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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Speaker Morgan looks forward to many more years of hearing the 'Voice of the Navajo Navajo'

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz. – Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale) said he looks forward to many more years of hearing the “Voice of the Navajo Nation,” that is the distinctive phrase used to identify commercial AM radio station, KTNN-AM, which is part of the Native Broadcast Enterprise entity that ceremoniously broke ground Monday, April 2, for a new multi-media Diné Media Center.

Speaker Morgan who sent his cultural liaison, Zane James, to represent his office said he has complete confidence that North American Building and Development Construction Company owned by Will Graven.

“Thank you, Will Gravens, for coming to Navajo to share with us your expertise and skills,” James said for Speaker Morgan during the groundbreaking event that was attended by about 100 people. “The project that you are about to undertake will leave a long and lasting impression of your company and our partnership.”

James thanked everyone “who had an input into this excellent project,” on Speaker Morgan’s behalf.

“I look forward to many more years of hearing the ‘Voice of the Navajo Nation’ over the day and night skies,” James said resonating Speaker Morgan’s written message. “On behalf of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, I wish KTNN, and its sister station, KWRK, and Native Broadcast Enterprise, the best of fortune in the coming years, and I encourage them to continue to maintain the excellence that they are known for.”

Other Navajo leaders in attendance during the ceremonial groundbreaking were Navajo President Joe Shirley Jr.; Vice-President Ben Shelly; former Navajo tribal chairman Peter MacDonald and James. Also in attendance were the Native Broadcast Enterprise Staff such as General Manager Chester Francis and sales associate Steward Begay. KTNN-AM radio announcer Paul Jones served as the ceremony’s master of ceremonies.

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“We all had one mind when we all started talking about this,” said NBE vice-chairperson member council delegate Ralph Bennett (Crystal/Red Lake/Sawmill). “The groundbreaking ceremony was good, the leaders there were reminiscent of when the AM radio station, KTNN, signed about 20 years ago, and up-to-date.”

Bennett added that Speaker Morgan’s words of strong support concurred with President’s Shirley message of “let’s go with it!”

Bennett said he and the NBE board members bought the parcel of land about a year ago, and have a long-term goal of having a multi-media journalism, broadcasting and mass communications training center for Navajos interested in careers in the mass communications field.

“We want to incorporate television, radio and especially satellite radio into a multimedia center,” Bennett said, adding that it would be special for Navajos to build to have a satellite radio distribution center.

The new Diné Media Center is planned to be more than 18,000 sq. ft. located on the Karigan Estates land tract in St. Michaels. The stations’ parent-company, NBE, purchased the nearly two acres of land last year.

“This is historic for NBE and we’re so excited!” said NBE Management Board Chairwoman, Tina James-Tafoya. “The staff really needs to be commended for making the best out of this current station for so long.”

The station is a “culmination of several structures, including a portable building, which was donated by a tribal department during the mid-1980s and several additions built on throughout the years,” according to the ceremony’s agenda.

Plans for the media center are not complete, but so the plans include new studios, offices, a board room and serious consideration of installing a television studio, according to the NBE ceremony agenda. Additionally, there will also be opportunities for other businesses to rent office spaces at the new facility.

“Financing the multi-million dollar facility is a big challenge, but it’s not stopping us,” James-Tafoya said. “This is going to be a huge investment for us and we are looking at several sources, including the Navajo Nation council, who has always been good to us.”

The NBE staff include Francis; Linda Ross, administrative assistant; Jay Allen, station manager; Troy Little, sales manager; Ernest Manuelito, chief engineer; Ray Tsosie, lead air talent; Lulla Bowman, traffic director; Kimber Kirk, bookkeeper; Sarah Begay, assistant traffic director; Stanley Benally, sales account executive; Edmund Cicarello, sales account executive; Begay; Marcia Peshlakai, promotions coordinator; Kathy Jones, receptionist; L.A. Williams, Sports/Rodeo Director; Jones; Leander Moffit, KWRK radio announcer; Sammy Boyd, radio announcer; Roy Keeto, radio announcer; Leanderson “Bandit” Shay, board operator and Gerard Harvey, custodian.

The NBE management board members are James -Tafoya, chairwoman; Bennett; Kirby Bedonie, secretary; Caroline M. Tom, member and Edward Perkins, members.