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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Navajo Nation Judiciary Committee meets with Utah Gov. Jon M. Huntsman Jr. at the Aneth Chapter**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Nation Judiciary Committee met with Utah Gov. Jon M. Huntsman Jr. and several of his staff on June 28, 2007 at the Aneth Chapter House to present him with a \$6 million funding proposal for a court facility.

The funding proposal for \$6,495,154 is for a court facility on the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation. The court facility will serve Aneth, Utah; Oljato, Utah; Dennehotso, Ariz.; Mexican Water, Utah; Navajo Mountain, Utah, Red Mesa, Ariz.; Rock Point, Ariz.; Sweetwater, Ariz. and TeecNosPos, Ariz.

The approximate population served will be 10,685 people, and the court facility will handle about 4,000 cases per year, according to Kee Allen Begay Jr., Judiciary Committee Chairperson.

“This meeting shows a positive working relationship is in place,” Begay said, pointing out that Gov. Huntsman is acknowledging Native American issues in the state of Utah. “This is an example that we are working with a top state official, and for Gov. Huntsman to work with us at the chapter level is commendable.”

Begay added that the meeting is indicative of how the Navajo Nation is exercising his sovereign status by meeting “government-to-government,” with the Gov. Huntsman and his staff.

Gov. Huntsman expressed his gratitude to the local community for the invitation and the warm welcome he received, and he indicated that he has scheduled this trip to visit the Navajo Nation to gather information and issues of the Navajo people.

He acknowledged the need of court service within the region of the Navajo Nation, and acknowledged that the Navajo Nation is a sovereign nation.

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## **Page 2-2-2/Begay/Judiciary Committee and Gov. Huntsman Meeting**

Begay along with Honorable Chief Justice Herb Yazzie presented Gov. Huntsman a joint statement that said discussed the effort of establishing judicial service for the Utah portion of the Navajo Nation and the effort of Navajo Government providing temporary court facility.

Additionally, the Begay and Chief Justice Yazzie statement pointed out that some court cases are gives some families' hardship of the current distance they have to travel for court services.

The joint statement also said that there needs to be a close working relationship with the off-reservation Utah businesses to resolve matters, and this effort is a lead example of government to government cooperation. Finally, the joint statement said that there needs to be a closer relationship between the Utah Courts and Navajo Courts.

Begay who represents the Many Farms and Round Rock Chapters said that Brent Johnson, Utah Administrative Office of the Courts General Counsel, acknowledged the need of a court service to the Navajo Nation, and a working relationship with the state of Utah.

Begay said that Johnson provided a lengthy process of the request, and he indicated that he will work closely with the Navajo Nation and Judiciary Committee on the funding request and the establishment of a court facility.

"Governor Huntsman is very impressive and he allowed himself and his staff to listen to the proposal," said council delegate Nelson Gorman (Chinle). "The local chapter also showed their leadership of providing necessary information in the development of the chapter."

Council delegate Raymond Berchman (Oak Springs/St. Michaels) said that he observed several things, too.

"The committee will need to actively start working with the Utah State Government as the committee has done with the state of Arizona," Berchman said. "I fully support the effort of the court facility establishment."

Begay said the meeting was productive, and he appreciated numerous aspects of the meeting.

"I just want to thank for everyone's attendance and cooperation of their full support," Begay said. "He wants quality Navajo Court Service for Navajo People and Non-Navajo People"

Participants during the meeting include the Navajo Nation Judiciary Committee Members; the Aneth Court staff; Judicial Branch Administrator Edward Martin; Council delegates Kenneth Maryboy (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa) and former council delegate Mark Maryboy (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa); Harrison Tsosie, Deputy Attorney General; Clarence Rock, Executive Director of the Utah Navajo Commission; Aneth Chapter Officials; Aneth community members.

The Utah Governors staff included Neil Ashdown, Gayle McKeachnie, Tani Pack Downing, Christine Kearl, Lisa Roskelley and Palmer DePaulis.