



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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May 3, 2008

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## Transportation & Community Development Committee attend grant awards ceremony at Navajo Museum

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The Transportation and Community Development Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council attended a grant awards ceremony at the Navajo Nation Museum recently.

Arbin Mitchell, Executive Director of the Division of Community Development, spoke at the awards ceremony that was titled "Partnership Meeting of Navajo Nation and New Mexico Indian Affairs Department for Capital Outlay Projects and Appropriations."

Mitchell announced that the New Mexico State Legislature awarded \$4.2 million towards 52 projects within the New Mexico portion of the Navajo Nation for 2008.

"The Capital Improvement Office is the agent that will monitor and enter into formal agreements with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, subject to approval by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council," Mitchell said. "This will be done upon the recommendation of the TCDC of the Navajo Nation Council."

Sampson Begay (Jeddito/Steamboat/Low Mountain), Chairman of the TCDC, addressed the chapters that attended and applauded their efforts at seeking funds from the state of New Mexico for capital outlay projects on behalf of the chapter communities.

"There is never enough funding appropriated to complete the entire project with the funding awarded by the State Legislature," Begay said. "However, it is up to you to find innovative ways to make up the difference. It is good to know that the appropriations according to the language in the bills are for planning design and construction — this allows for the preliminary planning and design to begin."

Begay applauded the State Legislature and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson for making this year's appropriations possible. Begay also acknowledged Rebecca Martinez, Capital Outlay Manager of the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, and her staff for their continued assistance to the chapters for budget development and technical assistance from the appropriations.

Martinez stated that while last year the Navajo Nation received more funding in 2007, funding this year has decreased across the state for capital outlay projects. She added that this year formal intergovernmental grant agreements known as joint powers agreements will be prepared for the chapters to receive their funding from the state upon approval by the IGR and the TCDC.

"Some chapters still have not initiated the required scopes of work for their projects, which could stall the project," Martinez explained. "Overall, the Navajo Nation and the Indian Affairs Department are managing \$32,701,106.05 of capital outlay projects, which include appropriations as far back as 2003 that have been reauthorized."

Marlene Kelly, Project Engineer for the Indian Affairs Department, a member of Martinez's staff, informed the chapters that 2008 appropriations will expire on June 30, 2010, and the appropriations that are for planning and design will not expire until four years — on June 30, 2012.

For more information, contact Gerri Harrison with the Office of Legislative Services at 928-871-7160.