

The Legislator

2nd Quarter

NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Speaker Morgan pleased with eyeglass project

Project will help more than 9,000 Navajo children

"We have thousands of Navajo children who have vision problems. The lack of glasses is a real challenge. That in turn, makes getting through school very difficult."

— Marilyn King-Johnson, executive director, Division of Diné Youth.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Blurry chalkboards and fuzzy vision will soon be a

thing of the past for nearly 9,000 Navajo children after the Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan and the 21st Navajo Nation Council announced the movement of the Navajo Department of Education's "Looking Ahead Youth Eyeglass Project" March 20.

Legislation passed last December amended the Navajo Nation 2008 fiscal year budget to appropri-

ate \$495,000 to the Navajo Department of Education for this project. The program enabled thousands of Navajo children to obtain a free pair of eyeglasses from Bishop Optical.

This immense collaborative effort between Speaker Morgan, Bishop Optical, the Office of Diné Youth (ODY) and restaurant owner Sammy Chioda has resulted in an exciting plan to provide

Navajo children with a pair of eyeglasses and a large pizza for every child that receives new glasses.

Marilyn King-Johnson, ODY executive director, explained that she held a meeting at Sammy C's Rock'n'Sports Grill in Gallup, N.M., to discuss the project when Chioda overheard discussions for this project.

Chioda offered to donate

gift certificates worth \$10.99 to every child that receives new glasses through this project. Doug Bishop, owner of Bishop Optical, also announced March 21 that he will donate another 1,000 glasses — bringing the total to 10,000 eyeglasses.

In explaining the importance of prescription eyeglasses, King-Johnson described a conversation she had with a gentleman; she

asked him to remove his glasses for a brief moment. She explained that the man began squinting and it was obvious that he desperately relied on his glasses for sight.

"See? Now imagine being a little Navajo kid at school trying to learn and think how that child feels and how he can't adequately

Continued on Page 8

Speaker Morgan presents Navajo Power – Navajo Vote

Kick-off event held in Tuba City, Ariz., on March 19

"Voting is the power that we have and we can decide who we want to send to our state legislature and to Congress to represent us — that is the power we have as voters." — Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan and the 21st Navajo Nation Council were pleased to present the 2008 Navajo Power – Navajo Vote town hall meetings.

The town hall meetings gave local candidates in county, state and federal elections an opportunity to present their political platforms and the opportunity to answer questions from their constituents.

A kick-off event was

held March 19 at the Tuba City High School Warrior Pavilion in Tuba City, Ariz.

Speaker Morgan, who represents the chapters of Iyanbito and Pinedale, N.M., has been a strong advocate for voting and said that "voting is our key to being heard."

He added that "it was a mere 60 years ago that Native Americans were given the right to vote in the state of Arizona."

"Voting was not always a privilege to Navajo people," Speaker Morgan explained. "In 1948, Navajos went to the polls and if they could speak English, they could vote."

"Voting is the power that

Continued on Page 3



Navajo Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan attended the kick-off event for Navajo Power-Navajo Vote on March 19 in Tuba City, Ariz. Pictured is Arizona congressional candidates Mary Kim Titla, Howard Shanker, Speaker Morgan, Coconino County Supervisor candidates Mandy Metzger and Jamescita Peshlakai. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

NAVAJO NATION LEADERS MEET WITH OBAMA

2



NAVAJO-HOPI HONOR RUN WELCOMED IN WINDOW ROCK

4



PINEHILL HEADSTART DEDICATES NEW BUILDING

7



PAGE.....

PAGE.....

PAGE.....

Navajo Nation leaders meet with Sen. Barack Obama to discuss Navajo issues

“The Native American community faces huge challenges that have been ignored by Washington for too long. It is time to empower Native Americans in the development of the national policy agenda.”

— Sen. Barack Obama

SANTA FE, N.M. — Before Sen. Barack Obama became America’s choice as the Democratic presidential candidate, a Navajo delegation shared some issues the Navajo Nation is facing with Obama on Feb. 2, during his Stand for Change Rally in Santa Fe.

A delegation of Navajo Nation leaders that included Council Delegates Ervin Keeswood (Tse Daa Kaan), Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi), Rex Lee Jim (Rock Point) and Leonard Tsosie (Pueblo Pintado/Torreon/Whitehorse Lake)

represented the Navajo Nation and the Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan.

