreaking ceremony at the Ch'ooshgai Community School. The school celebrated their tenth anniversary as a grant-funded school and they broke ground for a new dormitory. A traditional Navajo blessing occurred at the location where the new dorm will be constructed.

Mr. Long delivered my speech to the event attendees; I congratulated the community and the school personnel for their exemplary achievement for being a superior grant school. I explained that education is a vital part of our success and to the survival of the Navajo Nation and that they equip themselves in preparation of helping to develop future leaders.

In other events, Charles Long attended a sports and awards banquet for students that participated in the school's basketball program at the Borrego Pass School, which was sponsored by the coaches and school personnel. Awards were given to the boys and girls basketball players who excelled in sportsmanship.



In my motivational speech to the banquet attendees, which Mr. Long delivered on my behalf, I stressed the concepts of determination, discipline, team work and parental support.

On May 6, my office participated in the Shiprock Judicial District Hozhooji Naat'anii Organization's Community Education Conference held at the Shiprock Chapter House in Shiprock, N.M. The 3rd Annual Community Education Conference provided a venue for members of the peacemaking court to present training for local residents on issues involving probate, traditional parenting skills, gangs and graffiti, teen parenting, truancy, elderly abuse, talking circles, alcohol and substance abuse, self identity, and the difference between peacemaking and adversarial courts.

In my speech to the conference attendees, which was delivered by Charles Long, I commended the peacemakers for the work that they do and I encouraged them to continue their much needed services. I explained to the general public that peacemaking has always been part of our culture and that it is an alternative form of dispute resolution, without taking the matter into district court — which can become time consuming and costly.

On May 9, I attended the graduation ceremony for nine police cadets for the Navajo Department of Law Enforcement Training Academy held at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock. In my speech, I congratulated the new police officers and encouraged them to remember and use the training they received, to use good judgment when on duty and to use common sense to help them overcome any situation they may find themselves in.

On May 10, I attended the graduation ceremony for approximately 250 students from Navajo Technical College at the Red Rock State Park near Gallup, N.M. I congratulated the graduates and I encouraged them to continue their education and use what they have learned to help their communities and the Navajo Nation.

In other events, Charles Long attended the graduation ceremony of the eighth grade class of 2008 from Borrego Pass School on May 22 — it was reported that 25 students graduated. In my speech to the graduates, which Mr. Long delivered on my behalf, I congratulated the graduating class and I thanked the parents for supporting them during their time at the Borrego Pass School. I also encouraged them to continue their education at the next level and beyond.

On May 27, my office participated in the Energy Policy Conference held at Hobbs, N.M. Several resourceful people spoke about the energy needs of the United States and how much oil would be required to meet the U.S.'s energy needs in the future. It was reported by Charles Long that the cost of gasoline will continue to rise, because there is a demand for oil. Oil has increased in India and China, and the production of oil is at a maximum level – the demand for oil is at an all time high.

It was also explained that even if the use of alternative fuel and energy is implemented, we will continue to need and rely on oil to meet 60 percent of our energy needs. The use of other forms of energy and the lessening of our dependence on foreign oil may help decrease the cost of gasoline.

On May 28, I sent Charles Long to a dedication ceremony on my behalf to commemorate the return of paintings by Warren E. Rollins at the courthouse in Gallup, N.M. It was explained that in 1934, Warren E. Rollins



painted three pieces for the U.S. Post Office in Gallup. Each of the paintings depicted scenes of tribal life of the Hopi, the Zuni and the Navajo people.

When the old post office building was sold, the paintings were taken to Washington, D.C. and stored in a warehouse. The paintings were restored recently and were sent to the U.S. Courthouse.

On May 29, I sent Charles Long to a traditional ceremony to break ground for the construction of the four-lane improvement project for U.S. Highway 491 near Tohatchi, N.M. The improved highway will help to reduce accidents and will allow users to travel safely to border towns to purchase food and other necessities, and to help reduce emergency response time.

In my speech to event attendees, which Mr. Long delivered, I thanked the community and everyone involved for their support to obtain funds for this project, and I encouraged them to travel safely on the improved road. We should always walk in beauty and so I also encouraged them to not litter the highway.

On June 2-3, Charles Long represented my office and joined leaders from tribes and pueblos of New Mexico. The meeting was held at the Route 66 Hotel and Casino to discuss and develop a strategic plan to help improve the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department. The group made several suggestions of how the department can better serve and work with the 22 tribes and pueblos of New Mexico.

The group suggested new initiatives to strengthen work and the government-to-government relationship, as well as focusing on issues that affect and impact the tribes and pueblos. When finalized, the strategic plans will be the guiding principles for the Indian Affairs Department for the next few years.

