



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 30, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council approves two legislations that will impact the newly opened Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort**

**WINDOW ROCK** – During a special session held on Friday, the Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0108-13, exempting the Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company from being subject to Navajo Nation fuel excise taxes to enable the entity to finance infrastructure development near the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort - specifically a gas station and a convenience store.

The NNOGC will be exempt from fuel excise taxes until either the estimated \$2.5 million infrastructure costs are reimbursed to NNOGC or after a seven-year period from when the convenience store begins operation, whichever occurs first.

The Navajo Nation fuel excise tax, which was established in 1999, imposes an 18-cent per gallon tax on gasoline distributors or retailers on the Navajo Nation.

The legislation was sponsored by Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) and Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake).

In addition, the Navajo Nation Council approved Legislation No. 0165-13, amending Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code to allow the sale of alcohol on casino floors owned by the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a'), asked for the Council's support of the bill as a means to continue the growth and success of the NNGE.

"Council previously approved alcohol sales in a limited capacity, and I ask you to support this legislation to allow the enterprise to be competitive and flourish," said Delegate Begay.

The majority of Council's discussion centered on a proposed amendment issued by Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) that sought to allow the sale of alcohol on casino floors from 2 p.m. to the regulatory closing time only, and to prohibit alcohol sales in the casino's gift shop and as part of hotel room service.

The proposed amendment was met with support from several delegates including Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish,

Tse'ii'ahi, Whiterock), who argued that the NNGE should abide by the existing law approved by the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council in 2008.

“What’s more important, the lives of our Navajo people, or dollars?” asked Delegate Simpson of his Council colleagues. “It seems like we’re always bowing down to the gaming industry.”

Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin) expressed concern that the NNGE could possibly face lawsuits if incidents involving alcohol occur, and urged fellow Council members to allow Navajo people to decide alcohol issues in the form of referendums.

“We need to give the choice to the people and let them decide for themselves,” said Delegate Nez.

Council Delegate Joshua Lavar Butler (Tó Nanees Dizi) spoke in opposition, calling the proposed amendment a double standard in regard to the Antelope Point Resort and Marina, located near Lake Powell in Page, which is allowed to sell alcohol through specific provisions outlined in Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code.

NNGE CEO Derrick Watchman assured Council members that the sale of alcohol is heavily regulated by the Arizona Gaming Compact and the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control, in addition to Navajo Nation laws.

According to Watchman, NNGE employees are required to receive periodic training that allows servers to limit alcohol consumption by customers on an hourly basis, and to ensure customer safety.

“If we violate the regulations I could be subject to criminal prosecution, so I take this issue very serious,” said Watchman.

After an hour of discussion, Council voted down the proposed amendment with a vote of 7-9.

Council then immediately voted 9-7 in support of Legislation No. 0165-13.

The legislation does not impact Navajo-owned casinos currently operating in the state of New Mexico, due to restrictions in the New Mexico Gaming Compact that prohibit the sale of alcohol on casino floors throughout the state.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 27, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Naabik'iyáti Committee receives update regarding the  
scheduled closure of the Na'Nizhoozhi Center, Inc. due to funding shortfalls**

*Na'Nizhoozhi Center, Inc. set to close its doors on July 15*

**WINDOW ROCK** – Representatives from the Na'Nizhoozhi Center Inc., the City of Gallup, and McKinley County discussed funding shortfalls with Naabik'iyáti Committee members on Thursday, which may result in the closure of NCI on July 16.

NCI was established in 1992, through an intergovernmental agreement between the city of Gallup, the Pueblo of Zuni, the Navajo Nation, and McKinley County to serve as a non-medical alcohol crisis intervention and treatment center for the city of Gallup and McKinley County.

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) expressed urgency in funding NCI to continue its services, and urged other entities to become involved in addressing the issue.

“We need to help this cause as soon as possible,” said Delegate Yazzie. “We need to get the Zuni Tribe involved along with the bar owners in Gallup.”

Also in attendance was the City of Gallup Mayor Jackie McKinney, who informed the committee that city officials have talked with several entities including the Navajo Nation Division of Health about the possibility of assuming operations at the facility.

“We want services to continue, but we feel we might have to go with another operator in the future,” said Mayor McKinney.

Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) inquired as to whether any tax revenue from the McKinley County liquor excise tax, a five-percent tax on alcohol sales imposed on retailers, would be allocated for NCI in the future.

