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President Ben Shelly (left) shovels dirt with Shiprock Chapter President Duane "Chili" Yazzie during a groundbreaking ceremony for a youth facility.

Navajo President Shelly Breaks Ground for New Youth Facility

SHIPROCK, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly delivered a message of encouragement for young people during a groundbreaking ceremony for a multi-purpose youth facility Wednesday afternoon.

“I have said many times that our children are the most precious resource the Navajo Nation has. Through them, we have new dreams, new visions and new ideas to better the Navajo way of life. The youth of the Navajo Nation hold our future in their hands,” President Shelly said. He encouraged them to stay active in their communities and help us build a nation.

President Shelly participated in the traditional blessing and ground breaking for a youth facility that, when completed, would be about 22,300 square feet. The Navajo Office of Youth Development and the Boys and

Girls Clubs of the Diné Nation have been allocated \$6.6 million to complete the building, which is scheduled to be completed in late spring of 2014.

The Navajo Nation, Navajo Housing Authority, Abandon Mine Lands, Economic Development Initiative- HUD, and the State of New Mexico provided funding for the center.

President Shelly said the center would allow children to have a safe environment for them to develop and learn to balance both the Navajo and modern worlds, so they can succeed in life and be proud to be Diné.

“So when I think about this youth center that we are breaking ground for, I think about the children having an opportunity to find that balance for themselves in a safe and positive environment. This is important because a safe and positive environment will give our children the best chance to learn how to balance the Navajo world and the modern world,” President Shelly said.

“This is important because a safe and positive environment will give our children the best chance to learn how to balance the Navajo world and the modern world. Their ability to balance their lives is important for the Navajo Nation’s long-term success,” President Shelly added.

The facility plans to have have a gymnasium, after-school/summer programming area with a technology center, media room, learning center, art room, teen area, game room and an administrative office area.

More than 70 people attended the groundbreaking ceremony.

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