The delegation met with Obama to educate him on the pressing issues facing the Navajo Nation. MacDonald-Lone Tree explained that the Navajo Nation needs to take any opportunity it has to push Navajo issues.

Though this was not an official endorsement from the Navajo Nation, it provided an opportunity for Navajo leaders to advocate on behalf of issues affecting Indian Country.

Navajo leaders that attended the meeting were satisfied with their Obama visit and they were pleased to know that he was keen on issues affecting the Navajo Nation.

Speaker Morgan said that he applauds both candidates — Obama and Clinton — for their interest in including American Indians on their

agenda.

He is also encouraging more involvement from senators across the nation and more involvement from U.S. presidential candidates in Indian Country.

“Navajo support should go to all the candidates; let the Navajo people decide who they want to vote for,” Speaker Morgan said.

The Navajo delegation presented Obama with a letter from Speaker Morgan. The letter was an invitation for Sen. Obama to visit the largest Indian nation in the country — the Navajo Nation.

Speaker Morgan explained to Obama that our nation has a population of 300,000 plus tribal members, many of whom will have a direct impact on this presidential election.

The Navajo Nation along with many other Indian nations across the country

have pressing issues that desperately need to be addressed. Issues involving our veterans, health care, economic development, the development of infrastructure, education and public safety in Indian Country are just a small fraction of the long list of issues that affect our Indian people.

“It is very important that our Indian people hear the voices of our presidential candidates,” Speaker Morgan said. “An official visit will be important for the continued tribal-federal relationship that we have established thus far.”

“We want our Navajo people and our Native brothers and sisters to educate themselves about the platforms of our presidential candidates,” Speaker Morgan added. “Our people need to be well informed about the future plans of their presidential leadership.”

In his remarks, Obama said he knows that Washington has certain responsibilities in its government-to-government relationships with Indian tribes. He also said that he is committed to advocating for full funding of the Indian Health Service, continued funding for urban Indian health programs, meaningful help for school construction and tribal colleges, funding for tribal police programs and tribal courts.

“The Native American community faces huge challenges that have been ignored by Washington for too long,” Obama said. “It is time to empower Native Americans in the development of the national policy agenda.”

Speaking on sovereignty, the Illinois Senator explained that he supports and respects tribal sovereignty. He continued by saying that he understands that

Washington’s “one-size-fits-all” solution does not work for Indian Country and that tribal communities should be empowered to address their own problems.

Obama also explained that he plans to appoint an American Indian policy advisor on his senior White House staff if elected as President of the United States. He also plans on holding annual meetings with Native American leaders to develop a national Indian policy agenda.

Obama continued by saying that he will work with Native American leaders to improve Indian health care and education, and will help in making it a national priority.

The Navajo Nation thanks the leadership of Sens. Obama, Clinton and John McCain. The Navajo Nation looks forward to a future working relationship with all of them.

Office of the Speaker

P.O. Box 3390

Window Rock, AZ 86515

(928) 871 - 7160

Fax: (928) 871 - 7255

www.navajonationcouncil.org

Honorable Lawrence T. Morgan

Speaker

Dr. James J. Davis Jr.
Chief of Staff

Patricia Begay
Director - Office of Legislative Services

Frank Seanez
Acting Chief Legislative Counsel

Joshua Lavar Butler
Communications Director - Press Officer

Bronson Peshlakai
Public Information Officer

Leila Help-Tulley
Legislative Staff Assistant

Charles Long
Legislative Staff Assistant

Jonathan Hale
Legislative Staff Assistant

Laura Calvin
Financial Advisor

Emerson O. Notah
Computer Operations Manager

Winona Bitsie
Administrative Assistant

Geri McArthur
Senior Office Specialist



A Navajo delegation met with U.S. Presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama on Feb. 2, 2008, in Santa Fe, N.M. Pictured to the left is Council Delegate Ervin Keeswood greeting Sen. Obama as Council Delegate Rex Lee Jim looks on. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

Thomas Walker presents health priorities at the FY 2010 National Budget Formulation work session in Anaheim



Navajo Nation Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr.

“Without new state-of-the-art health care facilities, the 238,000 users of the Navajo area health care system will continue to place a burden on the existing facilities across the Navajo Nation.”

— Navajo Council Delegate Thomas Walker.

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Thomas Walker Jr., chair of the Health & Social Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, along with staff from the Department of Health and the Navajo Area Indian Health Service, presented the Navajo area budget and health priorities for fiscal year 2010 to tribal leaders, Indian health advocates and Indian Health Service representatives on Feb. 13 at the FY 2010 National Budget Formulation work session.

