



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Ts'ah Bii Kin summer youth employees construct walking/running trail with “junk food tax” dollars



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Ts'ah Bii Kin summer youth employees, Ts'ah Bii Kin chapter officials and administration, and community members during the “A Walk in the Sage Trail” dedication ceremony in Ts'ah Bii Kin on June 28, 2019.

TS'AH BII KIN, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez joined summer youth employees, community members, and chapter officials in the community of Ts'ah Bii Kin on June 28, for a dedication ceremony for a newly-constructed walking and running trail. The project known as the 2019 Ts'ah Bii Kin Trail Initiative was completed by a group of 20 Navajo students who are part of the chapter's summer youth employment program, using revenue collected through the Navajo Nation's two-percent tax on unhealthy foods and beverages, commonly known as the “junk food tax.”

The summer youth employees constructed the 0.8-mile graveled trail over the course of three weeks, which surrounds the perimeter of the chapter. The project was also partially funded in partnership with the Navajo Transitional Energy Company, LLC.

President Nez thanked the summer youth employees, many of whom returned home to work at the chapter for the summer break, for taking on the challenge of promoting healthy active living in their community.

“As young Navajo people, you have practiced and demonstrated one of the most important Navajo principles and teachings of T’áá hwó’ ajít’éeg, or self-reliance and self-determination, in order to help your peers and community. Thank you for stepping forward to make a positive difference for our people,” said President Nez.

According to Ts’ah Bii Kin Chapter Manager Earl L. Sombrero, the 20 summer youth employees worked very diligent and remained adamant about completing construction of the new trail, as the chapter officials and employees provided the necessary resources.

“This is a creative and inspirational project that the youth have completed within a short timeframe. The youth of Ts’ah Bii Kin Chapter have set an example of how the tax revenues from the sales tax on unhealthy foods and beverages can be used to change the lives of our people by providing resources to live healthy lives,” added Vice President Myron Lizer.

In 2014, President Nez supported former Council Delegate Danny Simpson in advocating for the Healthy Diné Nation Act, which implemented the two-percent sales tax on unhealthy foods and beverages sold on the Navajo Nation. They also supported a separate bill to eliminate the entire sales tax for healthy fruits and vegetables on the Navajo Nation.

The Healthy Diné Nation Act of 2014 included a sunset clause provision that calls for the two-percent tax to end in 2020, however, President Nez and Vice President Lizer said they will advocate for an extension of the sales tax to help chapters throughout the Navajo Nation promote healthy and active living.

The “A Walk in the Sage Trail” in the community of Ts’ah Bii Kin is now open to the public.

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