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April 24, 2015

President Shelly unveils Navajo Transit System \$2 million electric bus



FT. DEFIANCE, Ariz.—Soon, there will be a new bus on the Navajo Transit System bus route between Gallup, N.M. and Ft. Defiance.

President Shelly unveiled the NTS Mass Electric Transit Bus this morning in Ft. Defiance. Virgil Brown, director of the Division of General Services and Harrison Smith, department manager for NTS, joined the president for the presentation.

In 2010, Federal Transit Administration awarded NTS a \$2 million contract to build the bus for the travelers on the Navajo Nation.

“The Navajo Transit System secured a \$2 million contract to build the first Mass Electric Transit Bus in the Navajo Nation,” President Shelly said. “The Federal Transit Administration selected Navajo Transit System for this competitive national grant.”

Constructed by Electricore in

Valencia, Calif., the electric bus comfortably seats 42 passengers. The bus will require eight hours of charging time for the batteries, which allows a day’s worth of traveling for the bus.

President Shelly said the electric bus accommodates travelers from Gallup to Ft. Defiance, which is the most traveled bus route for NTS. Established in 1980, NTS provides transportation services to 41 of the 110 chapters.

There are currently 18 bus routes operated by NTS, which serves areas as far away as Aneth, Utah. Two new routes are anticipated to begin soon: one providing service to Forest Lake, Pinon and Chinle; the other providing services to Ramah, Gallup and Ft. Defiance.

The new bus was parked outside the bus bay gleaming in the spring sunlight. NTS showcased the batteries underneath the bus and the

portable charging station that connects to the electronic engine in the rear of the bus.

Originally funded on Oct. 1, 2010, the FTA grant award of \$2 million was executed by the Shelly-Jim administration upon taking office.

“We picked up the project and finished it. During the course of our work, the Navajo Nation was also selected to receive \$5 million in federal funds for the hybrid bus project for FY 2011,” President Shelly said.

The \$5 million grant requires \$1.25 million in matching funds from the Navajo Nation to execute the project.

“We have hopes that the incoming administration will pickup this project and complete it as we did with the electric bus,” President Shelly said.

Ten buses will be produced with the \$5 million grant, which will be delivered in the fall of 2016.

President Shelly said he traveled to Calif. to see the construction of the electric bus firsthand. His excitement to see the sleek finished product was evident.

Technicians from Electricore will be traveling to the Navajo Nation next month to program the bus for operation. The final two payments to the company were processed earlier this week by NTS.

“Although this is a small part, the new electric bus in environmentally friendly. We have a new bus on the road, an electric bus. Thank you,” President Shelly said.

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