McKinley County Commissioner Carol Bowman-Muskett, explained that New Mexico State Senator George K. Munoz is sponsoring S.B. 397, aiming to increase the liquor excise tax rate from five to six-percent.

Commissioner Bowman-Muskett added that if S.B. 397 becomes law, revenue collected from the increased tax rate may benefit prevention and treatment programs such as NCI.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) acknowledged the need to address the funding issues, and pressed the need to reduce the number of liquor licenses in the city of Gallup.

“When you allow liquor retailers to continue selling alcohol even when they’ve violated laws and ordinances, it perpetuates the alcohol problem,” said Delegate Tsosie.

Delegate Tsosie urged Gallup city officials and Navajo leaders to meet and work together to address the funding issue and other issues affecting Navajo people in and near the city of Gallup.

“Navajos are being targeted on their way home from Gallup, especially on the Arizona side. You never see roadblocks in the city of Gallup, or in the affluent areas,” said Delegate Tsosie. “In this government to government dialogue, we need to talk about it.”

Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), Mayor McKinney, Commissioner Bowman-Muskett, and NCI officials said they will continue to work together to discuss and resolve the issues.

Naabik’íyátí Committee members voted 14-0 to accept the report.

A meeting between city, county, NCI, and Navajo officials to discuss the possible closure of NCI is scheduled to take place on Tuesday.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**

**Cell: (928) 380-0771**

**[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)**

For Immediate Release  
June 28, 2013

---

## **Navajo President Shelly Ready to Approve Emergency Declaration for Drought Conditions**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said he is ready to sign an emergency declaration regarding drought conditions on the Navajo Nation after an Emergency Commission Meeting approved an emergency declaration.

“We need to help our people right now. We have wells that are dry. We have livestock that are thirsty and crops that are in dire need of water. Declaring this emergency will release emergency funding for chapters to take care of needs they see in their communities,” President Shelly said.

According to tribal precipitation statistics, Western Agency is about 65 percent below normal precipitation amounts this year, while Fort Defiance Agency is about 63 percent below normal. Northern and Eastern Agency are about 55 percent below average, while Chinle Agency is about 30 percent below average precipitation levels.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration officials expect above normal temperatures to continue through the summer months with below average precipitation.

The emergency declaration is being drafted and is expected to be signed soon.

“We are going to do everything we can to ensure that we deal with drought conditions that are consistent with the ramifications of the Navajo government. Also, declaring an emergency will allow us to appeal to President Obama for funding,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly added that everyone needs to help conserve water.

“We are in this together, so we all need to conserve water. Our livestock and crops will be depending on our conservation too,” President Shelly said.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 28, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**HEHSC receives report regarding a study to improve  
the reading scores of bilingual Navajo elementary students**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee received a report on Wednesday from Gregory Allen, a graduate student and elementary school teacher in Kirtland, N.M. Allen described the relationship between reading scores and musical tone tests amongst Navajo elementary school students in Kirtland, Newcomb, and Shiprock.

“When a student is reading, their voice is the same tone as when they are singing,” Allen said. “Students whose first language is Navajo, often have lower reading scores than students whose first language is English, but these scores do not properly reflect their intelligence.”

Allen explained that his study focused on the correlation between Navajo student’s reading scores and their response to three musical tone tests: steady-beat, pitch-matching, and rhythmic-echoing, the pitch-making test most closely correlated with the student’s reading levels.

“I have found that if a student comes from a Navajo speaking home and they sing a song in the Navajo language, it is much easier for them compared to singing a song that is written in English,” said Allen.

Allen plans to utilize his research to develop curriculum and testing materials that he hopes will improve the reading scores of students who come from a Navajo speaking home.

HEHSC vice chair Council Delegate Charles Damon II (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí’, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) encouraged Allen to transform his research into Navajo music education materials that encompass Navajo music to benefit schools across the Navajo Nation.

“The Navajo language is complex as there are only four syllables,” said Delegate Damon. “I am impressed that you are incorporating the Navajo language into music education.”

HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) expressed enthusiasm for the study and encouraged Allen to develop customized academic assessments that truly reflect the intelligence of Navajo children.

“This is the first time I have seen a study involving music on the Navajo Nation,” said Hale. “This study has my full support and I believe it will improve our student’s reading levels.”

HEHSC voted 3-0 to accept the report.

