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Navajo President Shelly and Vice President Jim Deliver State of the Navajo Nation

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim jointly delivered the State of the Navajo Nation report during the opening day of Navajo Council’s Summer Session Monday afternoon.

President Shelly and Vice President delivered their speech almost entirely in the Navajo language and mostly followed the written report. The Council voted 17-1 and approved the report.

According to the written report, President Shelly and Vice President Jim outlined several ongoing projects from the most recent information regarding FEMA reimbursements, the 4G broadband project, Navajo Transitional Energy Company and a job training initiative in which Public Service Company of New Mexico will provide Navajo students \$1 million through the next five years.

“Working with PNM, our goal is to provide funding directly to Navajo students in fall 2013 at both Navajo Technical College and San Juan College. We need to invest in our people and I believe this is an important way to do that,” the President’s report stated.

PNM plans to provide \$200,000 a year to help pay for job training for Navajo students. PNM proposed the plan to President Shelly nearly a year ago after the U.S. EPA ruled that PNM owned San Juan Generating Station had to reduce emissions to reduce haze.

“Through this process, the Navajo Nation has been involved and worked actively with the U.S. EPA, New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez and the New Mexico Environment Department, and PNM,” the report stated.

The report also updated the Council about the 4G LTE broadband project which is expected to be completed soon. The project received more than \$30 million through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and when completed would bring a 4G LTE network to the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly also updated the Council about NTEC and the potential of a Navajo owned coalmine.

NTEC is a transitional company that was started to buyout BHP-Billiton's Navajo Mine. When the mine is purchased, BHP-Billiton would manage the mine until 2016. Experts expect the mine to generate as much as \$200 million annually for the Navajo Nation.

Though the deal isn't finalized, President Shelly said previously signed Memorandums of Understanding with Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories would help the Navajo Nation explore the future of coal energy for the Navajo Nation.

The President's report stated that about \$5.5 million has been reimbursed to the Navajo Nation from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Some of the reimbursements have been nearly a decade in waiting.

"We are thankful that the Department of Emergency Management was able to complete tasks that were left undone for nearly a decade. They are now putting forth new uniform practices that will ensure that in the future, reimbursement payments will be processed in a much more efficient manner. This could not have been done without the assistance from the Chapters and administrative staff," the President's report stated.

Vice President Jim updated the Council about Na Nizhoozhi Center in Gallup and the work he and President Shelly have been doing.

NCI is schedule to close and reopen under a different name and the Navajo Nation has 25 weeks to finalize a plan that includes the Navajo Nation managing the detox facility.

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