



NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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Window Rock, Navajo Nation (Arizona) 86515

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 31, 2012

Media Contact: Rachele Todea
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NNHRC to Hold Next Public Hearing about Predatory Auto Sales Tactics in Crownpoint

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission will hold a public hearing on **January 4, 2013 at 10 a.m.**, at the **Crownpoint Chapter House** in Crownpoint, Navajo Nation (NM) for Navajo citizens who want to share their experience on border town auto dealers' predatory sales practices. The January 4th public hearing will be held during a regular Commissioner's meeting and is open to the public.

An example of a predatory sales tactic includes a customer having their keys or driver's license withheld and this coerces them to cave into pressure and sign a contract with unfavorable terms at high interest rate. Tactics like this often times result in creating bad credit where the dealer benefits, leaving the customer victimized.

NNHRC encourages those who feel they've been victimized by predatory sales tactics to attend and provide testimony about title loans as a down payment, repos, electronic lock outs, repeatedly being asked to return to the dealer, deceptive marketing tactics like bait and switch, or unusually high interest rates.

After providing a testimony, NNHRC urges Navajo citizens to file a written complaint with NNHRC. When a complaint is filed with supporting documents, NNHRC will formally review it.

NNHRC also urges Navajo citizens to complete a voluntary survey which will be given to participants who attend the public hearings. To take part in the survey, call NNHRC and a staff member will mail or e-mail it to you.

NNHRC advocates for the recognition of Navajo human rights and addresses discriminatory actions against the citizens of the Navajo Nation. For more information, call the NNHRC office at (928) 871-7436 or visit the NNHRC website at www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 28, 2012

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Today, NNHRC to Hold Public Hearing about Predatory Auto Sales Tactics in Kayenta

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission will hold a public hearing today at **10 a.m.** at the **Kayenta Chapter House** in Kayenta, Navajo Nation (AZ) for Navajo citizens who want to share their experience of predatory auto sales tactics from border town auto dealers.

An example of a predatory sales tactic includes a customer having their keys or driver's license withheld and this coerces them to cave into pressure and sign a contract with unfavorable terms at high interest rate. Tactics like this often times result in creating bad credit where the dealer benefits, leaving the customer victimized.

NNHRC encourages those who feel they've been victimized by predatory sales tactics to attend and provide testimony about title loans as a down payment, repos, electronic lock outs, repeatedly being asked to return to the dealer, deceptive marketing tactics like bait and switch, or unusually high interest rates.

After providing a testimony, NNHRC urges Navajo citizens to file a written complaint with NNHRC. When a complaint is filed with supporting documents, NNHRC will formally review it.

NNHRC also urges Navajo citizens to complete a voluntary survey which will be given to participants who attend the public hearings. To take part in the survey, call NNHRC and a staff member will mail or e-mail it to you.

NNHRC will hold an additional public hearing about this issue at the **Crownpoint Chapter House** in Crownpoint, Navajo Nation (NM) on **January 4, 2013 at 10 a.m.** The January 4th public hearing will be held during a regular Commissioner's meeting and is open to the public.

NNHRC advocates for the recognition of Navajo human rights and addresses discriminatory actions against the citizens of the Navajo Nation. For more information, call the NNHRC office at (928) 871-7436 or visit the NNHRC website at www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov.

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For Immediate Release
December 27, 2012

President Shelly Congratulates Navajo Nation Band on Selection of Inaugural Parade Participation



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.- Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly congratulates the Navajo Nation Band on their selection to march in the Jan. 21 Inaugural Parade in Washington, D.C.

Following the Swearing-in Ceremony of President Barack Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden and an inaugural luncheon, the parade will commence down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House.

“I am very proud of the Navajo Nation Band on their selection to the Inaugural Parade. Our Navajo people hold many talents and to play their musical instruments, before the President of the United States, is a honor and privilege,” President Shelly stated.

The Navajo Nation Band was once known as the Navajo Tribal Band participated in the inaugural parades for President John F. Kennedy on January 20, 1961 and President Richard M. Nixon on January 20, 1973. The Navajo Nation Band will be making an appearance after 39 years.

Between April and November, the Navajo Nation Band has participated in three large events, The Red Earth Festival in Oklahoma City, Okla., America's Freedom Festival in Provo, Utah and the Sun Bowl Parade in El Paso, Texas.

Band members voluntarily join and are required to provide their own instruments and uniforms. However, funding is provided for reimbursement.

"The dedication of the Navajo Nation Band members is outstanding. They have a lot of discipline to practice on their own, provide their own instruments and travel. Their presence in parades is always noticed and enjoyed. We are glad the people of the United States will get to see the talents of the Navajo Nation," President Shelly stated.

The Navajo Nation Band has 70 active members this year but 85 participants, including a drum major, musicians, banner carriers, honor guard, flag and support team, will be traveling via coach bus to the inaugural parade. Tentative departure is set for Jan. 18 and a return on Jan. 24.

"We have several rehearsals set up before we leave on our journey to Washington, D.C. The members will be practicing more than ever so they can be ready to go and perform their best. Expectations are high. Mostly because it may be the closest any one of us will get to see the President of the United States," Valerie T. Harrison, administrative coordinator for the Navajo Nation Band stated.

The Navajo Nation Band is seeking sponsorship for travel and lodging expenses. Expense assistance may contact the Executive Director of Navajo Human Resources Division here in Window Rock, Ariz. as soon as possible at (928) 871-6377 or email at navajonationband_wr@yahoo.com.

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For Immediate Release
December 24, 2012

Navajo President Shelly Presents \$300,000 Check to NCI



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly (center) signs a \$300,000 check for Na'Nizhoozhi Center Inc. President Shelly is surrounded by NCI staff and staff from the Navajo Division of Health.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly presented a \$300,000 check on Monday morning to Na'Nizhoozhi Center Inc., a detox facility that utilizes traditional and Western philosophies to encourage sobriety.

“Today, the Office of the President and Vice President, the Division of Health, and the Department of Behavioral Health Services is providing an award of an additional \$300,000 to NCI to help and assist their mission,” President Shelly said before he presented the check to NCI Executive Director Jay Azua.

“I’m grateful to the President for taking time out on Christmas Eve to present us a check,” Azua said.

NCI’s detox program services between 24,000 to 30,000 people annually.

“This money will get us through the winter and allow us to continue our operations,” Azua said.

Since 2003, the Navajo Nation has granted more than \$13 million to NCI to help with operations, which included a \$400,000 award from the Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health in March.

President Shelly said today’s check must go directly to direct services costs.

“These funds are allocated only for direct service and not for attorney fees, single audits, and bonuses for staff,” President Shelly said. “The funds will be used for our relatives who struggle with alcohol and substance abuse who are at risk of exposure during the harsh winter months.”

President Shelly added that alcohol and substance abuse increase risk of exposure.

“We have family members and relatives that are struggling with alcohol and substance abuse which takes them from their homes and brings them to border towns” President Shelly said, “Because of their struggles, they are most vulnerable to exposure and that brings me great concern,”

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For Immediate Release
December 23, 2012

Navajo First Lady and President Help Deliver Toys to Tuba City Children

TUBA CITY, Ariz. – Navajo Nation First Lady Martha Shelly helped deliver and hand out more than 8,000 toys to Tuba City youth last Monday and Tuesday.

The Office of the First Lady and the Native American Toys for Tots Program coordinated The Toys for Tots toy giveaway.

“I am thankful that some of our children will have toys this Christmas. I’m thankful to the Toys for Tots program for helping us get toys to our young ones. It makes me feel good to see the children smile when they get a gift,” First Lady Shelly said.

First Lady Shelly and President Ben Shelly were in Tuba City for two days helping Lt. Col. Peter Tagni, coordinator for the Native American Toys for Tots program. The trio gave out gifts to the young people of Tuba City. About 8,000 gifts were distributed in Tuba City and about 80,000 Navajo Nation wide.

“I’m thankful that we can help the children of the Navajo Nation and other Native American tribes. I can see the happiness and it makes me feel good,” said Tagni, who is retired from the Marine Corps and has been coordinating the Native American Toys for



Navajo President Shelly (left) stands with First Lady Martha Shelly and Lt. Col. Peter Tagni, Native American Toys for Tots program, as children from Tuba City Head Start open their gifts.