###



# NAVAJO DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 28, 2013

CONTACT: Rick Abasta  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: 928-245-7607  
Fax: 505-371-8399  
Email: rabasta@navajodot.org

## Fuel Excise Tax dollars making a difference on Navajo Nation



*Fuel Excise Tax dollars collected by the Office of Navajo Tax Commission are funneled into the Navajo Nation Road Fund for projects like this parking lot in the community of Twin Lakes that was completed in June 2013. FET funding provides road infrastructure and self-determination. FET is imposed on gasoline at a rate of 18 cents per gallon and 25 cents per gallon on diesel fuel. (Photo by Darryl Bradley)*

**W**hen you fill up with fuel on the Navajo Nation, you are contributing to road infrastructure and self-determination.

For every gallon of fuel pumped at gas stations across the Navajo Nation, 18 cents is collected for the Navajo Nation Road Fund.

Since 1999, the Fuel Excise Tax has been collected by the Office of Navajo Tax Commission and is making a positive impact on the Navajo Nation for community road projects.

For gasoline, the FET is 18 cents and for diesel, it is 25 cents.

Funding from the road fund is used for improvement projects such as parking lots, school bus routes, drainage crossings, access roads, road maintenance, grading, graveling, archaeological surveys, testing, mitigation, drainage studies, construction services, threatened and endangered species, airport maintenance, designs, plans, specifications, bidding, and contract services.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said roads have always been an issue Navajo people passionately care about.

"I am thankful that we have completed more than half of the projects that were stuck in government bureaucratic processes," Shelly said. "We have pushed these projects through and have many more to complete.

"The Fuel Excise Tax is making a difference because we have funding to pay for some of these projects," he added.

Paulson Chaco, director of Navajo Division of Transportation, said FET projects dating several years back are finally finding their way to completion.

"Navajo DOT had a backlog of 78 Fuel Excise Tax projects in

limbo when I stepped into the division. We have cut that figure in half and completed many projects since President Shelly took office," Chaco said.

There are currently 32 FET projects across the reservation that NDOT is working to complete.

Chaco said no new FET proposals will be collected until NDOT completes the remaining 32 projects.

"We are working hard to ensure these projects are completed, rather than taking on new FET projects while work is still left undone," he said.

According to statistics from the Navajo Tax Commission, a total of \$146,644,840 in FET funds has been collected since 2002, for an average of \$13,331,349 per year.

From the annual FET revenue, \$4 million is distributed to the State of Arizona; \$2 million is deposited into the Permanent Trust Fund; \$3 million goes into the FET coffers; and \$3 million is used for road maintenance activities.

As directed by the Office of President and Vice President and Resources and Development Committee, NDOT imposed a moratorium on new FET projects since 2010, to ensure all previously funded projects were first brought to completion.

During the moratorium period, a \$13 million surplus was realigned by NDOT.

On March 28, 2013, NDOT reported to the Naa'bik'iyati' Committee and was directed to divide the \$13 million surplus between all five agencies of the Navajo Nation.

"NDOT will complete 13 projects in 2013," said Darryl Bradley, principal civil engineer for NDOT.

He explained that fuel manifests are issued by the tax commission to distributors delivering fuel on the Navajo Nation. In turn, tax returns are filed by the distributors and the fuel tax is paid on a monthly basis to the Navajo Nation.

“These funds are used by NDOT for transportation projects within the Navajo Nation for development, planning, road maintenance and construction of public roads,” Bradley said.

Zane James and Priscilla Lee are program and projects specialists for NDOT, working directly with FET funding for projects.

James is overseeing 16 projects, three of which are completed parking lots and an access road for the communities of Twin Lakes and Standing Rock.

Lee also has 16 projects on the table, with the two-mile C27 Dakota Loop project slated for completion on June 28, 2013.

Both agree the funds are integral to improving Navajo Nation roads and their focus is to complete the remaining FET projects before soliciting for new project proposals.

Approximately 14,733 miles of public roads cover the Navajo Nation. From that figure, 76 percent, or 11,353 miles of road are unpaved and provide the only means of access for schools, employment, medical care, and commerce.

NDOT’s mission is to provide a safe transportation infrastructure through innovation and partnerships.