Walker, who represents the chapters of Birdsprings, Leupp and Tolani Lake, explained how the Navajo Area Indian Health Service (NAIHS) developed its priorities and recommended support and advocacy for increased federal funding for the Indian Health Service (IHS) in fiscal year 2010.

Walker has consistently ranked health care facility and sanitation facility construction as its top two priorities in the past five years — this is due to the overwhelming needs throughout the Navajo Nation.

“Without health care facilities, the health status of our people will not improve...”

“Without new state-of-the-art health care facilities, the 238,000 users of the Navajo area health care system will continue to place a burden on the existing facilities across the Navajo Nation,” Walker said.

Current facilities include six hospitals, eight health centers, nine health stations, and 20 dental clinics.

“Without health care facilities, the health status of our people will not improve at the rates that we wish for, especially those who do not have electricity and running water in their homes,” he said.

Walker also advocated for funding needs for the Native Americans for Community Action, the only urban center in the Navajo area which is located in Flagstaff, Ariz. This advocacy comes after the current federal administration proposed to eliminate funding for 34 urban programs that serve American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

Walker said that the NAIHS recommendations for fiscal year 2010 includes funding requests for health care facility construction, sanitation facility construction, injury prevention,

diabetes programs, heart disease programs, behavioral health services, mental health services, dental, cancer and infectious diseases.

According to a recent report to the Navajo Nation Council by the NAIHS, there are approximately 24,000 diabetes cases on the Navajo Nation. There has been a dramatic increase since 1998, when the tally was at 14,000 people.

It was also reported by the NAIHS that approximately 30 percent — one out of three people over the age of 40 — have a diagnosis of diabetes. It was also explained that if we were to include all those individuals 20 years old or older, it is almost 20 percent, or one out of five people that have diabetes.

Walker stressed the importance of maintaining

“one voice, one budget” in the advocacy for the Indian Health Service budget when tribal leaders and national organizations advocate to congressional members and to the Health & Social Services Department.

Walker explained that advocacy is very crucial and that we need to emphasize the needs of tribal communities because they are the ones that need adequate health care service for their children and the elderly.

The annual national meeting for the IHS gives tribal leaders and representatives from the 12 service areas a chance to present their respective budget needs and their challenges. This meeting provides a venue for discussion, comparison and consolidation of recommendations in creating one national budget for the IHS.

Navajo Vote

...from page 1

we have and we can decide who we want to send to our state legislature and to Congress to represent us — that is the power we have as voters,” Speaker Morgan said.

Navajo people are becoming more educated in the voting process and part of that means that they want to meet the candidates and they want to learn about their political agendas.

Leila Help-Tulley, legislative staff assistant with the Speaker’s Office, explained that “the Navajo people want to have the opportunity to meet the political candidates that will be advocating for our Navajo interests.”

Help-Tulley added that “we have to make it our interest to be a part of this discussion since Navajo people are a vital and powerful component to the democratic voting process.”

“The fact that Navajos and other tribes in Arizona were not allowed to vote is ironic,” Help-Tulley said. “Ironic, in the sense that our Navajo Code Talkers helped win the war for America against the Japanese soldiers with the

use of the Navajo language in 1948 — this was during a time when English speakers were not allowed to vote.”

Voting is a powerful tool that we should all take advantage of...

In 1948, Help-Tulley said that there were Navajo Code Talkers who wanted to vote, but could not. “They gave their life to fight in a war, but were denied the right to vote.”

“Voting is a powerful tool that we should all take advantage of, it was not always a privilege for our Navajo people,” Speaker Morgan added. “Our Native people fought long and hard to finally gain this right for us — a right that we should definitely utilize.”

“Change will not come to us. We as Native Americans need to take a firm stand and

exercise our right to vote,” Speaker Morgan said. “Our Native people need to realize that they are very influential as voters.”

Voting numbers help influence and determine federal funding appropriations, as well as other resources. Speaker Morgan added that the “Navajo people and Native Americans need to realize that these formulas are calculated and influenced by you as a voter.”

The Office of the Speaker coordinated five town hall meetings across the Navajo Nation, beginning with the kick-off event in Tuba City. Town hall meetings were held at the Many Farms Public School in Many Farms, Ariz., on March 27; Window Rock High School in Fort Defiance, Ariz. on April 3; Navajo Technical College in Crownpoint, N.M., on April 18; and at the Shiprock Chapter House in Shiprock, N.M., on April 30.