Tots program for 30 years.

Tagni was honored at an appreciation dinner on Tuesday and received a Pendleton robe.

Lt. Col. Peter Tagni (front left) sits with Navajo Nation First Lady Martha Shelly and Navajo President Ben Shelly as eighth grade students from Tuba City Middle School display their gifts from Toys for Tots.

President and First Lady Shelly assisted Tagni starting Monday morning by handing out toys to students at Eagle Nest Intermediate School. Students lined up and were divided into two lines, one for boys and the other for girls. The gifts were age appropriate.

Monday afternoon, gifts of watches, books, basketballs, and digital cameras were passed to the seventh and eighth grade students of Tuba City Middle School.

The next day, gifts were given to the Head Start classes in Tuba City, followed by an assembly for the community and Tuba City High School students, which featured Soulfly singer Massimiliano Cavallera.

“Don’t give up you dreams,” Cavallera said. “Once you achieve your dreams, you will be able to help others who need help.”

President Shelly also spoke and geared his message to the parents in the in audience.

“I want our kids to be standing on top of the world,” President Shelly told the audience at Tuba City High School. “It’s up to you, the parents, to make that happen for them.”

Toys for Tots gave out more than 200,000 toys were given out to Native American children throughout the Holiday season.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 23, 2012

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Law and Order Committee hears report on the status of current tribal-state gaming compact negotiation discussions with New Mexico

WINDOW ROCK – The Law and Order Committee accepted a report on Dec. 17 by the Navajo Nation Department of Justice and learned more about the direction the Navajo Nation might be headed in early 2013 as it continues to negotiate a tribal-state gaming compact with the State of New Mexico. The report was accepted with a vote of 4-0.

The current 2001 Compact the Nation signed onto with four other tribes in New Mexico is set to expire in June 2015, reported DOJ attorneys Karis Begaye and LaTonia Becenti Johnson, both members of the Nation’s compact negotiations team.

The Nation’s goal during the negotiations process, said Begaye, is to have the new gaming compact amendments formally prepared in time for consideration by New Mexico State Legislature during its 2013 Regular Session, which begins next month on Jan 15 and ends on Mar.16.

Johnson said since November the Nation’s negotiations team has been meeting weekly with New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez’s appointed Lead Negotiator, Jessica Hernandez, in anticipation of the 2013 legislative session.

Before the negotiated compact amendments can be considered for approval or disapproval by the full New Mexico State Legislature, the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee will need to approve them first.

“We’re here today to get you to start thinking about this, and get it on your radar,” explained Begaye, who added that there is large concern with getting the compact amendment legislation reviewed by the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee in time.

The urgency to get the amendments considered during the 2013 regular session exists because the following year, the 2014 regular session is scheduled to only be a short 30-day budget session. During that session, state lawmakers will only consider fiscal budget items.

DOJ advised against aiming for the 2015 session because there is a possibility that a new governor will be elected in office and may not want to sign a compact agreement that was negotiated on by the prior governor’s administration. At that point, negotiations would have to restart from the beginning.

In response to a question posed by Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K’ai Bii’Tó, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake) on what would happen if the Nation does not have a compact in place by the expiration date, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise chief executive officer Derrick Watchman said there is a “remote chance” that the Department of Interior will “step in and force a compact.”

“That is most likely what’s going to happen” if the 2015 deadline is not met, said Watchman. “But we’re going to get this done this January, February, and March,” he reassured.

Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) was of the opinion that the State of New Mexico should be negotiating an exclusive compact with the Navajo Nation because the Nation's gaming situation differs from those of other New Mexico tribes and, in addition, has a larger land base.

Responding to Delegate Begaye, Heather Clah, general counsel for the Office of the President and Vice-President, stated that it is still the Nation's position that a "true government-to-government" negotiation dialogue would mean that the state should negotiate an individual compact with the Nation, instead of one general compact to which the Nation would be party to with other tribes.

However, Clah said if the Nation were to negotiate an individual compact with the State, according to the New Mexico Compact Negotiation Act, other tribes have the opportunity to sign onto that compact. At that point, the compact would not be exclusive between the Nation and New Mexico.

"Our sovereignty means a lot on the Navajo Nation," said Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Cornfields, Ganado, Jeddito, Kin Dah Łichíí', Steamboat), after thanking the compact negotiations team for continuing to push the Nation's positions on the gaming issues that are unique on the Navajo Nation.

The Naa'biik'iyati' Gaming Task Force subcommittee is comprised of Council Delegates LoRenzo Bates (Chair), Edmund Yazzie (Vice-Chair), Speaker Johnny Naize, Joshua Lavar Butler, and Jonathan Hale.

Along with the Gaming Task Force and DOJ, other key representatives from the Navajo Nation who have been involved in the New Mexico gaming compact negotiations include the Office of President and Vice-President, the Office of Legislative Counsel, Office of the Speaker, Office of Legislative Services, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, and the Navajo Gaming Regulatory Office.

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For Immediate Release
December 21, 2012

President Shelly Orders the Navajo Flag to Fly at Half-Staff to Commemorate Victims of School Shooting

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly ordered the Navajo Nation Flag be flown at half-staff in honor of families who are mourning the loss of loved ones as a result of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings.

President Shelly ordered the Navajo Nation flag be flown at half-staff beginning today through sundown on Monday, Dec. 24.

President Shelly released the following statement:

“ Today, in honor of the victims whose lives were tragically cut short last week at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and as we join America in solidarity of recognizing this tragic event, I order that the Navajo Nation Flag to be flown at half-staff from today through sundown, Monday, December 24.

During this time, I ask that we cherish our children and remember that life is precious. As many in America have called for a moments of silence, ringing of bells or performing 26 good deeds, as President of the Navajo Nation, I ask each of you to offer prayers to the victim’s families as they mourn. I also ask that you pray for our Navajo children so that their wellbeing will remain intact. And also offer prayers for our educators who work tirelessly to brighten the future of our children.

Though Sandy Hook Elementary School is hundreds of miles to the east, I encourage schools on the Navajo Nation and in surrounding communities to reevaluate their security plans and take precautionary measures as needed. Our children are our most precious resource. They have our dreams in their hands.”

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For Immediate Release
December 21, 2012

President Shelly Delivered Partnership Message at Navajo County Inauguration

HOLBROOK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly delivered a message of partnership with Navajo County at the Navajo County inaugural ceremony on Thursday.

“Days like today, we renew our commitment to the service of our constituents and our people. We renew our ideas to make our communities better. We remind ourselves the reason why we ran for office, because at the very core of who we are, regardless of party affiliation, we believe we can make a difference,” President Shelly stated.



(Left To Right) Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly stands with Navajo County Supervisor Jonathan Nez, Supervisor Sylvia Allen, Supervisor Dawnafe Whitesinger, and Supervisor Jesse Thompson.

President Shelly also commended Navajo county officials for the county’s redistricting efforts. Through joint effort, in 2011, comments and input were sought from the Navajo County public in regards to redistricting efforts along with the formation of a redistricting team that offered recommendations.

“I look forward to continue the good working relationship the Navajo Nation has with Navajo County. We also look forward to working with the White Mountain Apache Tribe as well and doing all we can to unify all of Navajo County. Our people in Navajo County have many needs, from roads, to water, to health care and public safety,” President Shelly stated.

The Navajo Nation recommended increasing the Native American Voting Age population in District 5, which resulted in electing Dawnafe Whitesinger, Navajo/White Mountain Apache, of Whiteriver, Ariz. to county supervisor seat.

“We had the honor of being joined by the President of the Navajo Nation Ben Shelly, who shared about the value of the County and the Navajo Nation continuing to partner together to better serve the citizens of the County,” stated re-elected County Supervisor Delegate Jonathan Nez of District I. Nez also serves on the Navajo Nation Council.

Jesse Thompson joined Dawnafe Whitesinger and Nez as three Navajos to serve on Navajo County Board of Supervisors.