On June 5, my office participated in a meeting that included Elroy Drake, Al Henderson, Fred White, Ernest Franklin, Brian Gilbert, Steve Gunderson and Charles Long. The meeting was with representatives from the Southern Ute Growth Fund. The Navajo Nation is considering the acquisition of the Cellular One Telecommunications Company; the group met with the Private Equity Group for some assistance and advisement. It was reported by Charles Long that the discussions began with the Spider Rock Networks Inc., a company formed under the Diné Development Corporation.

Spider Rock Networks is working on improving telecommunication services across the Navajo Nation and the purchase of the Cellular One Company is one of the objectives towards this effort. This was an initial meeting and other meetings with the Southern Ute Growth Fund will be necessary to begin a working relationship.

On June 12-13, I attended a meeting with the Stonewall Industries of Providence, R.I. This meeting was arranged by the Navajo Arts & Crafts Enterprise (NACE). Stonewall industries manufactures silver that is used in jewelry, silverware, cups, plates and many other items. The acquisition of the company would enable NACE to sell silver at a near wholesale cost to our Navajo artisans, while at the same time, making NACE more profitable.

At the meeting, we discussed the proposition with Mr. Bob Jackson, who is the owner, and he is willing to sell the company to the Navajo Nation. Jackson also gave us a tour of the industry and we saw how silver was made into



sheets and wires. Financial statements and other information about the company will be sent to Sean Henisa. A final decision to purchase the company will be made after the financial statements and other documents are received from the company.

On June 23-24, my office participated in a two-day mini-conference for the Eastern Navajo Agency Emergency Management Department at the Best Western Inn of Gallup. It was reported that the conference provided information regarding wild land fire, public health preparedness, drought, livestock health management, water resources and rapid assessment and establishing an alert team.

In my speech to the conference attendees, which was delivered by Charles Long, I thanked the organizers of the conference for providing excellent information. I also thanked the staff from the Department of Emergency Management for sponsoring the much needed conference, and I also thanked the attendees for taking an interest in the conference. I also emphasized to the conference participants that they have been given some knowledge on emergency situations; now they must begin to use what they have learned to implement emergency plans for their own communities.

I also stated that the only emergency situation we have been accustomed to have here on the Navajo Nation comes from snow and mud. It was reported that the two key solutions in dealing with emergencies is being knowledgeable and being prepared.

In other events, on June 26, I attended the quarterly meeting for the Council of Large Land Base Tribes (CLLBT) in Crow Agency, Mont. I am the vice-chair of this organization and the chair is Carle Venne, who is also the chairman of the Crow Tribe. The meeting provides a venue for an exchange of information and Joe Garcia, president of the National Congress of the American Indian, provided several updates on key issues affecting Indian Nations.

Garcia gave us a summary on legislative initiatives that the Bush administration is working on and he also explained the importance of the Indian vote in this year's national elections — similar to my push to mobilize voters on the Navajo Nation.

Donald Laverdure, chief legal counsel for the Crow Tribe, provided information regarding tax law issues pertaining to tribes. The Honorable Ben Shelly, vice president of the Navajo Nation, introduced a resolution that requested support for Mount Taylor to be placed on the state of New Mexico's register of cultural properties. This resolution was unanimously approved the CLLBT.

In other matters, my office continues to participate in monthly meetings for the Utah Navajo Commission. The most significant issue has been the Utah Navajo Trust Fund. The Utah State Legislature passed legislation to resign as trustee of the trust fund in 2008. The state legislature and Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman want the federal government to appoint another trustee. The position of the Navajo Utah Commission is that the Navajo Nation should be the trustee, but the seven chapters that benefit from the trust fund have expressed their desire to keep the funds in Utah.



It has been explained to the chapters that the funds will continue to be used only by the seven chapters and the question that is being discussed is who will control the funds? The difficulty in this process is that certain individuals within those chapters fail to understand that the two issues are separate matters. My office will continue to meet with all commissions to resolve any matters.

Ladies and gentleman of the Council, as the Speaker of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, I have always advocated for our veterans and many times I support events that promote their issues.

One such recent event was the 6th Annual Navajo-Hopi Honor Run on May 13, 2008, which is another project that my office has been involved in. Every year, many families of our fallen soldiers are commemorated. In commemoration, my office helps to coordinate an honor ride for veterans and non-veterans with the spirit of camaraderie. Riders promote the concept of K'e (kinship) amongst the communities and the families. The families are honored and many have extended their assistance by providing meals to our honor riders, by providing prayers and helping to create memorable times at each stop along the way of their ride.

This year, my office collaborated with KTNN to promote their *Drums of Summer* program. On May 15, my office, along with the 21st Navajo Nation Council and KTNN sponsored a social pow-wow that brought many of our Navajo people together to recognize our Gold Star families — families that have lost loved ones who served in the military.