The general public was invited to this exciting event to actively participate in the discussions, while getting to know their political candidates.



New Mexico congressional candidate Benny Shendo Jr. speaks during the Navajo Power-Navajo Vote event held on April 3 at Window Rock High School, while Arizona congressional candidate Howard Shanker looks on. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

Navajo-Hopi bikers drive motorcycles more than 700 miles showing solidarity to fallen soldiers

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — A motorcycle trek supporting solidarity for Indian Country's fallen soldiers across Hopi and Navajoland culminated to a large gathering at the Navajo Nation capital with song, dance and the honoring of Gold Star Mothers on the evening of May 15.

The Sixth Annual Navajo-Hopi Honor riders, in conjunction with Operation Carry the Flame and Rolling Thunder Inc., rolled into the Navajo Nation Veteran's Memorial Park around 5:30 p.m., May 15.

The ceremony honored Gold Star Mothers – moms who lost one or more of their children in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

The following fallen soldiers and their

parents were honored: Army Spc. Lori Ann Piestewa, Army Cpl. Lyle J. Cambridge, Army Spc. Clifton J. Yazzie, Army Pfc. Clint Lamabear, Army Sgt. Marshall Alan Westbrook, Army Sgt. Lee Duane Todacheene, Army Sgt. Christopher Gonzales, Army Pfc. Harry N. Shondee Jr. and Lance Cpl. Kevin B. Joyce.

“The Navajo Nation supports the numerous men and women of our U.S. Armed Forces that have selflessly served our country to protect our Nation — they are among our greatest heroes,” Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan said. “Many have been courageous members of our military and have given their lives so that all Americans could live with security and freedom.”

Speaker Morgan added that, “the Navajo Nation

will remember the devoted and patriotic mothers of these brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our country.”

Council Delegate Roy Laughter (Chilchinbetto/Kayenta) said, “It's an honor for us to do this for our fallen veterans. Lots of families are joyous, especially the ones who had loved ones who came home.”

The motorcyclists were greeted along the last leg of the route by local residents, veterans and other supporters along Route 12 from Lukachukai to Window Rock while under Navajo Police escort.

“All my brothers served in the Armed Forces and it's an honor to watch the bikers go by in support of what soldiers sacrificed for us,” said



Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders converged in Window Rock, Ariz., for a welcoming ceremony on May 15. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

Amelda Sandoval Shay of Lukachukai.

Sandoval Shay stood at the foot of her driveway waving a personal-size American

flag as the nearly 70 bikers rounded the corner into Lukachukai.

After the honor ceremony, the motorcade of cyclists,

support vehicles and spectators were escorted by police to the Raymond Nakai Hall at the Navajo Nation Fairgrounds for the KTNN Drums of Summer and Social Pow Wow.

Bikers thundered into the arena with vigor sending the message of their arrival reverberating throughout the hall. The cyclists were served Subway sandwiches, fruits, cheese and beverages sponsored by the Office of the Speaker, the 21st Navajo Nation Council and the Navajo Housing Authority.

The riders began their more than 700-mile journey Tuesday from Window Rock. The group made stops in Ganado, Beshbito, Kykotsmovi, Birdsprings

continued on Page 5

Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders rolled through northern Arizona and stopped in Ganado, Ariz. for a welcoming ceremony. (Photo by Bronson Peshlakai)



Honoring all who fight for freedom ...from page 4

and Flagstaff, Ariz., where they met with Operation Carry the Flame and Rolling Thunder, led by King Cavalier, president of Operation Carry the Flame.

All groups were served Navajo Tacos and other treats at Terry and Percy Piestewa's home – the parents of Lori Ann Piestewa who was killed in an ambush near Nasiriyah, Iraq in March 2003. She was the first female to be killed in action in the Iraq War.

Cavalier led a pack of motorcyclists from Barstow, Calif. earlier in the week who joined the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders at the Piestewa family home in Flagstaff Tuesday evening.

“On Memorial Day we remember the fallen soldiers.

It is important, especially if it hits you at home – meaning in your heart – if it was because one of your loved ones had passed on, it's a very special honor,” Council Delegate Dave Shondee (Kayenta/Chilchinbeto) said.

Cavalier said the message needs to be carried that freedom is not ours.

