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USDA CONVENES AT NTU TO DISCUSS RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Crownpoint N.M. – Yesterday at the Navajo Technical University (NTU), the Navajo Nation Divisions, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, and other Federal partners convened for the first time ever to discuss and plan future steps for rural development projects within the Navajo Nation.

Some of the projects discussed were Internet to Hogan which will provide better access to the internet for Navajo families, providing water to rural homes with the STAR School Technical Assistance and Training Program, Solar Panels for the Former Bennett Freeze Area, a Navajo Nation Police Academy, and a Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education Preservation and Culture.

The convening was the beginning of many discussions with USDA Rural Development which will require further follow up with the career officials in the USDA Rural Development regional and state offices. Other federal attendees such as the Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Economic Development Administration, and the Small Business Administration provided input on the proposed projects and how they could be executed. The convening was well attended and a great networking opportunity.

Vice President Jonathan Nez provided opening remarks for the convening. “It is time for Navajos to invest in Navajos, and keep families here on the Navajo Nation” said Vice President Nez. The vice president highlighted the need to capitalize and partner with federal agencies on the recent investments in in-



In his opening remarks, Vice President Jonathan Nez said there is a need for the Navajo Nation to partner with federal agencies on infrastructure projects.

frastructure through the Sihasin Fund.

President Russell Begaye stated, “I appreciate the Obama administration and USDA leadership for arranging the first Navajo-USDA convening to be held on the Navajo Nation. These projects will strengthen our economic base and I look forward to continued work with the new administration as well as the career employees who will remain at the USDA. This convening was a successful first step in communication, planning and partnership – we look forward to a continued commitment and strong partnership on these initiatives.”

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