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President Shelly attends Indian at Santa Fe, shares issues facing Nation



President Shelly met with Gov. Susana Martinez during Indian Day on Feb. 6 at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe. He was joined by Sen. Pinto and Speaker Bates to discuss issues crucial to the Nation. (Photo by Michele Morris)

SANTA FE, N.M.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended Indian Day at the N.M. Legislature on Feb. 6, 2015 and shared a number of issues facing the Nation.

President Shelly told state legislators that the Navajo Nation grew by 2,440 new jobs that were created during his term of office. He expressed his hopes to see that number increase with new jobs in the Land of Enchantment.

“We need your support for the rail spur in Thoreau. This includes a two-line rail system for transport from the Transcontinental to the Four Corners,” President Shelly said. “We extend our gratitude to the State of New Mexico for funding the study.”

He said the opportunities with transportation and rail have resulted in a commitment from Burlington Northern Santa Fe to invest \$8 million for two loops that will accommodate 100 rail cars for each loop.

“From such projects, we can increase gross revenue receipts

for the Navajo Nation, Four Corners, counties and state,” President Shelly said.

He also spoke about the capital outlay and tribal infrastructure funds provided by the state for projects across tribal lands in N.M.

The funding provided to Indian tribes across the state for infrastructure projects are a demonstration of government-to-government partnerships to leverage funding, he said.

It provides an opportunity for tribes, pueblos and the state to come together to address infrastructure needs, said the president.

He thanked the leadership in the House and Senate, specifically mentioning Rep. Sharon Clahchischillie, Rep. Patty Lundstrom and Rep. Wanda Johnson. He also thanked Sen. John Pinto and Sen. Bennie Shendo.

President Shelly said their support would be crucial to passing the tribal gaming compact with the state.

“We need your support. Jobs, revenue, tax and business from the many vendors will come forth from this legislature as you pass our compact,” President Shelly said. “We will remain here in Santa Fe to work toward this accomplishment.”

By working together and negotiating with the pueblos and legislators, the Navajo Nation is looking forward to passing a gaming compact that is agreeable to all this legislative session.

He concluded by saying that the new rail system is an opportunity for growth in manufacturing and other future industries.

“The Navajo Nation is not a manufacturing nation. Although we produce natural resources and jobs in the energy market, we have no manufacturing workforce,” President Shelly said. “With your foresight and legislative fix, we can increase opportunity for a manufacturing base in northwest N.M., where there is an abundance of oil, natural gas, coal and agriculture.”

