



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2, 2019

## Nez-Lizer Administration continues commitment to meeting with Navajo Utah Chapters

**TÓLIKAN, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Division Directors from the Nez-Lizer Administration met with the Navajo Utah chapters and Council Delegate Charlaine Tso on Monday, at Tólikan Chapter where they listened to concerns and recommendations from officials and residents and provided updates to local residents.

Monday's meeting served as a follow-up to a meeting held in Mexican Water on Oct. 4, where President Nez gave his commitment to meet with the Navajo Utah chapters on a regular basis to maintain communication with the residents and officials.

"For our administration, it's important that we go out to the communities and be among the people to truly understand the issues and to help us assess how we can help to empower our people. During our campaign, the Navajo people told us that they wanted to see Division Directors out in the communities," said President Nez, who represented Utah chapters as a former member of the Navajo Nation Council.

President Nez said he will present a plan that will address potential budget shortfalls in the coming years for the Nation that is similar to the Permanent Trust Fund Income Five-Year Plan that was approved in 2016. Rather than prioritizing funds from the interest earned annually from the Permanent Trust Fund principal, the Nation would prioritize those funds to ensure that direct services are funded in the Comprehensive Budget before projects.

He also stated that he will request more funding for the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development to provide more technical expertise to complete over \$300 million worth of infrastructure and community development projects that were funded in previous years. He



**PHOTO: President Jonathan Nez meeting with chapter officials and residents at Tólikan Chapter on Dec. 2, 2019.**

noted that when the projects were funded there were no funds allocated to hire additional workforce to work on the long list of new projects.

“The Division of Community Development is in need of more resources and more workers with expertise to complete the projects that are designated to each of the 110 chapters,” said President Nez.

Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman said she is currently reorganizing the division in order to secure an adequate number of project managers to oversee ongoing projects. She also encouraged the chapters to submit applications for Community Development Block Grant funds to help with local projects, which are due in February.

Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie reported that his staff continues to work to empower chapters to conduct their own business site leasing and to stimulate their local economy by initiating their own taxes and other initiatives that provide revenues to grow and develop communities.

Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Oliver B. Whaley also provided updates on uranium mine cleanup efforts. He also encouraged community members to dispose of their waste at transfer stations to avoid penalties for illegal trash dumping and to keep their communities clean.

Several other Division Directors provided reports including Division of Natural Resources Executive Director Dr. Rudy Shebala, Division of Human Resources Executive Director Dr. Perphelia Fowler, Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Office Executive Director Christopher Becenti, and representatives from the Division of Transportation.

President Nez also spent the majority of Monday’s meeting listening to concerns and recommendations from chapter officials and members from the communities of Mexican Water, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Dennehotso, Red Mesa, Aneth, Teec Nos Pos, and Tóńikan. Many of their issues are related to road projects, school bus routes, emergency services and public safety, power line projects, broadband, chapter facilities, waste disposal, and more.

“The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks for the Navajo Utah chapters, residents, and Council Delegate Charlaine Tso for working together and moving their communities forward. We are committed to supporting your initiatives and to empowering your communities to complete projects that benefit your local residents,” added President Nez.

Council Delegate Charlaine Tso, who represents several Utah chapters as a member of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council, also offered her continued support for her constituents and their projects.

The next regional meeting with Utah Navajo chapters is tentatively scheduled for March 6 at 9:00 a.m. at Teec Nos Pos Chapter.

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