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THE NAVAJO NATION

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Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprises celebrates Grand Opening of Quality Inn Lake Powell hotel, restaurant

PAGE, Ariz. – Hefting a pair of oversized scissors, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., cut the ribbon to commemorate the Grand Opening of the third Navajo Nation Quality Inn Hotel and Restaurant here Nov. 7.



Before a packed banquet room of 150 people, the Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise Board formally welcomed Navajos from the surrounding area and non-Navajo Page residents to the Quality Inn Lake Powell it purchased some four months ago.

The 30-year-old Page landmark sits on the edge of Manson Mesa, which became known as Page in 1958, once a dusty little government town born for the construction of the Glen Canyon Dam. Now it's an important Arizona and Utah tourist destination.

Outside large windows of the banquet room is an awesome view of the Paria and Kaiparowits Plateaus, Glen Canyon Dam and the Colorado River Gorge.

The Grand Opening of the Navajo Nation's Quality Inn Lake Powell is celebrated with a ribbon-cutting by Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr. Observing the happy occasion, from left to right, is Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise Board Vice Chairman Lawrence Platero, member Orlanda Hodge, Chairman Lorenzo Max and Marketing Director Donovan Hanley.

Lorenzo Max, chairman of the hospital enterprise board, said the purchase of the hotel is somewhat of a homecoming for Navajos.

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He noted that the area was once a part of Navajos' ancestral homeland bordered by the mighty and sacred Colorado River. Purchasing the hotel and restaurant was like getting a piece of it back, he said.

"It's very hard for us to be separated by a fence and boundaries," Mr. Max said.

"Purchasing and operating the Quality Inn in Page is restoring a small piece of land back to fold of the Navajo Nation."

Joining Mr. Max and the President was hospitality enterprise board Vice Chairman Lawrence Platero and members Orlanda Hodge and Allen

Preparing treats for the Grand Opening are food service department members Kyle J. Keith, left, and Wallisa John. Cutting the cake is Laurie Parsons, director of food and beverage.

Nailla. Also there was former Miss Navajo Nation Jannalee Atcitty, Navajo Nation Council Delegate Tom LaPahe, hotel managers Stan and Cindy Sapp and general manager Randy Wolff.

Mr. Max said this is the first hotel that the hospitality board has purchased off of the Navajo Nation. One of the board's mission goals, he said, is to reacquire properties in other communities.

President Shirley said the purchase of this hotel and restaurant is like planting seeds for the future prosperity, independence and sovereignty of the Navajo Nation and its people.

He expressed appreciation to the board for working with the Navajo Nation Council's Economic Development Committee to enable it to purchase the hotel, which will allow the Navajo Nation to strengthen its economy and provide jobs for its citizens.

At one time before foreigners came to this continent and this land, he said, the Navajo people took care of all of their own needs. Now, as a people they are working their way back to that independence through education and business development.

"I'd like to see us standing on our own feet, not dependent on anybody," the President said. "I know talking to our elderly, our medicine people, that we were once like that."

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He said well-run businesses like the Navajo Nation Quality Inn hotels are about making money, and that “the more money you have, the more independence you have.”

“We’re on our way to getting back that independence,” he said. “The more jobs, the more independence.”

Mr. Platero, who is also the Navajo Economic Development Committee chairman, welcomed the people of Page who came to the Grand Opening, saying they made Navajos feel welcome.

“I also want to thank the people who vacuum the hallways, who do the dishes, who make the food, the people who do the work,” he said. “As a member of the management board, we’re very glad that we have you as a staff.”

He said the hospitality enterprise board promotes tourism, and that is what the Navajo Nation is all about.

“Come in and see what it’s like,” he beckoned. “But leave your money.”

Entertainment was provided by the Peshlakai Family.

The Blue Corn Restaurant will be the only place in Page where traditional Navajo food of mutton stew, ribs and blue corn mush will be served each week.

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ADDITIONAL SOURCES:

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