Sheriff Kelly “KC” Clark, County Attorney Brad Carlyon, Assessor Cammy Darris, Treasurer Manuel “Manny” Hernandez, Recorder Laurette “Lori” Justman, Superintendent of Schools Linda L. Morrow, Superior Court Judge Robert J. Higgins, Superior Court Judge John Lamb, Superior Court Judge Michala Ruechel, Supervisor Nez, Supervisor Jesse Thompson and Supervisor David Tenney were sworn into previously held positions in the county. Supervisor Sylvia Allen (District III) and Supervisor Whitesinger (District V) were newly elected.

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December 21, 2012

Media Contact: Rachele Todea
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NNHRC to Hold Additional Public Hearings about Predatory Auto Sales Tactics

Navajo Human Rights officials respond to public interest & provide more public hearings

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission received a number of requests to host more public hearings from Navajo citizens who want to share their experience of predatory auto sales tactics from border town auto dealers. Public hearings are scheduled at **10 a.m.** at the **Kayenta Chapter House** in Kayenta, Navajo Nation (AZ) on **December 28, 2012** and at the **Crownpoint Chapter House** in Crownpoint, Navajo Nation (NM) on **January 4, 2013**.

The January 4th public hearing will be held during a regular Commissioner's meeting for January and is open to the public.

An example of a predatory sales tactic includes a customer having their keys or driver's license withheld and this coerces them to cave into pressure and sign a contract with unfavorable terms at high interest rate. Tactics like this often times result in creating bad credit where the dealer benefits leaving the customer victimized.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 20, 2012

Media Contact: Leonard Gorman
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Statement by the Navajo Nation Human Rights Executive Director *To welcome historic inauguration day in Navajo County of Arizona and commend its redistricting efforts*

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission's Executive Director welcomes the historic inauguration day in Navajo County of Arizona and commends the county's redistricting efforts with the following statement:

"I'd like to express my appreciation to Navajo county to not only solicit comments and input from all county citizens but more importantly for addressing the requirement of the Voting Rights Act Section 5 and that the county met with the Navajo Nation and incorporated the Navajo Nation's recommendation into the county's redistricting plan.

The Navajo Nation has taken very seriously the need to ensure that Navajo voting strength is enhanced and protected in districts that cover the Navajo Nation throughout the course of redistricting activities.

It also made a recommendation to the southern-most end of Navajo county in District 5 to increase the voting strength of White Mountain Apaches. The Navajo Nation recommended increasing the Native American Voting Age population in District 5, which resulted in electing a Native American to represent District 5.

NNHRC is very excited that the 1965 Voting Rights Act continues to have an impact in protecting minority voting strength."

*NNHRC and five Navajo Nation Council Delegates serving the Nation's redistricting workgroup whom are **Jonathan Nez** (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin), **Alton Joe Shepherd** (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat), **Leonard Tsosie** (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake), **Lorenzo Bates** (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland), and **Kenneth Maryboy** (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tolikan, Red Mesa) began in 2011 to ensure proper Navajo representation in Arizona redistricting efforts by enhancing Native Americans' voting power.*

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For Immediate Release
December 20, 2012

President Shelly Welcomed Navajo Nation's New Emergency Management Director

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President welcomed the Rose Whitehair as the new director of Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management.

“As leaders, we are always encouraging our children to become educated, get experience and come home to help our people. Ms. Whitehair has done that. She brings national expertise to our Department of Emergency Management. Her professional experience will also help improve emergency management from the chapter level upward,” President Shelly said.

Whitehair most recently work as a program manager for the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C. and started her new position with the Navajo Nation at the end of November.

Whitehair is To'aheedliinii and born for Tsin Sikaadnii.

“We are pleased to have Ms. Whitehair leading an important program within the Division of Public Safety. She has extensive experience at many different levels of emergency management. From the volunteer level through the ranks to her most recent work at NCAI. Her wealth of experience will help enhance our services,” Public Safety Director John Billison said.

Whitehair work experience began as volunteer fire fighter at the Window Rock Fire Department.

“They were tough on us,” she recalled about her training. She said she learned the importance of being responsible for personal safety in emergency situations.

Her experience eventually led her to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Medical Services from the University of New Mexico in 2002.

“My passion is emergency management and homeland security. I wanted to bring my passion and my focus to the Navajo Nation,” Whitehair said.

Whitehair said she wants to create programs for the chapters to become more engaged in planning for emergencies. She also wants to help establish a 911 alert system and train more people to respond to emergencies, who would eventually train others to respond to emergencies.

Whitehair added that her previous experience at the state of Arizona and National Congress of American Indians has broadened her network and wants to bring the network of professional contacts to the chapter level.

Whitehair worked previously for the Navajo Nation as a judicial liaison for the Navajo Chief Justice. She was also inducted into the International Women in Homeland Security and Emergency Management Hall of Fame in 2011.

“Ms. Whitehair’s knows many people throughout the country and knows many of the processes. Her experience at different levels make her an asset to the Navajo Nation,” President Shelly said.

Whitehair wants to help the Department of Emergency Management become better and make use of youth and elders.

“I look forward to bringing my experience from the state and national level to benefit my People. We will be consistently moving forward to strengthen preparedness and resiliency of our communities, especially with bridging the talent of our Diné youth with the expertise and training of our veterans, through the guidance of our elders,” Whitehair said.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Navajo Parks and Recreation Creating Business Opportunities”



Foreground: Navajo Nation Fair Sanitation Services.
Background: Navajo Nation Fair Security Services.

Window Rock, AZ – December 11, 2012 – Navajo Parks and Recreation Department will be hosting the first ever Procurement Fair by a Navajo Nation Department on January 9th, 2013 at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, AZ. Procurement Fairs offer networking opportunities with federal and local agencies, prime contractors, and small business contracting officers in one convenient location.

Navajo Parks and Recreation sends an open invitation to all those interesting in providing services or goods for the Navajo Nation Fair and Navajo Tribal Parks. The Procurement Fair will be open to all potential service providers specializing in large event production and park services from office supplies and feasibility study services, to professional services and government contracts, there are many opportunities for local companies to learn about how to do business with Navajo Nation departments.

Contract Compliance Officer Nate Boyd says, “this procurement fair will offer more opportunities for small businesses to know and understand what the fair and parks are in need of. Parks constantly needs services for improving their infrastructure. We look forward to networking with old and new Consultants and Contractors.”

Navajo Nation Business Regulatory, Department of Justice, Purchasing, Risk Management and representatives from the Office of the President and Vice President will be onsite to make resources available to businesses that may otherwise not have access without expending a great deal of time and effort. “We invited departments who are involved in the review process of contracts with the Navajo Nation to be available to answer questions and give presentations. As an added incentive, attendees who register at the procurement fair and submit their proposals will receive an automatic five points toward their evaluations” states, Navajo Parks and Recreation Director, Martin Begaye.

Registration for the Procurement fair will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 9:00 a.m. at the Navajo Nation Museum. A \$50 Registration Fee will be required for all service providers. For more information or a listing of current Request for Proposals or Request for Quotes please contact Navajo Parks and Recreation Contract Compliance Officers: Nathaniel Boyd 928-871-7053 or Regina Shebala at 928-871-7052. You may also download copies at www.navajonationfair.com.

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Navajo Parks and Recreation

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NDOT Department of Highway Safety stresses safety this holiday season



Navajo Division of Transportation heavy equipment operators began snow removal activities recently. Pictured here is a motor grader clearing Navajo Route 7, the main road to Sawmill, Ariz. on Dec. 15, 2012. Because of inclement weather conditions and the celebratory Christmas spirit so close to the holiday, the Department of Highway Safety warns all drivers to take extra precautions when traveling. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

The month of December marks the time of the holiday season when everything is in full swing and the first snowfalls are enjoyed around the Navajo Nation. It is also a time of festive celebration.

Among highway safety professionals, Dec. is known as “National Impaired Driving Awareness Month.”

President Barack Obama issued a national proclamation and said, “As Americans gather with friends and family to share in the holiday season, National Impaired Driving Prevention Month reminds us the importance of celebrating safely.

