

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Monday, October 02, 2006

COUNCIL HAS FULL AGENDA FOR FALL SESSION

It appears that the 20th Navajo Nation Council has a full agenda for its last regular session scheduled for October 16-20, 2006.

Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale) presented his recommendation for the fall session agenda to the Ethics and Rules Committee on Friday, September 29, 2006. Navajo Nation law requires that regular session agendas be adopted at least 15 days prior to the session.

Oral reports are required to be heard on the first day of session. The Council is scheduled to hear reports from President Joe Shirley on the state of the nation; Congressman Rick Renzi; Speaker Morgan and the DNA People's Legal Services on hate crimes in border towns; Katherine Benally (Dennehotso) and the Tom Claw family on discrimination by law enforcement agencies of Coconino County and City of Flagstaff; the DWI Resource Center; the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission on water rights issues; and three candidates for United States Congress, including Albert D. Kissling, Susan Friedman and Ellen Simon.

Under Old Business, the agenda includes legislation to enact the Fairness in Appropriations Act and four separate supplemental budget requests in the amounts of \$70,000 for the Navajo Nation administrative area in Window Rock, \$275,463.27 for the Department of Criminal Investigations to pay outstanding costs for autopsy services, \$1 million to design, develop and implement a skilled nursing facility in Fort Defiance, and \$149,574.17 to implement a photograph card system.

There are a five supplemental requests from the undesignated, unreserved fund balance under New Business, including requests for \$3,750,000 for the Raytheon Expansion Project; \$150,000 for Fort Wingate High School for Navajo language program; \$94,800 for purchase and relocation of two modular corrections facilities in Tuba City; \$500,000 for constructing the Alamo Mini-Mart; and \$26,400 for poll official stipends. There is also legislation to adopt a five-year plan for expenditure of the permanent fund income.

Other pieces of legislation relating to finance that are on the agenda for Council consideration include establishment of the Gaming Development Fund, enacting the Veterans Trust Fund Amendments Act of 2006, approving \$1,234,000 from the fund income of the Land Acquisition Trust Fund to purchase Counselor Trading Post Properties, establishing the Historical Trust Asset Mismanagement Litigation

Trust Fund; and approval of amendments to the Navajo Nation Sales Tax. The amendments to the sales tax, sponsored by Keel Allen Begay (Many Farms/Round Rock), would increase current sales tax by one cent to benefit judiciary and public safety initiatives.

While the Council is set to congratulate the Ramah High School Lady Mustang Basketball Team for its 2A State Championship and the Gallup High School Lady Bengals Basketball Team for its State 5A Girls State Championship, as well as expressing condolences to the late Tommy Chavez, former Council delegate, Speaker Morgan is sponsoring legislation that would authorize the speaker to issue certificates of condolence, congratulations, appreciation and recognition of achievement on behalf of the Council. The change could save the Legislative Branch thousands of dollars and allow for a more efficient and time-saving process for Council and for those being recognized. The proposed amendment is one change recommended in a report issued by the National Conference of State Legislatures to make the Council more effective and efficient.

A recommendation issued by the speaker during his report at the summer session to establish a Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission is being followed through with legislation this session. Council delegate Ervin Keeswood (Hogback) is sponsoring the enactment of such a commission to address problems with racial discrimination in border towns surrounding the Navajo Nation.

The fall session agenda also includes several items related to elections such as amendments to residency requirements for the Office of the President and Vice President, proposals to refer a referendum vote to amend the number of Council delegates, and amendments to the Election Code to clarify qualifications provisions for elective positions.

There are separate proposals to approve the Navajo Nation Motor Vehicle Authority Act, the Board of Education Age Qualifications Act of 2006 and the Navajo Technical College Act of 2006. Amendments are further being proposed for the Eastern Navajo Agency Land Boards and to the Navajo Nation Civil Trespass Act.

There are two pieces of legislation that affect Hogback Chapter including a memorandum of agreement between the chapter and the Navajo Nation concerning possible revenue sharing if gaming should occur within the Chapter and a proposal to change the name of the chapter to Tse'Daa'Kaan Chapter.

The Council is also set to consider confirmation of Shawn Attakai as the Judicial Branch's nominee for the Commission on Navajo Government Development.

The proposed agenda will be made available on the Navajo Nation Council website.