Information: [www.navajodot.org](http://www.navajodot.org)

### ONGOING FUEL EXCISE TAX PROJECTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Tohajiilee Behavioral Health Center Road | 21. Tohatchi Parking Lot                   |
| 2. N8068 and N8069 Gap and Tachee           | 22. Window Rock Airport Parking Lot        |
| 3. N8068 and N8069 Drainage                 | 23. Oljato Senior Center Parking Lot       |
| 4. N4 and N9065 Pinon and Teesto            | 24. N9702 and N9703 Sawmill and White Clay |
| 5. N8073 Pinon                              | 25. Dine’ College Access Road              |
| 6. Hard Rock Parking Lot                    | 26. Chinle Valley School Parking Lot       |
| 7. N20 Coppermine                           | 27. Nenahnezad School Bus Route            |
| 8. San Juan Farm Routes                     | 28. Coal Mine School Road                  |
| 9. Shiprock Community Bus Routes            | 29. Red Mesa High School Parking Lot       |
| 10. N673 Whippoorwill Low Water Crossing    | 30. Newcomb Senior Center Parking Lot      |
| 11. N9452 Red Lake                          | 31. Twin Lakes Parking Lot (completed)     |
| 12. N5007 Newcomb                           | 32. Standing Rock Parking Lot (completed)  |
| 13. Black Mesa Low Water Crossing           |  |
| 14. N9003 Greasewood                        |  |
| 15. N124 Oaksprings                         |  |
| 16. N61 Whippoorwill                        |  |
| 17. N8031 Hard Rock                         |  |
| 18. Many Farms Parking Lot                  |  |
| 19. Chinle Workforce Development Redesign   |  |
| 20. Window Rock Alternative Route           |  |



*The Standing Rock parking lot is completed and allows community members and visitors access to their tribal facility without having to worry about mud and snow during adverse weather conditions. (Photo by Darryl Bradley)*



*Top, FET dollars also paved for the access road in Twin Lakes. Below, workers pave the parking lot in Standing Rock. (Photos by Darryl Bradley)*