“We're not defending ‘our’ freedom, we are defending ‘freedom,’ Cavalier said. “We learn how to honor the warriors in a way that most of America needs to learn over again. It's a recharge of the spirit for us every year we come down here,” he said. “What Gold Star Mothers had to endure is significant – it's beyond the sacrifice that an American family

should have to make.”

A small contingency of Navajo and Hopi riders continued carrying on the message of celebrating and honoring our veterans

to Washington D.C. the following week. The riders visited with Cheyenne, Arapaho and Muskogean nations in Oklahoma.



A symbol in honor of Lori Piestewa adorning a motorcycle. (Photo by Bronson Peshlakai)



A riders jacket decorated with numerous patches. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)



Several Gold Star Mothers from the Navajo Nation were honored during part of the welcoming ceremony held for the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders in Window Rock on May 15, 2008, the third day of their five day trek. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

Council Delegate Evelyn Acothley meets with officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

"Members of the Health & Social Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council will continue their persistent advocacy on behalf of the Navajo people."

— Navajo Council Delegate Evelyn Acothley

ATLANTA — Navajo Council Delegate Evelyn Acothley, a member of the Health & Social Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, met with officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Ga., in April 2008.

Acothley, who represents the chapters of Bodaway-Gap, Cameron and Coppermine, delivered a message that advocated the need for sanitation

facilities and quality water sources on the Navajo Nation. She explained that this is a concern that is shared all over the Navajo reservation.

"The data and statistics are alarming," Acothley stated.

Navajo Area Indian Health Services reported its Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS), meaning unfunded needs for water, sewer and solid waste facilities, is about \$423.6 million.

More than 7,858 Navajo homes are without potable water. The Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) estimates that 30 percent of the population is not served by a public water system — about 1,000 unregulated water sources on



Navajo Nation Council Delegate Evelyn Acothley

the Navajo Nation.

During the tribal consultation session, Acothley stressed the need for CDC

funding to ensure accessible health care for residents of the Navajo Nation.

In her presentation, she provided insight into the daily lives of the people.

"Many homes lack basic infrastructure, sanitation facilities, electricity, telephones and other basic needs such as adequate shelter, water, food and heat," Acothley said. "The Navajo people, today, still haul water and firewood to heat water and some travel many miles to buy groceries and to wash their clothes — this contributes to a high-cost of health care on the Navajo Nation."

"Many Navajos rely on unregulated water sources, which presents the greatest health risk associated with

drinking water," Acothley reported to the CDC.

In addition to reporting on the data, Acothley also highlighted the health priorities of the Navajo Nation. In the preventable injuries category, motor vehicle accidents are a major concern, she reported.

Compared to the U.S. population, the mortality rate related to motor vehicle accidents are five times higher on the Navajo Nation. Other health issues, such as an increase of heart disease is increasing and is a factor in other related diseases that extend from this primary ailment.

Cancer and the high percentage of diabetes affecting Navajos were other

issues that Acothley shared with meeting attendees. She also reported that alcohol and substance abuse is eight times higher than the national average, which requires more analysis, planning and program modifications.

"Members of the Health & Social Services Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council will continue their persistent advocacy on behalf of the Navajo people," Acothley added.

The Navajo Nation has established a working relationship with the CDC and she explained that the Navajo Nation needs to continue pushing Navajo issues forward. The HSSC plans to attend future meetings with the CDC.

MacDonald-Lone Tree presides over Tribal Justice Advisory Group meeting in Washington



Navajo Council Delegate Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree

"There was a sense of frustration expressed. Frustration that two years of consultation has resulted in the elimination of the budget for Indian Country."

— Council Delegate Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree

WASHINGTON — Navajo Council Delegate Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree represented the 21st Navajo Nation Council by presiding over the Tribal Justice Advisory Group meeting, in place of absent Chairman Jefferson Keel, at the second quarterly meeting of the Tribal Justice

Advisory Group in March 2008.

MacDonald-Lone Tree, who represents the chapters of Coalmine Canyon and Toh Nanees Dizi (Tuba City), was appointed by the Public Safety Committee and Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the 21st Navajo Nation Council to represent the Navajo Nation for the newly formed group, which is operating under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Justice.

MacDonald-Lone Tree explained that there were numerous issues and recommendations raised at the consultation session by many tribal leaders and service professionals.