“Every year, accidents involving drunk, drugged, or distracted driving claim thou-

sands of lives, leaving families to face the heartbeat of losing a loved one. We stand with all those who have known the tragic consequences of drugged or drunk driving, and we rededicate ourselves to preventing it this Dec. and throughout the year,” President Obama added.

Also affecting our roadways is the inclement weather. While most enjoy the snowfall for the benefits of moisture, driving through inclement weather can be dangerous to individuals on our roadways.

Safety tips for this season include the three P’s of safe winter driving: Prepare for the trip, protect yourself, and prevent crashes on the road.

Motorists should maintain their vehicles, including

checking the battery, tire tread, and windshield wipers. Keep your windows clear by adding no-freeze fluid in your washer reservoir and checking your radiator’s antifreeze levels.

Additionally, motorists should keep a flashlight, jumper cables, shovel, snow, brush, ice scraper, blankets, and warning devices (like flares) in their vehicles. For longer trips, add food, water, medication, and cell phones.

Remember to add additional time to your travel. Check the weather and leave earlier to drive, if necessary. Familiarize yourself with map directions and be sure to let others know your route and arrival time.

Buckle up and use child safety seats properly. Slow down

and increase your distance between vehicles. Keep your eyes open for pedestrians walking the road and again, never use drugs or alcohol when driving.

This safety reminder is brought to you by the Navajo Division of Transportation Highway Safety Department. We remind the general public to be careful while traveling the roadways. Let’s make this a safe and happy holiday season.

Information:
www.navajodot.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 19, 2012

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Navajo Nation signs MOU as a first step to acquiring BNCC, secures revenue and Navajo jobs

WINDOW ROCK – On Dec. 18, the Navajo Nation and BHP Navajo Coal Company entered into a Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the transfer of ownership of BNCC to the Nation. The transfer of ownership is scheduled to be completed by June 2013.

Although the Navajo Nation will become the owner of BNCC, BHP Billiton will continue to manage the mine until 2016. After June 2013, the Nation will be full owners of BNCC.

The Nation began exploring the possibility of acquiring BNCC in October after it became apparent that the Navajo Mine would no longer meet BHP Billiton's investment criteria beyond 2016, which could have resulted in the closure of the Navajo Mine and jeopardized the operation of the Four Corners Power Plant.

During the Fall Council Session, Council approved supplemental funding in the amount of \$750,000 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance to begin assessing whether the nation could proceed with an acquisition of BNCC.

The approved funding was used to hire the following firms to assist the Nation in the process: Manatt, Phelps & Phillips; Pacific Economics Group and Rothstein/Kass; Navigant Consulting; The Brattle Group; Fredericks, Peebles & Morgan; and Behre Dolbear.

The MOU is the first step in ensuring the continued operation of the Navajo Mine, where 433 individuals are employed full-time – of which, eighty-five percent are Native American.

As part of the understanding, the Navajo Nation will continue to provide coal to the Four Corners Power Plant for fifteen years beginning in 2016.

“When it comes to the Navajo Nation's economy, it became necessary for us to make this move toward complete ownership in order to prevent a drastic loss in revenue,” Speaker Naize said in a letter to Navajo personnel employed at the mine.

Approximately thirty-two percent of the Nation's general fund revenue derives from current revenue from BNCC royalties and taxes. The understanding and eventual acquisition of the mine ensures that revenue and jobs are secure beyond 2016.

“It is our responsibility as leaders to ensure that we do everything we can to shield our people from the detrimental effects that a potential loss in revenue would have on the direct services and assistance our Nation provides to our people,” Speaker Naize said.

Although there may be critics of the Nation's decision to acquire BNCC, this is the first step of many for the Nation in securing and diversifying our future in energy development, Speaker Naize said, and it is the leadership's hope that we eventually move into sustainable sources of energy.

Speaker Naize also added that he has absolute confidence and trust in BHP's ability to oversee operations until 2016, and he was certain that the leadership made the best decision for the Nation.

Speaker Naize, President Ben Shelly, and the Office of the Attorney General signed the MOU on behalf of the Nation.

The Naa'bik'iyati' Committee received a report on the MOU on Dec. 18 from attorneys and staff who worked on the MOU on behalf of the Nation.

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For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 18, 2012

Speaker Johnny Naize's statement on the passing of Senator Daniel Inouye

Senator Inouye has always been a strong advocate for Native Peoples. More importantly, he was a friend to our causes. I will always remember and appreciate Senator Inouye's strong support for the Navajo Nation in securing funding for housing. Without his support, many Navajo families may still have been without housing. I am truly blessed to have worked with him and to have witnessed his leadership first hand. The Navajo Nation will forever remember his unrelenting support.

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For Immediate Release
December 15, 2012

President Shelly Concludes Israel Tour in Southern Towns and Farming Communities

SEDE BOQER, Israel— Wrapping up a week long tour of Israel in northern and southern cities and towns Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly spent their final day visiting farming communities including small business ventures in the Negev, a rural area of arid desert lands that borders Egypt and Jordan.

President Shelly met with Shai Hazaz, mayor of villages and kibbutz communities near Beersheba where thousands of desert acres have been transformed into economically sustainable farms.



President Shelly toured farms with local Mayor Shai Hazaz and toured an area in which 12,000 acres are farmed in a climate conditions similar to the Navajo Nation's.

“We talk a lot about green houses and technology,” said President Shelly after seeing drip irrigation farmlands and green houses that use computer aided control systems monitored from a cell phone. “This is an area where our communities would be interested. We can teach individual Navajos to use green houses—to be self-sufficient. That could be the second phase I would be interested in.”

Emphasizing Navajo Agricultural Products Industry the president proclaimed with its products speaking about fried bread with Navajo Pride flour. “We need to come to test it,” said Shai Hazaz, who accepted the president’s invitation to visit the Navajo Nation.

Farming communities with organic agricultural produce are packaged on a truck with a loading bay and placed on transports for immediate shipping to Russia and Europe upon harvesting. Left over produce on the field are open to community members at no cost. The Israeli government’s agricultural ministry works with local farming communities in providing water and certifies produce with organic labels.

In neighboring communities where green house are producing crops with the use of drip irrigation in rows of elevated fields, the president visited AMA Agriculture Industries with 12,000 acres of farming. The fields are monitored by sensors for sunlight, temperature, moisture saturation, and fertilization levels. Adjustments are made through a computer with designs for water efficiency and growth acceleration. The watering and fertilization system is centrally located in a control room to enable easier access to the system for maintenance, repairs, adjustments, and to keep the system operating with as little down time as possible.

President and First Lady Shelly also visited a community at the Mashabbim and Nizzana border crossing near Gaza in an arid, rocky desert climate where tourism and animal farms are the main methods of economic sustainability. The community resembling areas of the Navajo Nation serves as a bed and breakfast vacationing spot for Israelis who live in urban Israel and mostly Europeans throughout the year. Sheep and goats are raised in these communities.

“Seeing these communities grow out the desert,” said the president, “assures me that we can continue our own ways while increasing our economic livelihood. They are flourishing in the desert.”

Communities in the Negev are working closely with a research university in Eilat, Israel where professors and scientists are continually finding new ways while improving methods of water use to promote life in a dry climate. A large underground aquifer with brackish water is used for year around fish hatcheries producing Australian and aquarium fish for market.

President Shelly met with professors Eilon Adar, Pedro Berliner, and Jhonathan Ephrath of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev as they spoke about the university’s cooperating participation of the local farming and agricultural communities. The university meets with local communities routinely to adjust research protocols to fit local needs.

The university is open to Navajo students for graduate school in sciences at the master and doctorate levels.

President and First Lady Shelly visited Beit Kama in Ramat, the resting place of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister who spent the latter years of his life in the Negev with a vision of turning the desert into agricultural lands. Israel's largest solar research institute in Elat is on the verge of breakthrough in energy storage.

Returning late Friday, President and First Lady Shelly their final evening in Israel at a dinner north of Jerusalem with Shalom Almog, a retired colonel who served in the Israeli Defense Forces, who expressed gratitude to the president for coming to Israel with open invitations for return.