# FUEL EXCISE TAX REVENUES



\$15,000,000

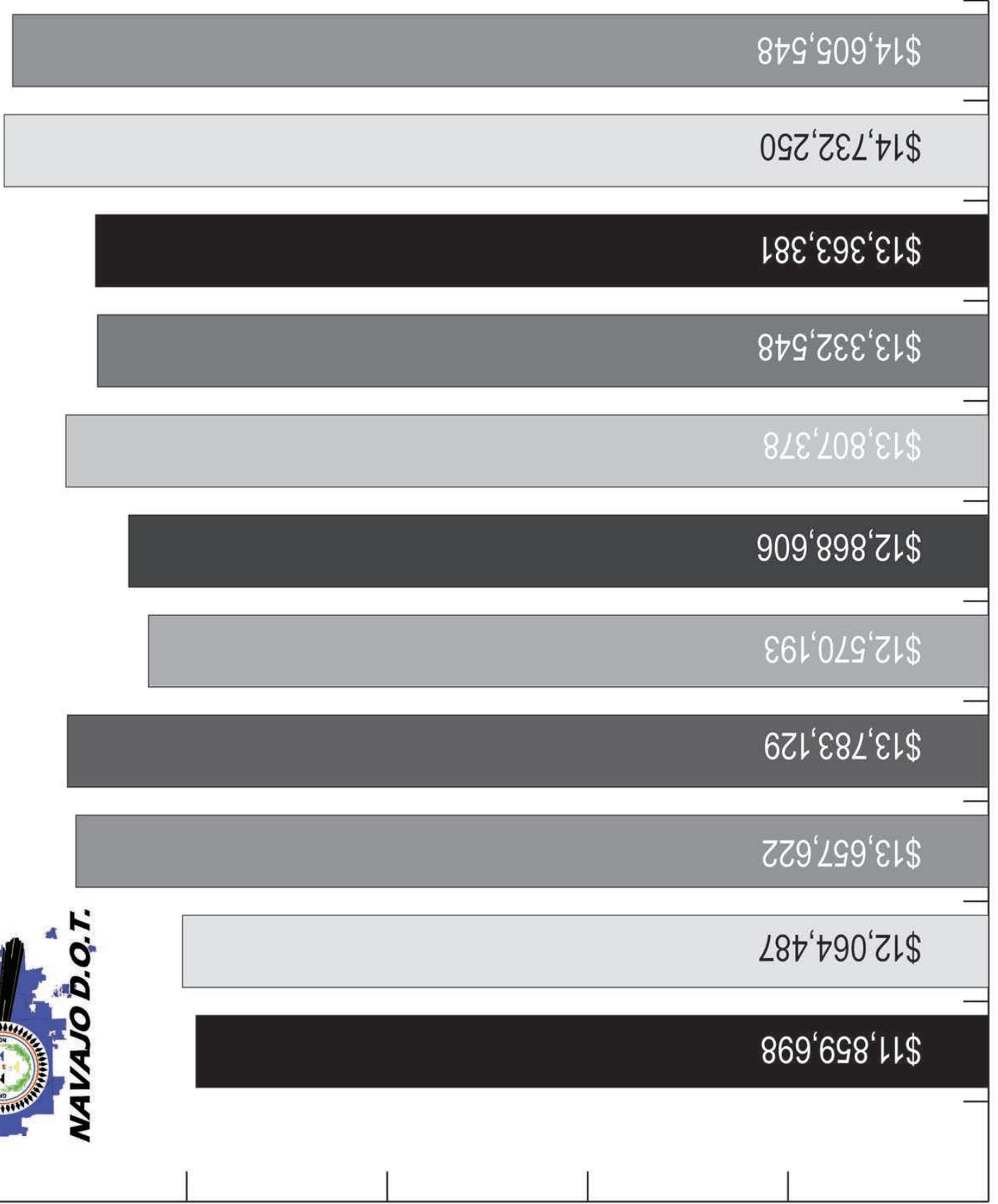
\$12,000,000

\$9,000,000

\$6,000,000

\$3,000,000

0



\* Statistical data provided by Office of Navajo Tax Commission

FISCAL YEAR '02 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 '08 '09 '10 '11 '12

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE



Navajo Nation Office of the President  
and Vice President &  
Navajo County Board of Supervisors



---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday, June 27, 2013

Eric Descheenie (Navajo County) 928-524-4045  
Erny Zah (Navajo Nation) 928-380-0071

### **NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT BEN SHELLY, NAVAJO COUNTY CHAIRMAN JONATHAN NEZ, AND RED DOG GRAVEL PROJECT PARTNERS SHOWCASE PROGRESS ON ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

**PINON, AZ** – Wednesday, inter-governmental partners making up the Red Dog Graveling Project demonstrated progress to Navajo Nation “Black Mesa Region” Chapter leadership and Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly during a team update meeting at the Navajo Nation Department of Transportation/Navajo County Pinon Road Yard Facility.

The Red Dog Gravel Project is a partnership initiative intended to improve the quality of life for Black Mesa Region residents by crushing, hauling, and placing red dog gravel material from Peabody Western Coal Company on 125 miles of road in most need of repair, over five years. Black Mesa region consists of ten Navajo Nation municipalities or chapters including Kayenta, Pinon, Forest Lake, Black Mesa, Shonto, Low Mountain, Chilchinbeto, Whippoorwill, Hardrock, and Blue Gap/Tachee.

The intergovernmental partnership consists of Navajo Nation Department of Transportation (NDOT), Navajo County, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Peabody Western Coal Company, local school districts, in particular Pinon and Kayenta, in addition to the chapters.

The partnership reported to meeting participants that Phase-I of year-one is complete and Phase-II of year-one is well underway. Phase-I included the delivery of 4,500 tons of red dog gravel to each chapter to improve road segments (totaling 25 miles) in most need of repair as identified by chapters.

Phase-II of year-one includes the distribution of 40,000 tons of red dog gravel to the respective ten chapters and placement to locations where chapters designated greatest need. To date, the communities of Low Mountain and Whippoorwill have received their allocated amount with road maintenance vehicles making their way to the next designated chapters. Phase-II is expected to be completed this fall.

As a facilitator to the Red Dog Gravel Project, Navajo County Chairman Jonathan Nez acknowledged the outstanding cooperation and hard work of the partners, "If there is ever a model of true partnership involving virtually all levels of government and the private sector, this is it. The federal government through the BIA, Navajo Nation, Navajo County – State of Arizona, Navajo chapters, and Peabody Western Coal Company are all contributing to this common effort in tremendous ways. Chapters, NDOT, and Navajo County have foot much of the bill for the 40,000 of gravel crushing. Navajo Nation has provided \$250,000 for material hauling and placing expenses. BIA Force Account, the construction workforce group in BIA, is contracted to haul material with cost effective material placement. Navajo County has provided two road maintenance equipment operators and water trucks. And NDOT, Navajo County, and Peabody are providing fuel. Even the school districts are allowing construction crew to lodge in their respective housing units. I applaud all of us."