One issue many tribes face is the cross-deputization of law enforcement officers. Tribes experience obstacles in establishing working relationships with officers with local county sheriffs, state patrols and federal agencies.

Another issue is domestic violence, which is occurring at an alarming rate on many reservations with slow and inefficient federal prosecutions.

MacDonald-Lone Tree explained that the one main issue that was reiterated throughout the day from tribal leaders was the lack of funding and available resources for tribal justice and safety programs.

Tribal leaders expressed great concern over the fiscal year 2009 budget requests that eliminated the tribal line items in the budget for the Justice Department. Tribal leaders also expressed the challenges associated with preventing and reducing crime without adequate manpower. Tribal leaders displayed strong advocacy in requesting additional funding for manpower.

Funding for jails and treatment centers are a high priority across Indian country as well. Alcoholism and drug abuse are major contributors to violent crime.

MacDonald-Lone Tree said that "Native people are suffering and the victims and perpetrators are becoming younger and younger."

"Crime is increasing on reservations across the country and Indian Country has become a safe haven for criminals; because criminals

know that public safety programs are underfunded and understaffed," she added.

MacDonald-Lone Tree said that tribal leaders made one last recommendation to federal officials to create focus groups that will address specific concerns and to develop solutions.

MacDonald-Lone Tree

added that TJAG members also had the opportunity to meet and share some of these concerns with the Justice Department and acting Assistant Attorney General Jeffrey L. Sedgwick.

MacDonald-Lone Tree stated that Sedgwick said that he is willing to help the tribes. "He wants to work

with the tribes while he is in office during the short period that he's there," she said.

"There was a sense of frustration expressed," MacDonald-Lone Tree explained. "Frustration that two years of consultation has resulted in the elimination of the budget for Indian Country."



Four staff members from the Speaker's Office pose for a quick photo during a welcoming ceremony for the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders in Window Rock, Ariz., on May 15. Pictured are Public Information Officer Bronson Peshlakai, Staff Assistant Leila Help-Tulley, Communications Director Joshua Lavar Butler and Staff Assistant Charles Long. (Photo by Francis Redhouse)

Speaker Morgan attends school dedication for new Pinedale Head Start building

PINEDALE, N.M. – The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan and Council Delegate Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake) attended a dedication ceremony for the new Pinedale Head Start building Jan. 16 at the Pinedale Chapter House.

The community of Pinedale had reason to celebrate after years of working on plans to build this much needed facility.

Clara Daye, Pinedale Chapter coordinator, thanked Speaker Morgan for his help in securing the funding needed for the new building.

“Speaker Morgan was very involved in the process. He was extremely helpful in securing money from the state as well,” Daye said. “Speaker Morgan was a major player in making this dream a reality for our Head Start children.”

Pinedale Chapter President Raphael Martin also thanked Speaker Morgan and the Council for their continued

advocacy for the Pinedale community and for the Navajo Nation.

Bernice Yazzie, program director with Navajo Head Start, thanked the Chapter, the Navajo Nation Council and Speaker Morgan as well.

“We work for the kids so that they can move forward in education,” Yazzie said. “Our jobs are to teach our children and parents need to know that they are a vital part of our program — let us continue to help each other and let’s be part of our children’s education together.”

Speaker Morgan said that “this is a good day for the Pinedale community. This new building is for our kids and for our grandchildren to learn. This building will be here for many years to come. We must invest more dollars into the education of our children — it’s an investment for the future of our Navajo people.”

Charles Long, legislative staff assistant with the

Speaker’s Office, explained that funds for the new building came from various funding sources.

The Navajo Nation Council appropriated \$720,000 from the Navajo Nation General Fund, \$50,000 came from the Chapter’s supplemental funds and the state of New Mexico chipped in \$10,000.

Navajo Nation Head Start programs are a comprehensive, unique and quality program that is designed for eligible 3 to 5 year old children and their families.

Head Start specializes in several family-oriented services, culturally diverse activities, community involvement and advocacy involvement.

The Navajo Nation Head Start program is an excellent early childhood development program that is dedicated to helping families prepare for the future of their children.

The program’s main goal is to prepare and empower children and their families for future success by developing building blocks of stability

and self-reliance.

