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For Immediate Release
April 16, 2013

President Shelly Outlines Objectives for Uranium Clean Up

GALLUP, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly delivered an opening statement that featured future steps needed to continue uranium clean up in Church Rock and other affected areas.

“One of the critical lessons we learned early on was to listen to the people who live in the impacted areas,” President Shelly said during his speech.



President Shelly’s speech helped start the two day Fifth Annual Uranium Contamination Stakeholder Conference, in which citizens had a chance to express their concerns to leaders of various government agencies that are tasked with uranium clean up and reclamation.

President Shelly talked about the Five Year Plan that outlined timelines to clean up uranium abandoned mines and contamination sites.

“Since 2007, over seven different federal agencies have joined this inter-agency collaboration and they have completed many of activities in the Five Year Plan,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly said the future of mine clean up needs to have more Navajo employed and trained to perform remediation tasks.

He added that the agencies need to continue identifying and cleaning structures, water wells, abandoned mines, and continue clean up of North East Church Rock mine site and Tuba City Dump.

President Shelly did applaud the completed objective of cleaning up uranium tailings along U.S. Highway 160 near Tuba City.

“We are grateful that Department of Energy allowed Navajo EPA to take the lead on the cleanup process which came in on time and under budget. This is a good model for all to recognize – as long as sufficient resources are provided,” President Shelly said.

He added that financial resources needed to be dedicated to the remaining objectives.

U.S. EPA Region 9 Administrator Jared Blumenfeld was in attendance and agreed with President Shelly that financial resources need to be allotted for the objectives to be completed.

“All of these objectives are important to me as Navajo Nation president,” President Shelly said.

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