



NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Navajo Nation approves Gallup MOA

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz.—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission presented a government to government Memorandum of Agreement to the Navajo Nation Intergovernmental Relations Committee to address race relations in Gallup, N.M., yesterday.

IGR committee members voted in favor of the initiative, 9 in favor, 0 abstained, 0 opposed at the Navajo Nation Council Chambers in Window Rock, Navajo Nation on August 31, 2010.

Navajo Nation Council Delegate of Tohatchi Herman R. Morris sponsored the legislation.

Said NNHRC Policy Analyst, Rodney L. Tahe, it's a non-binding agreement at no cost to Gallup or the Navajo Nation. He said, for instance that the Gallup MOA will help NNHRC obtain documents from the City's Department of Public Safety and other governmental entities within the City of Gallup.

Gallup is the second city adjacent to the Navajo Nation to sign the MOA following the City of Grants of New Mexico.

According to NNHRC Executive Director Leonard Gorman, Gallup city officials have not required any mediation from the US Department of Justice. Two other cities have required mediation from the US Department of Justice: Grants, N.M. and currently, the City of Farmington where negotiations continue.

Gallup City Mayor Harry Mendoza signed the MOA on August 12 after the Gallup City Council members unanimously approved the MOA 5-0, on August 11 at the Gallup City Council Chambers.

The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission sent the City of Gallup the MOA nearly a year ago which states in part, "Together the COMMISSION and the CITY intend to move forward by acknowledging that racism and other destructive actions were inflicted

upon the Navajo and other indigenous peoples and minorities,” as stated in the MOA preamble. Then continues, “Those actions and ideas must be eliminated now and forever at every level of government and eventually in the hearts and minds of peoples.”

Gallup officials approved the NNHRC proposed MOA and added a paragraph to the preamble which states,

“The **CITY** is noted for its racial diversity and tolerance as reflected by its treatment of its Japanese-American citizens during World War II. The **CITY** was originally founded and populated by immigrants who came from every coal-mining region of the Globe: Croatia, Italy, Mexico, Greece, China, Japan, Germany, Wales, and England to service the transcontinental railroad running through the community. The **CITY** has long occupied a unique relationship with the Navajo Nation and its people, in comparison to other border towns. While that relationship has at times been fraught with tension and animosity, it has usually been characterized by mutual respect and benefit. A recent shining example of the quality and level of cooperation is the successful joint achievement of the Navajo Nation and the **CITY** in turning the dream of the Navajo/Gallup San Juan Water Pipeline into reality. In order to build upon the past and improve the future, this MOA is entered into with a spirit of multi-cultural harmony.”

According to research by Paul Benedict on the Western New Mexico University Gallup Studies Center website, Gallup “was the only community that refused to intern its Japanese residents,” during World War II.

Navajo Nation Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan, Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission Chair Duane H. Yazzie, Gallup Mayor Harry H. Mendoza and the U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service Consolation Specialist Grace Sage Musser, Ph.D., will sign the formal agreement at an official signing ceremony at a press conference on a date to be determined.

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