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For Immediate Release
December 13, 2012

Navajo President Ben Shelly Meets with Deputy Minister at Knesset, and Honors Survivors of Holocaust at Yad Vashem

JERUSALEM, Israel—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with Ayoob Kara, who serves as Israeli Deputy Minister of the Development for the Negev and Galil today as the two government leaders spoke about agricultural development and future opportunities for the Navajo Nation to advance on Israel’s technology in agrobusiness.



“I want to work with your people—I know that Israel is self-sufficient, what we need is your expertise, what can we share,” said President Shelly at the Israeli Knesset this afternoon. “What I read of you—you were no different than we are,” he said, “how did you survive while moving forward in technology, greenhouses—I am interested in that and becoming partners.”

President Shelly speaks at a press conference shortly after he laid a wreath honoring the survivors of Israeli families at Yad Veshem memorial in Jerusalem, President Shelly, according to Israeli officials, is the first tribal leader to visit Yad Veshem.

The president and First Lady Martha Shelly were welcomed at the Knesset by the deputy minister. “It’s an honor to meet your people,” said the Israeli deputy minister as he received the president and first lady. “I can bring with me professional people from companies, said Ayoob. “Galilee is different from the south. We have desert lands where we found a solution for everything—how to grow wheat from a new technology with little use of water.”

Following the meeting at the Knesset the president attended a meeting with Josh Reinstein, director for the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus, who committed the political resources of the Knesset caucus to working with the Navajo Nation in securing agriculture, technology, and infrastructure. “We have developed a way to do three to

four yields a year,” said Reinstein, “with our farming. Avocados we grow them bigger and we have four cycles with drip irrigation,” he said describing the yield of Israel’s year around farming.

The president and First Lady Martha Shelly toured northern Israel yesterday while traveling to Haifa to meet with Professor David Faraggi, Rector for Haifa University encountering massive farming fields of grapes, avocados, bananas, citrus fruit, peppers, vegetables, and orchards of pears and apples, all covered by large nets for protection from birds. The water supply is fed through drip irrigation with injection of microscopic fertilizers as farms produce crops year around.

In his meeting with Professor Faraggi, the president spoke on the need for educational advancement for Navajo students in foreign exchange opportunities. The pathway would include opportunities for foreign students to experience Navajo at the Diné College in Tsaile. The opportunities were expanded by Prof. Faraggi to include faculty. Haifa University has an enrollment of 18,000 students, with 800 of them from foreign countries. The university is one of seven research universities in Israel.

“That exchange can be developed,” said the president at Haifa University. “The super highway can be built. Every nationality can bring their culture so we can all understand who we are—to live together as family, to have a little more peace in the world.”

Honoring the families of survivors of the Holocaust of World War II, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly laid a wreath at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem this morning as they toured the memorial with Pastor Robert Tso, wife Rose, and Navajo businessman Myron Lizer.

The president and first lady will visit farm lands in the Negev, the harsh desert area of Israel where farming communities known as Moshav’s are investing technology and development into green houses with minimal water supply in producing agriculture year around. The visit will include visits to three locations and a lunch meeting with the mayor of Beersheba, Israel, an agricultural town in southern Israel.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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NNHRC to Hold Additional Public Hearings about Predatory Auto Sales Tactics

Navajo Human Rights officials respond to public demand & provide more public hearings

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission received a number of requests to host more public hearings from Navajo citizens who want to share their experience of predatory auto sales tactics from border town auto dealers. Public hearings are scheduled at **10 a.m.** at the **Kayenta Chapter House** in Kayenta, Navajo Nation (AZ) on **December 28, 2012** and at the **Crownpoint Chapter House** in Crownpoint, Navajo Nation (NM) on **January 4, 2013**.

An example of a predatory sales tactic includes a customer having their keys or driver's license withheld and this coerces them to cave into pressure and sign a contract with unfavorable terms at high interest rate. Tactics like this often times result in creating bad credit where the dealer benefits leaving the customer victimized.

NNHRC encourages those who feel they've been victimized by predatory sales tactics to attend and provide testimony about title loans as a down payment, repos, electronic lock outs, repeatedly being asked to return to the dealer, deceptive marketing tactics like bait and switch, or unusually high interest rates.

After providing a testimony, NNHRC urges Navajo citizens to file a written complaint with NNHRC. When a complaint is filed with supporting documents, NNHRC will formally review it.

NNHRC also urges Navajo citizens to complete a voluntary survey which will be given to participants who attend the public hearings. To take part in the survey, call NNHRC and a staff member will mail or e-mail it to you.

NNHRC advocates for the recognition of Navajo human rights and addresses discriminatory actions against the citizens of the Navajo Nation. For more information, call the NNHRC office at (928) 871-7436 or visit the NNHRC website at www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov.

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Naa'bik'iyati' Committee approves NDOT-FHWA direct funding agreement



Council delegates Jonathan Nez (Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Shoto, Tsah Bii Kin) and Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Ft. Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) co-sponsored Legislation No. 0383-12, which is regarding a direct funding agreement between Navajo Division of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. NDOT Director Paulson Chaco said the division has been working on passage of the legislation for over a year now. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK-By a vote of 16-0, the Naa'bik'iyati' Committee of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council approved the direct funding agreement between Navajo Division of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration on Dec. 6.

Council delegate Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Ft. Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) co-sponsored Legislation No. 0383-12 along with fellow delegate Jonathan Nez (Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Shoto, Tsah Bii Kin).

Smith said NDOT is moving forward as a division and taking over responsibilities formally entrusted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The agreement provides FY 2013 revenue amounting to \$10 million for NDOT and \$44 million for the BIA.

"This \$10 million represents

the preliminary part of any road construction," Smith said. "Eventually, by way of projects, NDOT will develop the capacity to enter into the next phase to take over greater responsibilities."

Smith reported the biggest concern from most people was the BIA's control schedule for road projects, which was stretched out into a 40-year plan.

"For some of the chapters in the area expecting services concerning roads, (the timeframe) is almost unrealistic," he said.

Through the direct funding agreement, the Navajo Nation and BIA would collaborate on prioritizing projects and budgeting funding to pay for those costs.

Smith said the Navajo Nation was never before given that kind

of opportunity and that the BIA was opening the door for future collaborations based on the success of the agreement with NDOT.

His co-sponsoring colleague echoed similar sentiments.

Nez said, "In regard to this legislation brought forth to you today, it is an exercise in self-governance. I think this is a model we could utilize as well, to allow direct funding to come into divisions and departments."

He said concerns with the current BIA process are primarily about the protracted process from planning to construction.

"I think with the approval of this legislation, we will expedite a lot more action and not just at the central level," Nez said.

Nez reminded delegates about NDOT's meetings and

efforts with regionalizing transportation plans at the chapter level, and said NDOT's vision of granting decision-making authority to regional transportation centers will save people a trip to Window Rock to request for services.

Other opportunities are also available from the direct funding agreement.

"We also have an opportunity to make interest off these funds that come into the Navajo Nation through an interest-bearing bank account," Nez said.

NDOT Director Paulson Chaco said the agreement was unique to the Navajo Nation because no other federally-funded program in the tribal government has a direct funding agreement.

"The opportunity is there for the Navajo Nation now to take one step closer to true self-determination of our transportation system," Chaco said.

For the past year, NDOT has been navigating through the approval process for the legislation. Approval would mean streamlining the transportation system and working collaboratively with the BIA.

"The Navajo Nation has no control at this time of those construction dollars we receive," Chaco said. "This (agreement) gives us the opportunity to actually look at what's out there with our construction dollars and see what is spent with our Navajo Nation money that the BIA currently oversees."

The committee members spoke about concerns and voiced support for the legislation.

Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Lupton, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Wide Ruins) shared concerns over 638 contracts getting replaced with the direct funding agreement.

“There’s a lot more control in the 638 mechanism versus the direct compact,” Curley said.

Other delegates were frustrated with the current process.

Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine, K’aiibi’to, LeChee, Red Lake-Tonalea) said he was tired of the BIA and the blame game when it came to transportation services.

“I’m thankful for Coconino County for N20 maintenance from Bodaway Gap to Coppermine,” Tsinigine said. “I appreciate the county for stepping in and maintaining it because NDOT and BIA have no money.

NDOT and the BIA developed the current agreement, which allows Coconino County to provide maintenance on BIA roads.

