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President Ben Shelly Highlights 2011 Successes

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Nearly one year in office and President Ben Shelly’s list of accomplishments for this year lays the foundation for the next year.

President Shelly outlined some of the successes his administration had this year.

“This year, the Navajo Nation has had many good blessings and changes. I signed the Title 2 amendments creating a whole new government. I worked to create open communication and transparency in my administration, along with initiating and completing projects for the people of the Navajo Nation. All the while, I created and protected jobs for our people,” said President Ben Shelly.

One of President Shelly’s successes this past year came in the form of town hall style meetings held across the Navajo Nation. The Shelly-Jim Administration held meetings at five different chapters of which hundreds of people attended. The town hall meetings helped establish more precise goals to help meet the needs of the people.

Also, President Shelly worked to create a safer environment while creating jobs for the Navajo Nation and its residents. Three new multi-judicial complexes are being built in Tuba City, Kayenta and Crownpoint. While similar facilities in Window Rock, Chinle, Dilkon and Shiprock are in initial planning stages. These complexes are planned to house law enforcement agents, detention areas and judicial facilities.

But while President Shelly was bring money to the Navajo Nation for new projects, he also safeguarded \$125 million of Navajo program money that otherwise might have been cut. He essentially kept funding levels intact for the Navajo Housing Authority, Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands program, Navajo Head Start and the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project.

While protecting Navajo programs, President Shelly also broke ground for two more Navajo gaming facilities. Twin Arrows, near Flagstaff, Ariz. and Northern Edge, near Farmington, N.M. Northern Edge is expected to open next month.

President Shelly also found ways to maximize existing money to help more Navajo people. Using creative budgeting, President Shelly was able to increase spending for direct service programs by \$4.5 million. The programs that received most of the money were Navajo Area Agency on Aging, Low Income Energy Assistance Program, and Division of Public Safety

For the first time, a Navajo uranium mine was deemed “Clean Closure” by the U.S. EPA. After the U.S. EPA spent about \$4.5 million reclaiming a closed mine near Tuba City, Ariz., the federal agency called the mine a “Clean Closure,” making it the first mine on the Navajo Nation to achieve that status.

President Shelly also initiated and coordinated efforts to develop a supplemental comprehensive draft of the Navajo Nation Energy Policy, a piece of legislation that would create the framework for policy regarding Navajo energy.

President Shelly also laid out the Navajo tribal identification program. Now, Navajo tribal members have an option to carry an identification card to show proof of Navajo membership.

But some projects didn’t start on during the Shelly-Jim administration. Nonetheless, President Shelly now the bearer of ensuring that about \$2 billion worth of projects continue to their fruition. Some of these projects include: Management of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, Big Boquillas Wind Farm Project, Navajo Broadband grant, Navajo- Gallup Water Supply Project, U.S. Hwy. 491 construction, construction of Navajo Division of Transportation complex and signing the Arizona Public Service and BHP – Billiton leases.

As this President Shelly’s first year ends, the President looks to next year to gain more ground on building a self-sufficient sovereign Navajo Nation.

“Looking into the next year, we will continue to create job opportunities for our Navajo people and fostering a business friendly environment on the reservation. We will continue protect Navajo money at the federal level while preparing for challenges that may lie ahead,” President Shelly added.

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