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BIA Budget Calls for Renovation of Tuba City Jail

Plan Reflects Extensive Efforts by the Navajo Nation Council Public Safety Committee

Window Rock, Arizona, Navajo Nation - The budget justification from the Department of the Interior for FY 2007 proposes expending \$3.8 million for renovation of four Indian country detention facilities, including the Western Navajo Detention Center in Tuba City, Arizona.

"This is good news and proof that the Public Safety Committee's exhaustive lobbying effort with the BIA and with The White House is bearing fruit," Navajo Nation Council Public Safety Chairwoman Hope MacDonald-LoneTree said. Chairwoman MacDonald-LoneTree added, "The Western Navajo Detention Center (e.g. the Tuba City Adult Jail) is on the verge of being shuttered. Either a complete renovation or the construction of a new facility must be undertaken soon."

The BIA FY 2007 Budget Justification states: "Many of the [Western Navajo] detention building systems have exceeded their useful life and temporary repairs have been made to keep the aging systems and components operable. Required repairs and improvements to the facility are numerous and necessary. The current FCI is 0.1237 (poor). Work performed on the law enforcement center will complete the identified critical health and safety code deficiencies. The potential FCI is 0.000 (good)"

At the invitation of the Navajo Nation Council Public Safety Committee, and with the assistance of Congressman Rick Renzi, an official from the White House Office of Management and Budget toured the Tuba City facility just over a year ago. "Because of that first hand view of the decrepit conditions at the Tuba City jail, the White House has supported renovation funds in its budget plans for FY 2007," noted Public Safety Committee Chair Hope MacDonald-LoneTree.

Chairwoman MacDonald-LoneTree added, "Over the last several years, we have met repeatedly with senior White House and numerous other Federal officials in an effort to elevate law enforcement and detention center funding for Navajo. Notably, in the last two years, funding for law enforcement has climbed 13.8 percent when nearly all other Indian programs have been stagnant or lost ground. Now, with the BIA's plan to address

the Western Navajo Detention Center, the Committee's efforts are paying off in the detention area as well."

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