It was a memorable event that included a welcoming ceremony for the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders, riders from two national organizations called Rolling Thunder Inc. and Operation Carry the Flame. The 21st Navajo Nation Council and my office presented plaques and shawls to our Navajo and Hopi participants. The pow-wow attracted a large crowd at Nakai Hall in Window Rock. Navajo vendors selling jewelry and traditional foods added to the festive environment, while promoting self-sufficiency.

The event was so successful that we had many inquires about the next event. For many, the experience was a healing process as the Navajo Nation offered acknowledgement to the Blue Star families and other veterans of past wars.

The Navajo Nation Honor Ride to Washington, D.C., was another event that my office actively participated in. The event was planned concurrently with the 6th Annual Navajo-Hopi Honor Run on May 13. My office conducted five meetings that involved representatives from my office, several council delegates, the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs and the Black Creek Gourd Society. These meetings were arranged to insure that all coordination efforts would be in place for the Washington, D.C. trip.

There were 50 veterans from throughout the Navajo Nation that had planned to attend various festivities in Washington, D.C. during the Memorial Day weekend. The veterans were selected by several agency offices of the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs. The Navajo Veterans Department arranged all travel plans for their travelers



and it was requested that their staff be available for contact by their travelers. It is important to note that many Navajo veterans benefited from the \$300,000 that was appropriated for veterans' activities.

The other group that attended the Memorial Day events in Washington, D.C., included some members of the 21st Navajo Nation Council and one Gold Star parent, five Navajo Nation Council motorcycle riders, four staff members and two medicine men.

Leila Help-Tulley, legislative staff assistant with my office, coordinated travel arrangements for this group. On their way to Washington, the group visited two tribal nations. The Cheyenne/Arapaho Nation and the Muscogee Nation, both located in Oklahoma, were enthusiastic to welcome the Navajo Nation Honor Riders to their part of the country.

The visit to the two tribal nations was significant; the Navajo Nation should take every opportunity it has to establish partnerships with other veterans' organizations in Indian Country. These efforts will increase our advocacy for our Native American veterans and it provides opportunities to share support and advocacy for our veterans at the national level.

In a continued effort to build advocacy support, the Navajo Nation Honor Riders were accompanied part way by riders from Rolling Thunder Inc. and Operation Carry the Flame.

The Navajo Nation Honor Riders delivered a position paper on behalf of the Navajo Nation to Washington, D.C. The Navajo Nation's position was presented before a national forum that was attended by the presidents of Rolling Thunder Inc., Operation Carry the Flame and Run for the Wall — all national veteran advocacy groups.

This year's event was a success, despite the controversy that evolved weeks before the event began. It is very important that I make note that these events are very important to the families of fallen soldiers and to all veterans throughout the Navajo Nation.

My office also assisted in organizing the Navajo Nation Council's Annual Horse Ride. The Legislative Branch also hosted its yearly annual picnic for all staff members to welcome the horse riders to the Nation's capitol. As always, this year's horse ride was a success and I would like to thank all the council delegates and the organizers of this annual event.

Honorable Council Delegates, as you can see, my office has been extremely busy with various issues on behalf of the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation. Our work as tribal legislators, as legislative staff, as Navajo Nation employees and as citizens of the Navajo Nation does not end. Our continued advocacy on behalf of our Navajo people will always continue, in order to improve the quality of life for our people.

Our advocacy is strong, evident by our position nationally as leaders in Indian Country. Our nation is continually being watched and observed by outsiders and it is extremely important that we continue to push our issues — until someone hears our concerns. As I have explained time and time again, our voices are powerful. We, as Navajo people and as Native Americans, have the power to make a positive difference.



In closing, I would like to remind the 21st Navajo Nation Council that we are known far and wide for our strong leadership — not only within our region — but, state-wide, national and internationally as well. Our efforts to improve working relationships are tied closely to our accomplishments thus far. It is my belief that we are all tied in a political sphere of cooperation, which is an effort to improve the quality of life for all citizens. Our Navajo Nation voices are heard around the world, as we continue to strengthen our tribal government — our strong voices will grow even stronger if we continue to work together as a Nation.

During this council session, we will be asked once again to make decisions on issues of great significance to our Navajo people. The issues that have been brought before us this session — as in all our sessions — requires careful deliberations and requires action that will bring about the greater good for the Navajo Nation.

The work that we are doing today will continue to have a great impact for many years and even many generations beyond our term as council delegates. We must continue to look toward the future with long-range goals. I thank each of you for the foresight and vision that you contribute to this council as you consider legislation and make decisions for the Navajo Nation and the Navajo people.

Honorable Council Delegates, let us continue the strong voice of the Navajo Nation. With that, I thank each one of you for your leadership in this council and I look forward to the work that we have to accomplish this week. Thank you.