



## The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

# Navajo Council concludes day three, receives nearly \$5.2 million from Navajo Fire Rock Casino

*2009 Fall Session going smoothly*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** — The Navajo Nation Council took a gamble a year ago this week when the Navajo Nation celebrated the grand opening of the Navajo Fire Rock Casino near Gallup, N.M. and today, on day three of the Navajo Nation Council's Fall Session, some of the payout was presented back to the Navajo Nation in the form of two checks totaling \$5,179,502

The first check was presented to George Arthur and the Resources Committee of the Navajo Nation Council in the amount of \$3,929,502, which represents 11 percent of the casino's first quarter earnings. A second check was presented to LoRenzo C. Bates and the Budget and Finance Committee in the amount of \$1,250,000 for the principle payment of the loan it borrowed to finance the construction of the casino.

Robert Winter, CEO of Fire Rock Casino, was on hand to present the checks to the Council.

"It gives me great pleasure as part of the Navajo Nation gaming industry to be here today," Winter said. "We are here to do two things, one is to give thanks and the other is to hand over money to two groups of people that helped us get established."

Winter referred to George Arthur (T'iistoh Sikaad/San Juan/Nenanezad), chair of the Resources Committee, and LoRenzo C. Bates (Upper Fruitland), chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, for their influential assistance in getting Navajo gaming off the ground.

"We had very little success in getting financing for building the Navajo Nation's first casino and if it wasn't for the members of this council and the committees who stepped up to the plate, Fire Rock wouldn't be here today," Winter added. "I wouldn't be here today having the pleasure of handing over money to the Nation and the committees that supported us."

In a separate presentation, George Arthur presented George R. Beckert with a plaque from the Navajo Nation Council in appreciation for his involvement in helping to increase AYP scores of students at Tohatchi Elementary School this past year.

Beckert thanked the Council for honoring him.

"I would just like to thank the council," Beckert said as he accepted his plaque. "Please, no matter how tight economic situations are, do not forget education."

After the presentations, Council got right back to business adding Legislation 0616-09 to the Council's agenda by a vote of 64-4. The motion to add the item was made by Curran Hannon (Oak Springs/St. Michaels). The legislation was sponsored by Raymond Maxx (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) and it relates to an emergency to authorize the Navajo Nation Land Department permission to secure an appraisal report, negotiate the purchase and eventually purchase the Arizona Snowbowl in accordance to Navajo Nation law.

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Legislation No. 0312-09, sponsored by Thomas Walker Jr. (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake) failed by a vote of 28-48. This legislation relates to health, public safety, government services, judiciary, economic development and finance to enact the Navajo Nation Commercial Tobacco-Free Act of 2009. Before going to the main motion for a vote, there was a second attempt to table the legislation to the upcoming Winter Session, but the proposal failed 35-37.

Legislation No. 0155-09, sponsored by George Arthur, failed by a vote of 6-63. This legislation relates to health and resources to amend the Navajo Nation Safe Drinking Water Act. There was an attempt to table the legislation, but the attempt failed by a vote of 22-45.

Stephen B. Etsitty, executive director for Navajo Environmental Protection Agency, was on as an agent for this legislation.

"The Navajo Nation EPA takes a lot of pride in servicing the Navajo Nation in providing safe drinking water at locations around the Navajo Nation," Etsitty explained. "It would be very meaningful to anyone providing bottled water to ensure that the water meets Navajo Nation safe water standards."

Legislation No. 0162-09, sponsored by Ervin M. Keeswood Sr. (Tse Daa Kaan), passed by a vote of 61-0. This legislation is related to government services to reinstate Randall Benally, Enoch Endwarrior and Contreta Endwarrior's membership in the Navajo Nation. Details about this legislation were not readily available.

Legislation 0282-09, sponsored by Edmund E. Yazzie (Thoreau), passed by a vote of 64-4 with one amendment to include "educational use along with personal use" into the legislation's language. This legislation relates to economic development and public safety to enact the Navajo Nation Unauthorized Recording Act of 2009.

Legislation 0292-09, sponsored by Roy B. Dempsey (Oak Springs/St. Michaels), passed by a vote of 57-3. This legislation relates to economic development, resources and intergovernmental relations to amend 25 U.S.C. §415(e) to grant authority to the Navajo Nation to write business site leases for a term of up to 99 years.

Legislation 0373-09, sponsored by Roy Dempsey, passed by a vote of 51-0. This legislation relates to resources to approve the Oil and Gas Exploration and Development Operating Agreement between the Navajo Nation and the Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company for certain Navajo Nation trust lands in San Juan County, N.M.

Day four, possibly the final day, of the Council's Fall Session will continue tomorrow, Oct. 22. A copy of the full agenda can be downloaded by accessing the Navajo Nation Council's website at [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org).

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