“BIA’s our trustee and NDOT is doing their work as a trustee. I support (the legislation) but I want to see something done,” he added.

Another delegate was exhausted with the bureaucracy.

Mel Begay (Bahastl’a’a’, Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi) said the agreement provides hope that the Navajo Nation will someday accommodate road maintenance needs that are long overdue.

“I’m certainly not too pleased with the BIA on how they have performed and how they have overseen our transportation system,” Begay said.

He warned that he was dubious that NDOT would be able to

“NDOT and the BIA paved two-miles of this 13-mile road. The elders are very pleased in Pinedale, they are very happy.”

shoulder the responsibility he saw as another bureaucratic process pawned off on the Navajo Nation.

“This is just some bureaucratic policy that’s transferred to the Nation,” Begay said. “But at what cost?”

Another committee member contrasted Begay’s concerns against elders genuinely thankful for road maintenance services provided by NDOT at the grassroots level.

Edmund Yazzie said the work NDOT provides to the Navajo Nation is making a difference in his communities and spoke of a road in the Pinedale Chapter that’s been needing work for over 50 years.

“NDOT and the BIA paved two-miles of this 13-mile road. The elders are very pleased in Pinedale, they are very happy,” he said.

“NDOT has proven they aren’t all talk. They have proven that work is done and continues to be done,” Yazzie said.

Information: www.navajodot.org



Navajo Division of Transportation Director Paulson Chaco answers questions posed by members of the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee on Dec. 6. Chaco said the direct funding agreement is the first of its kind for the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Council delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine, K’aiibi’to, LeChee, Red Lake-Tonalea) said he is tired of the BIA and the tedious time-consuming process for movement of transportation projects and maintenance of roads in his communities. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



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For Immediate Release
December 8, 2012

President Shelly in Israel to Meet with Knesset, Agriculture Ministry, & Memorial Visit to Yad Vashem

*The President's Priorities: Agriculture, Technology, Tourism,
Infrastructure, and Government Services*

JERUSALEM, Israel—Arriving today in the ancient city of peace Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and First Lady Mrs. Shelly are in Israel for a week to meet with dignitaries of the Knesset, Israel's legislative body, and the Ministry of Agriculture as the president emphasizes pro-growth strategies for the Navajo Nation.

"We set on this mission to look at how Israel has advanced in growth in some of the same areas we face on the Navajo Nation," said the president as he arrived in Tel Aviv earlier today. "We came to discuss how we can adapt new technology for the Navajo people."

President Shelly will meet with the Christian Allies Caucus of the Israeli Knesset, which includes members from six of 13 political parties in Israel to bridge relations as he relates the need for a healthier agricultural climate. The caucus is chaired by David Rotem, who also serves as chair of the Knesset Committee for Law and Justice.

"Agriculture is a priority for us," said President Shelly, "as we build a healthier Navajo Nation and opportunities for business development." The president will visit Shikma, a 12,000 acre farm land in southern Israel, meet with Meir Yifrach, who leads the vegetable growers union as he learns more about Israel's agro-business and technology of drip irrigation and fertilization known as Fertigation. Also in the president's agenda is a meeting with Yoav Morag, the regional director for Israel's Ministry of Agriculture.

President Shelly is scheduled to lay a wreath at Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, a custom visiting heads of states do during in their visit in honoring Israel.

President Shelly arrived in Israel during the eight-day festival of lights, the national holiday of Hanukkah, which began on Friday, commemorating the re-dedication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

“It is important for us to share who we are as Navajos, and our own struggles as we have endured since the Long Walk,” said the president. “Our trip is also about cultural exchange in this part of the world where the Israeli people co-exist with their neighbors.”

As President Shelly visits Israel, 7,992 square miles, nearly the equivalent of western Navajo, he will tour historic places, the Mount of Olives, the Western Wailing Wall, the City of David, and Jordan Valley.

Pastor Robert Tso from Shiprock and Myron Lizer, who heads Navajo Westerners/True Value stores coordinated the president’s visit to Israel, along side several faith-based organizations which stemmed from the president’s participation in a Navajo-Israel event last December in Farmington attended by some 300 people from around the United States.

Several faith-based groups and non-government organizations contributed to the president’s visit. The groups desire to see advancement for Navajo, and cultural exchanges for both nations.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Health, Education, and Human Services Committee presses NDOH to further progress on implementation of health care initiatives after status report

Affordable Care Act and Navajo Nation Medicaid Feasibility Study discussed

WINDOW ROCK – On Wednesday, the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a status report from the Navajo Division of Health addressing one of many concerns the committee had with the division’s handling of the implementation of health care initiatives on the Navajo Nation.

Roslyn Begay, NDOH program manager for the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, reported to the committee in NDOH director Larry Curley’s absence, stating that the division had yet to spend funds from a \$96,491 award it received from the Navajo Area Indian Health Service to conduct education and outreach activities on the Navajo Nation pertaining to the Affordable Care Act of 2010.

“As of today, the division has not spent any of those funds. The division has not implemented the education and outreach activities,” reported Begay, who had recently been designated by Curley to be the lead on the planning and implementation of those activities.

Although “many of the other ACA provisions have already been implemented,” Begay acknowledged that the division was “very late” in completing the educational outreach activities, but that it would soon be conducting a series of six public forums across the Navajo Nation next year from January through March to educate leaders, health care providers, health board members, and the Navajo public on the Act.

News of the implementation delay did not bide well with Council Delegates Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) and Kenneth Maryboy (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teec Nos Pos, Tólikan, Red Mesa).

“You had three months to get this done,” said Delegate Hale, pointing out that education and outreach activities, along with other legislative concerns brought up months ago, were scheduled to be complete at the end of the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2013, which runs from October through December.

Delegate Hale said it was “upsetting” that NDOH did not address a number of concerns the committee had with other health care initiatives and tasks under the division’s charge.

As a result, Delegate Hale reasoned that perhaps it was appropriate to implement restrictions on the division’s budgets through the creation of budgetary conditions of appropriations and impose limitations on off-reservation travel for division directors until those concerns were met.

“I feel the same way,” said Delegate Maryboy. “It is really troublesome that the head of the program is not even here to make the report to us, and yet there are many things that need to be dealt with.”

Delegate Hale explained that health care issues of concern the committee had on topics such as Medicaid expansion and health insurance exchange were very important issues to the Navajo people, especially elders.

“I understand you are sincere and you’re concerned about why we have not begun the education on Navajo Nation,” said Begay, “but I have to assure you that since I have been designated to take the lead on this, I will assure this committee that we will activate the planning and implementation activities.”

Nearing the end of discussion on NDOH’s report, Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi Tó ii) said he was most interested to learn more about the Navajo Nation Medicaid Feasibility Study, which was authorized by Congress through the permanent reauthorization of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act of 2010.

Delegate Phelps suggested for NDOH to provide briefing reports to the committee on the feasibility study that began on the Navajo Nation in July 2012.

Congress expects submission of the Feasibility Study Report by March 13, 2013. Review of the Navajo Nation Medicaid Feasibility Study draft report will occur next week, Begay said.

The committee has scheduled a strategic work session with NDOH on Dec. 21 and 22 to progress toward thorough understanding and completion of the Nation’s most current and pressing health care issues and initiatives. The location has tentatively been set in Window Rock.

The goal of the strategic session, said Delegate Hale, is “to get things done. That’s the intent.”

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For Immediate Release
December 7, 2012

Navajo President Shelly Congratulates Superfund Job Training Graduates



GALLUP, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly encouraged a group of 19 graduates whom successfully completed courses from the U.S. EPA Superfund Job Training Initiative (JTI).

The graduates, all of which were Navajo, completed training to become qualified to help clean up uranium waste. The class learned to mitigate and measure radon, and how to handle hazardous waste.

President Shelly said their training would help them restore natural balance of the earth that was affected when the earth was mined for uranium.

“Each one of us are made with four sacred elements,” President Shelly urged the group during a speech Tuesday evening. “You are the four elements, the four elements that are sacred to the Navajo people.”

More than 100 people attended the graduation of a program. Superfund JTI targeted the Navajo Nation for recruits and graduates for the program marking the first time Superfund JTI has focused their effort to a tribal nation.

