



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 12, 2016

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Delegate Tso commends efforts of the Former Bennett Freeze Area Field Intake Project



PHOTO: Council Delegate Otto Tso commends Tó Nanees Dizi college summer interns for their participation in Former Bennett Freeze Area Field Intake Project at Tó Nanees Dizi Local Government Center on August 11, 2016.

TUBA CITY, Ariz. – On Thursday evening, Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) was in attendance to support the Tó Nanees Dizi summer college interns at the Former Bennett Freeze Area Field Intake Project appreciation banquet at Tó Nanees Dizi Local Government Center.

The Former Bennett Freeze Area Field Intake Project consisted of 25 summer interns that conducted field visits to homes within the FBFA. They conducted housing assessments and documented current conditions, identified existing infrastructure, verified grazing permit and home site lease statuses, verified physical addresses, collected photos of homes, and inputted geographical coordinates of homes and roads.

Council Delegate Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizi) expressed his appreciation to the college students for initiating and working on the project to help Former Bennett Freeze Area community members.

“I am grateful for our Tó Nanees Dizi college students for doing this work in the FBFA. The data collected will greatly assist the chapter and the Nation. The FBFA needs a lot of attention and many of our family and community members are waiting for opportunities to improve the conditions of the area. This project will allow opportunities for funding,” stated Delegate Tso.

According to Tó Nanees Dizi Local Government executive manager Regina Allison, 18 college students, five Navajo Nation Department of Workforce Development employees, and two chapter employees participated in the project for the duration of 10-weeks. The college students represented Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona, Pima Community College, Utah State University, Diné College, Grand Canyon University, and Mesa Community College.

“The chapter and the chapter commissioner’s goal was to utilize our intelligent and bright students. Many chapters hire summer youth for labor work but we gave our youth the opportunity to help the community by using their skills and abilities,” added Allison.

Delegate Tso added that the summer youth enrichment programs would not have been possible without Council’s advocacy for youth funding and the chapter’s ability to utilize sales tax revenues.

In May, Council members unanimously voted in support of legislation that approved funding in the amount of \$2 million for chapters to provide employment and enrichment opportunities for Navajo high school and college students.

“I am thankful that our tribal leaders gave us this opportunity to participate and lead a project of this magnitude. I learned a lot and I personally saw the struggle of people who are affected by the Bennett Freeze. Many homes have no water, no electricity, and poor housing conditions. It made me sad that our Diné people have to endure these challenges. This project taught us to think critically and prepare us to help our Diné communities after college,” stated college intern Amber Neztosie during the appreciation banquet.

The Former Bennett Freeze Area Field Intake Project report will be available through Tó Nanees Dizi Local Government when completed. For more information about the project email the Tó Nanees Dizi Local Government at tonaneesdizi@navajochapters.org.

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