



The Navajo Nation  
Office of the President and Vice President

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Navajo Nation and San Juan County, Utah sign Intergovernmental Agreement to maintain 74-miles of roadways for Navajo residents**



**PHOTO:** Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and San Juan County, Utah Commission Chairman Kenneth Maryboy sign an Intergovernmental Agreement to maintain roads for Navajo Utah communities during a signing ceremony held in Teec Nos Pos, Ariz. on Feb. 24, 2020.

**TEEC NOS POS, Ariz.** — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and San Juan County, Utah Commission Chairman Kenneth Maryboy signed an Intergovernmental Agreement at Teec Nos Pos Chapter on Monday, establishing the framework for the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation and the county to work together to provide maintenance, repairs, and the clearing of critical roadways in several Navajo Utah communities.

“I’m proud of the partnership that the Navajo Nation has built with San Juan County, Utah to provide road services that will benefit our students by improving school bus routes, and roads that are used by first responders, our elderly people, and many others on a daily basis. We thank the San Juan County Commission for working together with the Nation to move this agreement forward,” said President Nez, who was also joined by 24th Navajo Nation Council members Charlaine Tso and Herman Daniels, Jr. for the signing.

The Intergovernmental Agreement identifies 14 routes in several Navajo communities, totaling 74-miles, that will be maintained through December 2024 through the collaboration of San Juan County and the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation.

“We’re excited once again to begin the road maintenance services on the San Juan County routes. With our partners, San Juan County Commissioners and officials, our guiding IGA has been created and established. Our needs within the Northern and Western Agencies are enormous. The San Juan County Commission is a welcoming entity to assist the Nation with our transportation needs,” said NDOT Executive Director Garret Silversmith.

The agreement gained momentum following a meeting in January, where President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer met with San Juan County Commissioners Kenneth Maryboy and Willie Grayeyes, to discuss road projects including the development of a new highway that would connect the communities of Navajo Mountain and Oljato to provide a shorter route for many residents and create community and economic development opportunities.

President Nez said that if the current dirt road is paved it would also create an improved route for thousands of tourists that visit Monument Valley and other nearby attractions every year. Currently, commuters drive over 100-miles through the communities of Shonto and Kayenta to get from one community to the other.

“With the partnership of the Navajo Nation, the state of Utah, and San Juan County, we look forward to the construction of this new highway, which would also serve as a critical corridor for tourism to help create jobs, businesses, and revenues, and to serve local community members,” said President Nez.

According to Navajo Nation Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith, the highway would stretch 30-miles near the Utah-Arizona border. He added that initial estimates indicate that the project will cost approximately \$115 million, which would include drainage improvements, construction of bridges, new pavement, signage, and right-of-way fencing. The Nation continues to seek additional sources of funding to leverage its resources through matching funds and other contributions.

The signing of the agreement took place prior to the Nez-Lizer Administration’s regional meeting with Navajo Utah chapters, which marked the third meeting with Utah chapters to hear directly from leaders and community members regarding local initiatives and recommendations. The first regional meetings were held at Tólikan Chapter on Dec. 2 and Mexican Water Chapter on Oct. 4.

“For our administration, it’s important that we go out to the communities and be among our people to truly understand the issues to help us determine how we can help to empower our

people,” stated President Nez. “During our campaign, the people mandated us to have our Division Directors out in the communities and that’s why we have our directors here today.”

Attorney General Doreen N. McPaul and several Division Directors were in attendance for Monday’s regional meeting including, Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith, Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie, Division of Human Resources Executive Director Dr. Perphelia Fowler, Division of General Services Executive Director Lomardo Aseret, Division of Social Services Executive Director Deannah Neswood-Gishey, Navajo Veterans Administration Executive Director James D. Zwierlein, Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman, Diné Uranium Remediation Advisory Commission Executive Director Wynona Baheshone, and Deputy Chief of Police Daryl Noon.

President Nez thanks Council Delegates Nathaniel Brown, Herman Daniels, Jr., and Charlene Tso and the Navajo Utah Chapter officials for their representation and participation, and the Teec Nos Pos Chapter for hosting the regional meeting.

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