“This initiative to train local residents to help clean up uranium mine sites is very important to me,” President Shelly said, adding that he thought so highly of the graduates accomplishment that President Shelly chose to attend the graduation, missing the White House Tribal Nations Summit in Washington, D.C.



President Shelly said the graduates were making the Navajo Nation stronger.

“We must grow our economic strength and each job that is created and filled by Navajo workers, we become economically stronger,” President Shelly stated.

Superfund JTI targeted Navajo after the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency unsuccessfully bid for a grant that would’ve brought job training to the Navajo Nation. President Shelly made the need for job training a topic during a meeting with US EPA Region 9 Administrator Jared Blumenfeld in a meeting in June.

More than 120 people applied for the 20 positions available.

“Congratulations to the graduates. You are valuable, precious children of the Navajo Nation,” President Shelly stated.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Resources and Development Committee engage in discussion with Pinon and Black Mesa regional communities on energy and environmental issues

RDC extends environmental monitoring permit for Peabody, receives report on proposed solar project

PINON, Ariz. — Members of the Resources and Development Committee traveled to Pinon Chapter on Tuesday where they convened for a regular meeting. The committee received a report regarding a proposed solar power demonstration project on Black Mesa, and passed a legislation pertaining to the extension of a Peabody Western Coal Company revocable use permit.

The RDC voted 3-0 to pass Legislation No. 0480-12, which approved the extension, modification, and reaffirmation of Peabody's revocable use permit for the operation and maintenance of eight environmental monitoring sites and monitoring site roads.

The permit will expire on May 31, 2015.

The legislation also included a rental adjustment for the eight sites which monitor water quality and other water measurements, according to the Navajo Minerals Department.

“The coal company has agreed to an increase in rent of approximately \$13,000 until the 2015 expiration date, and has already submitted its payment to the Navajo Nation as required by the Extension Modification and Reaffirmation of the revocable use permit,” said Council Delegate David Tom (Beclabito, Cove, Gadí i'áhi/Tó Koi, Red Valley, Sheepsprings, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnaózt'i'í), the legislation's sponsor.

Following presentation of the legislation, Council Delegates Leonard Pete (Chinle) and Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) both pressed Peabody Energy director of engineering services Randy Lehn for more information on monitoring site data that have been collected over the last ten years, and whether there were any causes for environmental concern that collected data may have suggested.

“What are these testing sites discovering? Is all okay, or is there something happening out there that needs to be addressed?” questioned Delegate Tsosie, adding that the committee has received reports from Diné residents of “sinkholes, depressions, and environmental damages.”

Lehn said the purpose of the permit is to monitor environmental issues, ensuring there is no environmental harm from mining operations.

Monitoring reports are sent to the Office of Surface Mining on a regular basis, and so far, there have been no damages found by OSM, stated Lehn.

However, Delegate Pete expressed disapproval over Peabody's failure to provide for the committee's review a summary report of monitoring data from the eight sites, which have been in place since the early 1980's.

"I do not have any problems with the sites, but we just need to be transparent with the people," said Delegate Pete, insisting that the coal company be better prepared with detailed report information when coming before the committee.

At the close of legislation discussion, Peabody Energy representatives were asked to return before the committee in January to deliver a thorough report addressing environmental monitoring concerns raised by Diné residents. The exact date has not yet been set.

Presentation of the legislation was then followed by a report on a proposed solar power project.

Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) introduced Wahleah Johns of the Black Mesa Water Coalition, who presented on the specifics of a proposed 1-5 MW solar power demonstration project to be built on Black Mesa reclaimed mine lands.

Johns said the purpose of the solar project is to demonstrate how solar energy works, show how lands can be repurposed using existing infrastructure, and to create a community co-ownership stake aiming to be profitable for local and Navajo Nation economies.

Revenue generation, job training, construction and operational jobs, and the creation of additional local and regional economy through the investment of funds generated through the project were all outlined as benefits.

Concerns colored with opposition were raised by a number of local residents belonging to an organization called Black Mesa United.

Some BMU members felt that local residents were being left out of the decision making process, having questions as to where the generated revenue would go and whether livestock grazing would be impacted around the solar project.

Although Delegate Pete nodded in support of the project's objectives, stating that at some point, it was time for the Nation to "become green and innovative," he was concerned by the "tug-of-war" amongst community groups regarding the project.

"How do we fix this?" asked Delegate Tsosie, who had also echoed concerns of community fractionation over discussions of economic development.

Regardless, Delegate Tsosie said he also supported the project.

"To me, this is a good project and a good idea. By building something like this, we begin to decrease our reliance on energy from outside companies," said Delegate Tsosie. "I think of this as an experiment as to how we can accomplish such goals."

The community organizations were encouraged to dialogue and work toward harmonious agreement.

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For Immediate Release
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Navajo President Shelly Meets With Federal Head Start Officials

Window Rock, Ariz. – Navajo President Ben Shelly advocated for Navajo Head Start during the second tribal consultation with the Administration for Children and Families.

The consultation was held last week on Wednesday and Thursday, which included Navajo officials meeting with Office of Head Start Director Yvette Sanchez-Fuentes and the Deputy Secretary Linda Smith of the Administration for Children and Families.

“I am advocating for my grandchildren in the Head Start program. Please keep the hearts, minds and spirits of these little children in your discussions for the next two days,” President Shelly said at the beginning of the two-day meeting.

Discussions of the meeting included the Designation Renewal System, a system that determines the quality and comprehension of a Head Start Program by measuring performance in nutritional, health, educational and the social needs of Head Start students. Negative reviews under DRS rules could force a program to compete for funding to continue services.

For the Navajo Nation, this could mean that Navajo Head Start would have to compete for \$27 million annually to keep current service levels for nearly 2,100 Head Start students.

President Shelly advocacy for Navajo Head Start successfully held off permanent termination and a significant reduction of funds to the program last year. President Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim have continually informed federal officials that Navajo Head Start would work to improve the program by restructuring to comply federal regulations.

The Navajo Nation was moved to the DRS process because a triennial review in April of 2010 found nine deficiencies. Navajo Head Start has to improve school performance measures, relationships between the staff and children in the classrooms, and age appropriate classroom set up.

However, the DRS process requires that the federal government provide training and technical assistance. Moreover, the Navajo Nation will continue to restructure the program to meet the requirement to hire highly qualified staff at management levels and service delivery levels.

“I want to know what these regulations will look like for the Navajo Nation and what technical assistance will be offered. I want this partnership to continue to ready our children for school while we continue to teach them their Navajo identity,” President Shelly said.

Tribal officials also said the personnel and finance process in Navajo Head Start needed to be streamline and will need to quickly hire highly qualified staff that have worked in school systems.

By the end of March, Navajo Head Start plans to develop a quality improvement plan that will benefit Navajo Head Start as it deals with personnel and finance, and improving the skills of teaching staff. In discussions last week, the existing Memorandum of Agreement between the Navajo Nation and the Office of Head Start, were amendments made to assist the Navajo Nation with exploring the possibility of providing funds for construction and renovation of head start buildings.

“The Navajo Head Start program began in the 1960’s along side many of our chapter houses,” President Shelly said, adding that Head Start programs have a mainstay for Navajo people, which makes changes harder to implement because Navajo people have grown accustom to established practices.

“It will be a challenge the new director, Ms. Sharon Singer, to move Navajo Head Start forward into compliance,” President Shelly said.

Singer was hired in October, filling a position that was vacant for nearly a year.

“We expect resistance to the changes, but it will be to improve the services for the children and families. We have to remember that we nearly lost the entire grant last year and we are grateful that the federal government is working with us to maintain the grant. This means the Navajo Nation has to work hard to rebuild the program to meet the federal regulations,” President Shelly stated.