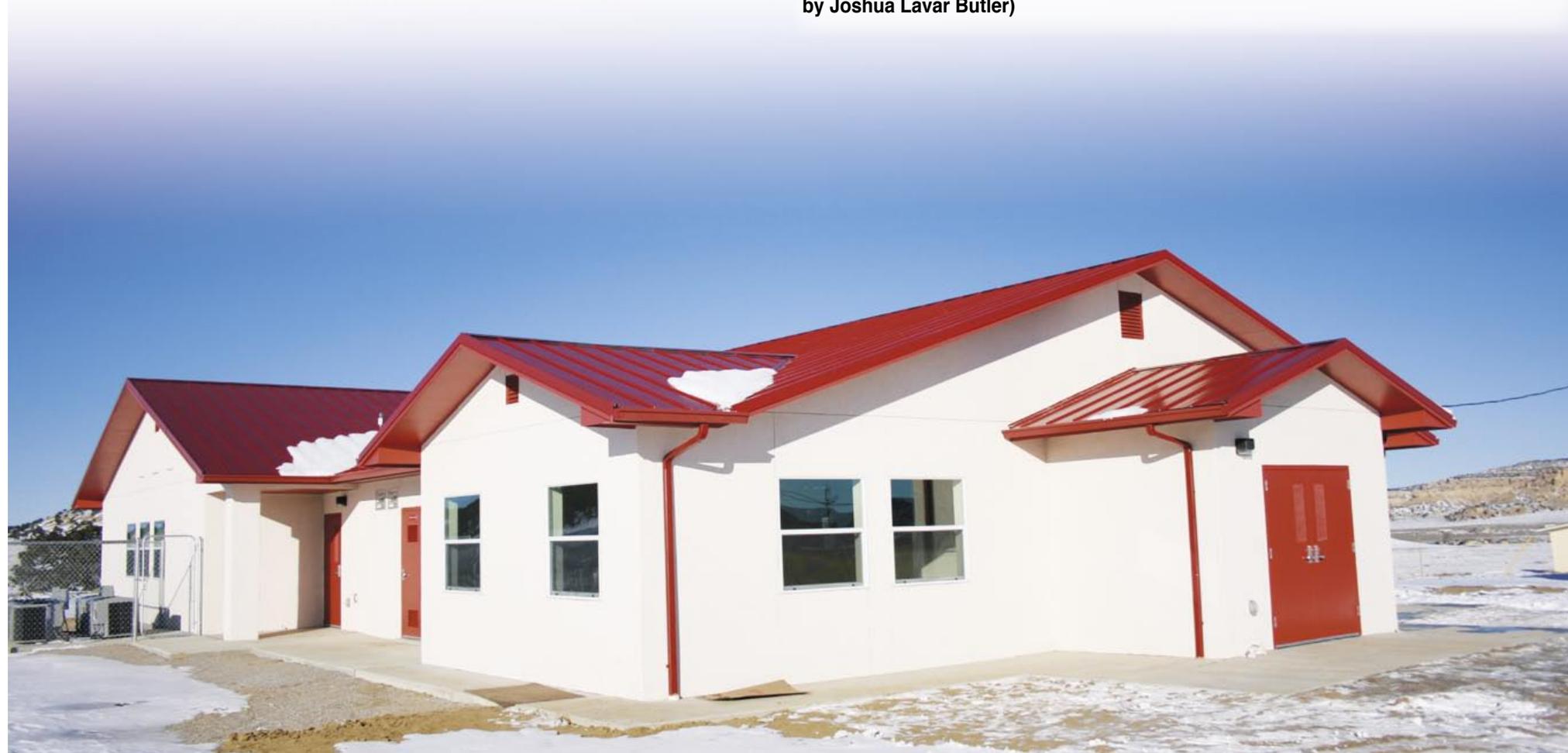
The community of Pinedale thanks Speaker Morgan, the Navajo Nation Council, the Pinedale Chapter, Clara Daye, Arviso Construc-

tion Company, the Land Use Committee, Navajo Nation Head Start Program, WW Capital Improvement Program, Mariano Plumbing, the Office of Environmental

Health and the New Mexico State Legislature for the contributions and assistance in the construction of the new Head Start building.



Pictured with two Head Start students are Anselm Morgan, Pinedale Chapter Vice President; Navajo Nation Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan; Raphael Martin, Pinedale Chapter President; Young Jeff Tom, Council Delagate; Charles Long, Legislative Staff Assistant; Bobby Sandoval; and Olsen Arviso Jr., owner of Arviso Construction. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)



Cross-Commission Agreement between Navajo Nation and McKinley County moves forward



Navajo Nation Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie

7,000 square-mile Navajo reservation.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Thoreau), vice-chair of the Public Safety Committee (PSC), was pleased to know that the recent Cross-Commission Agreement between the Navajo Nation and the McKinley County Sheriff's Office will finally move forward after years of stalling.

