

Contact: Karen Francis, Public Information Officer
Navajo Nation Council Office of the Speaker
(928) 871-7160
karenfrancis@navajo.org
www.navajonationcouncil.org

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NAVAJO NATION VISITS LAWRENCE LIVERMORE NATIONAL LAB

By Steve Grey

Members of the Navajo Nation Council visited Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Lawrence, California last week. Honorable Lawrence T. Morgan, Speaker of the Council, headed the delegation from the Navajo Nation, which also included Council delegates Mel R. Begay, Ralph Bennett, Young Jeff Tom and Tom M. White, Jr. The Navajo Nation has the largest tribal legislative council comprised of 88 members within a tribal government of 8,000 employees.

Of the 556 federally recognized tribes the Navajo Nation is the largest energy-producing tribe in the country. It has vast amounts of coal, oil and gas along with other natural resources within the 27,000 square miles of Navajo land which spreads across three states. The Navajo Nation is larger than many states such as West Virginia.

The visit was made to discuss with senior laboratory officials partnership and collaboration opportunities and to tour the Laboratory. The tribal delegation mentioned that national laboratories are truly a national resource and that tribes can benefit tremendously from partnering with them. The delegation mentioned that utilizing the Laboratory as a third party technical advisor would help the tribe as it makes important decisions. The tribal delegation got a chance to visit the National Ignition Facility, National Atmospheric Release Advisory and the Advanced Simulation Computing centers.

Speaker Morgan mentioned that he was very impressed with the research facility and impressed with the number of Navajo students that had worked at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory over the years. He mentioned that the tribe faces many technical issues daily and has a major need for science and technology personnel from the tribe to address such issues. The Speaker was also pleased that the DOE/LLNL field office, located in Shiprock, N.M., is still serving the tribes in and around Navajo. The office is a facility that serves both DOE and its National Laboratories as it works with tribes. Steve Grey, manager of the office recently served as DOE Indian Affairs Director at the Washington, D.C headquarters.

The delegation heard first hand about some of the work the Laboratory is doing with clean coal technology, CO2 sequestration regarding emissions, membrane technology

and other energy research. A \$2.5 billion state of the art power plant with a 500-mile transmission line is being proposed to be built on the Navajo Nation. Speaker Morgan mentioned that the power would be shipped to markets in California, Nevada and southern Arizona which impacts many of people at the Laboratory. The nation already provides coal to six other regional power plants. This is the largest venture any tribe has pursued and along with that comes topics of emissions, water, and other environmental issues. The delegation had many questions about education and opportunities for tribal members in the National Laboratory system.

The Speaker thanked Laboratory officials for the invitation and for upholding the Department of Energy Indian Policy to work directly with tribes. The Laboratory was the first National Laboratory to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with a tribal institution (Diné College) and with a tribe (Navajo). That agreement still holds today. Ron Cochran, Laboratory Executive Officer, hosted the visitors and said that the Laboratory is very proud of its record to work with tribes such as the Navajo Nation. Mr. Cochran offered his continued support on behalf of the Laboratory.

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Contact: grey1@lnl.gov