After reporting on much of the progress the BIA Force Account has made since they started April 8, BIA Construction Manager Joe Peterman stated, "These guys deserve a lot of kudos. They work hard from sun up to sun down and more, and we're coming to your chapters...be ready! I want to thank the Kayenta Unified School District for providing our guys housing and Navajo County for buying our trucks new tires. Going through 15 tires to date tells you the kind of miles we're putting in. We greatly appreciate it."

After receiving the update reports from the project partners, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly offered his remarks, "This group here is pioneering how partnerships work successfully and you all need to share this with other chapters and agencies to learn from. I have directed NDOT to setup trainings and work sessions to share how you made this work to provide safer roads in your communities."

The Red Dog Gravel Project update concluded with site visits to Navajo Route 4, west of the Pinon community and Navajo Route 67 of the Low Mountain community. Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, Navajo County Chairman Jonathan M. Nez, NDOT Director Paulson Chaco, Navajo County Public Works Director Homero Vela, Navajo County Transportation Liaison Leo Sheppard, and accompanying staff observed partnership construction crew carrying out Red Dog graveling for the people.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 27, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Resources and Development Committee discusses  
the impacts of oil drilling in the Eastern Navajo Agency**

**PUEBLO PINTADO, N.M.** – The Resources and Development Committee received a report on Tuesday from RDC member Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) regarding oil drilling operations on federal lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management near the community of Counselor in the Eastern Navajo Agency.

Delegate Tsosie described the impacts of the oil drilling operation on Counselor residents, roads, and safety.

“The Navajo people living in Counselor have had their every day activities disrupted by oil producers,” said Delegate Tsosie. “These oil producers use a method called ‘horizontal drilling’ and I am concerned that the oil companies are not only disrupting the residents, but also drilling oil from under Navajo land allotments.”

According to Delegate Tsosie, the BLM has created a Research Management Plan for the oil drilling operation, leading to the approval of oil drilling leases on BLM lands near Counselor.

“The oil leases were approved without consultation with the Navajo Nation,” noted Delegate Tsosie. “The Nation needs to meet with the Bureau of Land Management to explore how we can work this out.”

Delegate Tsosie stressed that any corrective action must be strategic, as current oil operations could possibly pose an economic threat to the Navajo Exchange Legislative Initiative.

The Navajo Exchange Legislative Initiative seeks to consolidate Bureau of Land Management Lands in the Navajo Eastern Agency and place the land into trust.

Brandon Velivis, economic development advisor for Ojo Encino Chapter, explained the challenges of enforcing effective land use plans in the Eastern Navajo Agency due to the vastness of Navajo checkerboard lands.

“Land use plans and environmental impact statements must include potential impacts to cultural and economic resources on tribal lands,” said Velivis. “These impacts were considered because of the mix of tribal, federal, and allotted lands, thus there is no adherence to Navajo cultural customs or community safety.”

Delegate Tsosie added that the oil operation has led to an increase in noise and traffic in Counselor, upsetting many residents.

“In Counselor, you will see the operation’s smoke emissions close to traditional Navajo hogans and roads that are constantly being damaged by tractors and oil trucks,” Delegate Tsosie said.

Following the presentation, RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) expressed deep concern for the residents, adding that he would like the issue addressed immediately to prevent prolonged challenges for the community.

“We need to resolve this looking at the problem from all angles,” said Delegate Pete. “This is an issue where all parties need to be on the same page.”

RDC vice chair Council Delegate Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) reminded his committee colleagues to remain mindful of political interests when seeking a possible solution.

“We need to acknowledge the political processes tied to the drilling and determine the best process to remedy a solution,” Delegate Smith said. “I am very interested to see if the Research Management Plan can be re-opened to address concerns of the chapter and the Nation.”

In response to the committee’s comments, Delegate Tsosie explained that the issue has resulted in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Eastern Navajo Land Commission working together to address the jurisdictional complexities.

“This situation is exactly where a government-to-government relationship needs to occur,” said Delegate Tsosie. “The operation is occurring entirely on BLM lands, but we don’t know what’s going on underground.”

RDC chair Council Delegate Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) suggested the committee create a directive requesting the Navajo Department of Justice to consult with the committee about the issue.

“I believe the Navajo Nation can work to delay the operation by working together and possibly finding a way to compete with these oil producers,” said Delegate Benally.