The agreement has been in the works for nearly seven years and was recently modified to meet the needs of the Navajo Nation in McKinley County, N.M. – needs that were desperately sought to combat crime on the Navajo Nation. Crimes on Indian reservations surpass the U.S. national average by two or three times, sometimes even more.

The Eastern Navajo area is comprised of a checkerboard

area, which creates a jurisdictional maze that hinders public safety. This lack of public safety in this area prompted the motion of this agreement. The agreement will deal with jurisdictional issues and will provide necessary services to the communities within this service area.

The agreement directs the Navajo Nation Public Safety and the McKinley County Sheriff's office to coordinate and to identify issues and concerns that deal with issues that face law enforcement today.

This agreement was established to provide for the orderly, efficient and effective enforcement of the criminal and traffic laws of the Navajo Nation and the state of New Mexico. The agreement will prevent the jurisdictions from becoming a sanctuary for the violators of the laws

of the other and to prevent inter-jurisdictional flight of offenders. The agreement still holds the recognition of the inherent sovereignty of the Navajo Nation and the state of New Mexico.

The Eastern Navajo area is comprised of a checkerboard area, which creates a jurisdictional maze that hinders public safety.

This landmark agreement will allow Navajo Nation Police officers to arrest non-Indians, while allowing the McKinley County Sheriff's department the same

privilege of making arrests on the reservation within the boundaries of their county. Before the agreement, McKinley County Sheriff's department could not come onto the reservation and Navajo Police officers could not make arrests off the reservation.

The agreement was signed Dec. 17 by Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley Jr., McKinley County Sheriff Frank Gonzales, Navajo Nation Public Safety Director Sampson Cowboy and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson.

Yazzie said he is pleased to know that the Public Safety Committee has revived the efforts to move the agreement forward in order to increase law enforcement in parts of the Navajo Eastern Agency.

"This project will benefit victims on the Navajo reservation," Yazzie said. "I am very grateful for the partnership that we have established with McKinley County and it opens doors for other counties that wish to follow suit."

Public safety issues are not unique to the Navajo Nation,

but are echoed in almost all reservations throughout the country.

The lack of jail space and lack of officers tops a growing list of issues effecting Indian country today.

It is the hope of the Navajo Nation that this agreement be utilized as a model for additional agreements in counties bordering the Navajo Nation in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico.

"The implementation of the agreement was a challenge, but it is finally done and we are looking forward to working together to serve the communities on the New Mexico side of the Navajo Nation," Cowboy said.

Hope MacDonald-Lonetree (Coalmine Canyon/To Nanees Dizi), chair of the PSC, expressed her gratitude to the people involved in pushing this agreement through the process.

"This is a good thing," MacDonald-Lone Tree said. "I look forward to a successful joint relationship between our department and the McKinley County Sheriff's Office."

Eyeglass project ...from page 1

learn because he does not have glasses," King-Johnson explained.

"We have thousands of Navajo children who have vision problems," King-Johnson added. "The lack of glasses is a real challenge. That in turn, makes getting through school very difficult."

"I've seen too many youngsters not being able to see very well early in their lives," Chioda said. He is committed to donating more than \$100,000 worth of pizza gift certificates to Navajo children who will be recipients of this eyeglass program.

"I think that this is going to be a huge and successful project for Navajo children," Chioda said with excitement in his voice.

Speaker Morgan said that

he will do whatever he can to continue to help Navajo children and this is just one of many projects on the list of challenges that his office is tackling.

The ODY reported that Bishop Optical will send mobile units to visit schools around the Navajo Nation in an effort to bring the program to the students. Navajo children in kindergarten through high school are eligible for the program and will need to submit a copy of their Certificate of Indian Blood to the nearest ODY office to get a referral form. Participants in the program will also need a current eyeglass prescription from an optometrist.

More information is available by calling the ODY administration office at (928) 871-6518.



A Navajo delegation met with U.S. Presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama on Feb. 2, 2008, in Santa Fe, N.M. Pictured is Navajo Council Delegates Leonard Tsosie, Hope MacDonald-Lone Tree, Ervin Keeswood and Rex Lee Jim with Sen. Obama. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)