The Navajo Nation is the only tribal super grantee in Head Start with other super grantees serving areas of Los Angeles, Baltimore, Chicago and Phoenix. If the Navajo Nation does well during the re-evaluation in March of 2014, then the grant will be renewed for another 5 years.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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NNHRC Seeks Navajo Peoples' Testimonies about Predatory Sales Tactics by Border Town Auto Dealers

SAINT MICHAELS, Navajo Nation—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission will maximize their upcoming regular monthly meeting in December to specifically receive Navajo peoples' testimonies about their experience of predatory sales tactics from border town auto dealers. The meeting will be held at the **Dilkon Chapter House** in Dilkon, Navajo Nation on **December 7, 2012 at 10 a.m.**

An example of a predatory sales tactic includes a customer having their keys or driver's license withheld and this coerces them to cave into the pressure and sign a contract with unfavorable terms at an outrageously high interest rate. Tactics like this often times result in creating bad credit where the dealer benefits leaving the customer victimized.

NNHRC encourages those who feel they've been victimized by predatory sales tactics to attend and provide testimony about:

- Title loans as a down payment,
- Repos,
- Electronic lock outs,
- Repeatedly being asked to return to the dealer,
- Deceptive marketing tactics like bait and switch, or
- Unusually high interest rates.

After providing testimony, NNHRC urges Navajo citizens to file a written complaint with NNHRC. When a complaint is filed with supporting documents, NNHRC will formally review it.

NNHRC also urges Navajo citizens to complete a voluntary survey which will be given to participants who attend the December 7th meeting. If Navajo citizens are interested in completing the survey, call NNHRC at (928) 871-7436 for direct electronic mailing or direct mailing.

NNHRC advocates for the recognition of Navajo human rights and addresses discriminatory actions against the citizens of the Navajo Nation. For more information, call the NNHRC office at (928) 871-7436 or visit the NNHRC website at www.nnhrc.navajo-nsn.gov.

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Navajo Nation leadership discusses LCR settlement with Arizona state parties, discussions at an impasse

Phoenix, Ariz. – The Naa’bik’iyati’ Water Rights Task Force met with state parties on Dec. 3 to continue discussions on a possible water rights settlement after Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) requested the Department of Interior to organize the meeting in his Nov. 28 letter.

In the same letter to DOI Secretary Ken Salazar, the Nation maintained that it would be “in the best interest of the Nation to stand on the Position Statement adopted by the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee.” The Committee passed resolution NABIN-87-12 so it could be presented to DOI during a Nov. 14 meeting.

The purpose of the meeting with the state parties was for Navajo Nation Leadership to meet and hear directly from the state parties on the issues outlined in the position statement (resolution NABIN-87-12).

Although the Interior was optimistic in their “Core Positions for a Near Term Settlement” it could negotiate a settlement that was favorable to some of the Nation’s positions, the meeting with the state parties clearly showed that the state parties were unwilling to compromise.

Some of the issues the state parties were unwilling to negotiate on included the delivery of 6,411 AFY of CAP to eastern Arizona Navajo communities without conditions, and the Secretary’s authority to take land into trust.

Navajo Nation leadership – eleven council delegates and Speaker Naize – and Hopi Tribal leadership, along with the DOI representatives, presented several priority issues that remain to be negotiating points between the state parties and the tribes.

The Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe were met with stark opposition to these points leaving the discussion at an impasse.

“It is without surprise that the various state parties would draw a firm line in the sand the way they did,” Speaker Naize stated. “I remain confident that we, as progressive neighbors, can continue to discuss these issues with practical progress.”

“I believe this type of discussion and baseline needed to be established – they heard directly from our leadership and we heard from them. Now, we can continue our work on this matter with greater clarity,” Speaker Naize added.

The Navajo Nation will continue to evaluate its options, and remains open to discussions with the Little Colorado River Water Rights Settlement stakeholders.

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For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org



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Navajo President Shelly Signs MOA with San Juan County Utah Commissioners

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.- Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed a groundbreaking agreement San Juan County Commissioners Tuesday morning. President Shelly and the commissioners entered into a memorandum of agreement focused on planning collaboration to develop land use recommendations for state and federal lands within San Juan County of Utah.

“Our Navajo people carry a deep history with these lands in Utah. With that history, use and management of the lands is critical for carrying on the Navajo traditional practices such as hunting, ceremonial practice and protecting our sacred sites. The Navajo people have valuable contributions for these important places and our collective communities,” President Shelly stated.

The memorandum of agreement -- the first of its kind between the Navajo Nation and the county-- is an effort to move beyond debate and uncertainty over the use and conservation of public lands, to better recognize the interests and concerns of land users, and to work together to find greater opportunities for economic development and cultural protection.

“The San Juan County Commission is excited to enter into this unprecedented agreement,” said San Juan Commission Chair Bruce Adams. “Working together in a formal collaboration, we believe we can better understand each other and will be more likely to achieve our goals. We expect that a good process will lead to good outcomes.”

San Juan County, Utah, is largely comprised of federal lands and members of the Navajo Nation comprising more than half of its population. The county is abundant with natural, cultural, scenic and recreational resources with red rock canyons, towering plateaus, 12,000-foot peaks, four national parks and monuments, as well as the San Juan and Colorado Rivers.

The rich character of these lands sits in stark contrast to economic challenges faced by San Juan County residents. San Juan County has the highest unemployment and poverty rates in the state of Utah.

“The best decisions about land use are those made from the ground up, with local people working with diverse interest groups to find common ground. That’s how support for land use recommendations grow – with people listening to each other with respect and open minds. I expect this new agreement could be a model for other counties,” said Commissioner Kenneth Maryboy, who also serves as a Navajo Nation Council Delegate.

Over the next 18 months both parties will meet to discuss and make recommendations on federal land designations, management and conservation, state land exchanges, and County economic development.

“This is a good agreement so we can make progress for better quality of life Navajo and non- Navajo people living in San Juan County in Utah,” President Shelly said.

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Resources and Development Committee gives approval for direct funding agreement between NDOT and Federal Highway Administration

WINDOW ROCK – In what was dubbed a “historic vote” by Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake), the Resources and Development Committee passed a legislation on Nov. 27 supporting and approving a direct federal funding agreement between the Navajo Nation Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.

The legislation will still need to go before the Budget and Finance Committee and the Naa’bik’iyati’ Committee for consideration of approval.

After a half hour of discussion and the addition of four amendments, the RDC voted 4-0 in favor of Legislation No. 0383-12, a bill co-sponsored by Council Delegates Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) and Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill).

The RDC had previously received an initial presentation of the legislation on Oct. 23, but voted 4-0 to table it until NDOT representatives were present to respond to questions and concerns the committee had regarding the distribution of funding under the agreement between NDOT and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

On Nov. 27, NDOT principal civil engineer Darryl Bradley told the committee that according to the agreement, NDOT will be receiving \$10 million directly from the Federal Highway Administration, while approximately \$44 million will be given to the BIA - Navajo Region office “to cover preliminary engineering and construction/engineering functions on behalf of the Navajo Nation,” for Fiscal Year 2013.

The RDC has been actively involved in a series of meetings NDOT has conducted with the BIA and the FHA over the past five months to review the contents of the program agreement.

The committee was pleased to hear that NDOT will continue to meet with the two federal entities to discuss and identify how the BIA’s \$44 million will be spent in FY13.

Major amendments to the legislation added language bearing mention to a federal statute stating that a tribal government may carry out a Tribal Transportation Program or Project through a contract or agreement with the Secretary of Transportation in accordance with the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, and that the Navajo Nation will assume the duties and functions of the Secretary of the Interior with respect to the Tribal Transportation Program.

After the RDC voted to unanimously approve each of the four amendments with a vote of 4-0 in favor, Delegate Tsosie announced, “We have a whole new legislation here. It’s a whole new way to do the roads program.”

Delegate Tsosie, serving as Chairperson Pro Tem in Council Delegate Katherine Benally's (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chilchinbeto) absence, requested that NDOT present the RDC with bi-monthly update reports regarding the agreement, in addition to the department's budget for the Nation's \$10 million funding award.

"This committee has talked about priorities for transportation, and its vision on where it wants to go," said Delegate Tsosie, "I told my chapters that we were going to be entering into an agreement with Federal Highway Administration, and we talked about NDOT's budget and its vision for the future."

The legislation forges a new relationship with the BIA on road construction projects, commented Delegate Tsosie, and the bi-monthly updates from NDOT are important for keeping track of how the monies going to BIA for Navajo projects are being utilized.

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