



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Budget and Finance Committee receives report on the status of the Veteran homes construction project**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Monday, the Budget and Finance Committee received a status report on the construction of Veteran homes, including 19 homes that are currently under construction throughout the Navajo Nation.

The construction of the homes is funded by a 2-percent set-aside from the Navajo Nation General Fund, which is generated from all revenues on the Nation and is diverted to the Veterans Trust Fund annually in the amount of four-percent.

The Navajo Nation Council approved a legislation during a Special Session held on September 9, 2013, which amended the Veterans Trust Fund to authorize the 2-percent set-aside.

Navajo Nation Department of Veterans Affairs director David Nez, reported that a total of 19 homes are currently under construction in the Fort Defiance, Chinle, Eastern, and Northern agencies. The Western Agency is in the initial phase of selecting Veterans to receive a new home.

“This is the first year of the four-year project, and thus far we have expended [approximately] 45% of the funding,” said Nez.

Nez said construction materials were supplied by Home Depot through an agreement with the Nation, adding that the homes are also handicap accessible and are designed for the specific needs of the Veterans.

However, appliances and septic tanks/leach lines are not included in the final construction phase of the home due to budgetary constraints.

BFC member Council Delegate Nelson BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tse Ch’zhi) said it is not right that home necessities such as appliances and a septic tank are not included in the home construction.

“The homes should be built so that Veterans can move right in, comfortably, without having to worry about having to pay for anything else after move-in,” said Delegate BeGaye.

According to Nez, in order to provide those basic services, additional funding is needed to purchase the items, as well as labor costs associated with installation. He added that wood stoves are included with the homes, and that his office would aid Veterans in obtaining wall heaters at low-cost.

BFC vice chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) suggested that DNVA hold a strategic planning session with all entities involved with the planning, design, and construction of the homes.

“I challenge your department to come together and devise ways to maximize the [funding] dollars to not only provide all home necessities, but to even try and have more homes built and bid out to more [cost-effective] vendors,” said Delegate Nez.

At the conclusion of the discussion, BFC members commended DNVA for their efforts to accommodate the Veterans and expressed their support for the forthcoming completion of the four-year project.

BFC members voted 3-0 to accept the report.

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