



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Resources and Development Committee approves \$65,000 for Thoreau Senior Citizen Center Project

WINDOW ROCK – The Resources and Development Committee on Tuesday, approved Legislation No. 0372-13, a budget reallocation in the amount of \$65,000 for the Thoreau Senior Citizen Center Project under the Capital Improvement Office.

According to the legislation, in 2008 the Navajo Nation approved \$70,000 to renovate the Lake Valley Senior Citizen Center. However, other General Funds and External funds from the State of New Mexico were used to renovate and construct the facility, leaving the Nation’s funds unused.

The \$65,000 will be used to finish construction of the Thoreau Senior Citizen Center, located approximately 32 miles east of Gallup, N.M.

“This is important to our community and there is much need for this senior center. In the beginning there was a lot of misinterpretation on the construction team, which resulted in the shortfall. So, we have been working with the designing and engineering and the Capital Improvement Office,” stated legislation sponsor Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), who represents the community of Thoreau.

“I have attended many chapter meetings and the concern of the senior citizen center is being addressed by the elders and they ask ‘when is this going to happen?’” The building is there and it is a nice building but just needs approval. I don’t know how many times I can stress how important this is to us back in the Thoreau area,” stated Delegate Yazzie.

RDC Council Delegate Leonard Pete (Chinle), added that from the start of the project, federal policy acts were set into place and chapter house members began working on getting the senior citizen center up and running. It was through the Attorney General, that the legalization and opinion of how the transfer of funds, through the chapter, was going to be utilized.

The Attorney General said these things are provided for us, and I don’t think they really know how that opinion might affect or cost the Navajo Nation. It doesn’t provide a solution of how to deal with these problems that arise from that opinion and how the Navajo Nation ends up dealing with that. So, it really wasn’t a well thought through situation, stated Delegate Pete.

According to Delegate Yazzie, a minor electrical problem stalled the next phase of construction. Upon approval, the electrical problem will be fixed and Delegate Yazzie expects the facility to be in full-use within two weeks thereafter.

Currently, activities such as quilt making, game festivities and birthday celebrations are conducted regularly at two locations: Ramah Detention Center and the County's Senior Center.

According to the discussion, in some cases, other chapter houses do not have a senior citizen center and utilize their chapter facility as a senior citizen center.

"One example of a senior center that is not being used is in Churchrock. Churchrock is a strong chapter but they are advocating for a senior center and we are working on that project as well," stated Delegate Yazzie.

The RDC committee voted 4-0 to approve Legislation No. 0372-13. The RDC serves as the final authority for the legislation.

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