



## The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### Dilkon District Court celebrates grand opening

*“Your hard work and persistence has made this day possible. It is always a good day and a good feeling to see progression here on our Navajo Nation.”*

*— Navajo Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan*

**DILKON, Ariz.** — The community of Dilkon celebrated the grand opening of its new multi-purpose district court building today, July 31, nearly a year after its groundbreaking.

State, county and tribal officials joined community members from around the district to celebrate the joyous occasion. Dignitaries included: Navajo Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan; members of the Judiciary Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council; Kee Allen Begay, chairman of the Judiciary Committee; Dilkon District Court staff; Dilkon Chapter officials and Navajo County supervisors.

The new 14,000-square foot complex situated on 2.3 acres of land north of milepost 55 along Route 15 was designed by Johnson Smitthipong & Rosamond and Associates, and is the first of its kind on the Navajo Nation. Its unique design incorporates a design in sync with Navajo tradition by incorporating the four sacred colors—white, blue, yellow and black.

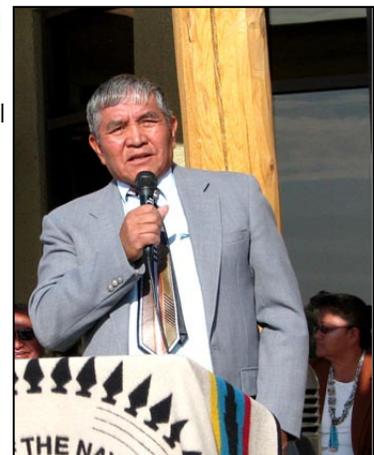
Judiciary Committee members expressed their appreciation for the support of the Arizona State Legislature for their help in making this project become a reality.

Council delegate Jerry Freddie (Dilkon/Teesto) welcomed visitors to the event.

“Today, we celebrate the grand opening of a much needed facility,” Freddie said. “There are many people to thank; we must always thank our Navajo elderly first. They are the ones who keep our sacred fire going. It is for that reason and for their support; this facility has become a reality for this community. This building symbolizes social order, which has deteriorated in this district and this is why we are in need to strengthen our judicial system to remedy the safety and judicial needs of our community.”



The Navajo Nation celebrated the grand opening of the Dilkon District Court on July 31, 2009. Top: Navajo Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan was a guest speaker during the event. Bottom: Navajo Council Delegate Jerry Freddie welcomes attendees to the event. (Photos by Christian Bigwater)



Kee Allen Begay, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, agreed.

"This new facility is good for the Navajo Nation and I commend our state legislators for their cooperative efforts," he said. "We were successful in securing vitally needed funding from the state of Arizona in cooperation with our legislators and with our then Governor Janet Napolitano."

Katosha Nakai, former lobbyist for the Navajo Nation and now special advisor on Native American Affairs to current Gov. Jan Brewer (R-AZ), lobbied intensely on behalf of the Legislative Branch of the Navajo Nation for the facility's funding.

The facility was made possible by a \$2 million appropriation by the state of Arizona, through a joint effort between the Judiciary Committee, the Legislative, Judicial and the Executive branches of the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation also provided matching funding with the state's allocation.

The three-year process for constructing this facility began during the 20<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council, one term ago, when the need for court house facilities became evident to serve the growing population of the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan congratulated the community of Dilkon, the Judiciary Committee and Kee Allen Begay for their leadership in making this facility become a reality.

"Your hard work and persistence has made this day possible," Speaker Morgan said. "It is always a good day and a good feeling to see progression here on our Navajo Nation. Today, we have a new district court building right here between our four sacred mountains. I commend the leaders from this area and the many contributing individuals that made this possible."

"It is our obligation as tribal leaders to provide adequate judicial services to our Navajo people," he added. "There is still much work to be done, this complex is one step in that direction. With this, we must continue strengthening and improving our judicial services and your Council delegates serving on the Judiciary Committee continue to do this in cooperation with judicial staff and their judges."

"This is only the beginning," Begay said. "We plan to have 11 court buildings at all 11 districts throughout the Navajo Nation and also a facility for our Navajo Supreme Court."

Navajo courts provide judicial services to people on the Navajo Nation, including district and family courts, peacemaking programs, probation and parole services, and Pro Se help.

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.

For more information, contact the Dilkon District Court at 928-657-8140.

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