Delegate Tsosie expressed support for Delegate Benally’s directive, adding that he would sponsor legislation to acquire the resources to further investigate the Nation’s interests in the oil operation.

RDC members voted 5-0 to support a directive to Navajo Department of Justice, requesting consultation with the RDC to review the Nation’s interests in the oil drilling operation.

RDC members accepted the report with a vote of 5-0.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**

**Cell: (928) 380-0771**

**[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)**

For Immediate Release  
June 26, 2013

---

## **Navajo President Shelly Responds to Obama's Climate Change Strategy**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly released the following statement regarding President Barack Obama's newly unveiled strategy regarding climate change.

"The Navajo Nation supports President Obama's climate action plan, but remains mindful of the important role fossil based energy has in providing secure, low-cost energy for the country. The Navajo Nation is supportive of an all of the above energy approach and is optimistic as we go down this road.

Though we look forward to new technologies that will be more environmentally sound, we hope that as policies are developed for the new initiative, policies will reflect time and resources necessary for economies dependent upon fossil fuels to transition into cleaner energy.

We are heartened to see specific mention for alternative energy resources and climate change preparedness specific to tribes. We applaud the president for taking such a bold step at addressing climate change and we stand at the ready to address climate change for our future generations."

President Shelly's statement is in response to a newly announce White House initiative that aims to further reduce emissions from fossil fuel production.

About 95 percent of the Navajo Nation's general fund after set asides is generated by fossil fuel royalties, leases and taxes.

###



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 25, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Law and Order Committee approves legislation to  
allow alcohol sales on casino floors in the state of Arizona**

*Legislation moves on to the Naabik'iyáti Committee for consideration*

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Law and Order Committee on Monday approved Legislation No. 0165-13, seeking to amend Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code to allow the sale and consumption of alcohol on casino floors owned by the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') urged LOC members to support the bill in an effort to promote economic development for the Nation.

“The gaming industry is very competitive and in order for us to compete at a high level, we need to adjust some laws that we have in place,” said Delegate Begay.

NNGE CEO Derrick Watchman explained that the proposed amendment would not affect Navajo casinos currently operating in the state of New Mexico due to restrictions in the New Mexico Gaming Compact that prohibit the sale of alcohol on casino floors throughout the state.

LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) expressed concern over regulation and enforcement of alcohol sales.

“How are we going to prevent people from consuming alcohol outside of the casino, or prevent people from bringing in liquor from outside the casino?” asked Delegate Shepherd.

In response, Watchman and general counsel for NNGE Ray Etcitty, assured LOC members that the NNGE is bound to strict policies from the Arizona Gaming Compact and the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control, that specifically outline regulations regarding the sale of alcohol.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) voiced concerns over the possibility of increased domestic violence and other crimes as a result of expanded alcohol sales.

“We talk about economic development for the Nation, but you also have to consider the victims in our communities,” Delegate Yazzie said.

Delegate Yazzie urged LOC members to reconsider the legislation after the NNGE establishes a proposed liquor sales tax, referencing a report received by LOC members from executive director of the Navajo Tax Commission Martin Ashley, prior to the legislation discussion.

The proposed liquor sales tax would be separate from the current five-percent Navajo Nation sales tax and the tax revenue would benefit public safety and social services on the Navajo Nation, according to Ashley.

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) suggested the sale of alcohol on casino floors be limited to the Twin Arrows Navajo Resort Casino, and reiterated the need for NNGE officials to be very cautious in serving alcohol to casino guests.

After an hour of discussion, LOC members voted 4-1 in support of Legislation No. 0165-13.

The legislation now moves on to the Naabik'iyátí Committee for consideration.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 25, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nrlb.communications@gmail.com

**Council Delegate Elmer Begay welcomes officials and heavy equipment operators to Heavy Equipment Certification training**

**DILKON, Ariz.** – On Monday, Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) welcomed officials from Navajo County, Navajo Nation Division of Transportation, and Bureau of Indian Affairs to a 40-hour heavy equipment certification training.

Navajo County, NNDOT, and BIA partnered together in an effort to provide training to heavy equipment operators from various communities throughout the Navajo Nation.

“I know this is a longtime coming,” said Delegate Begay. “You should be proud to be here.”

“There’s no other chapter, community, or county that has reached this point,” said Delegate Begay to approximately 25 heavy equipment operators in attendance.

BIA Road Maintenance Supervisor and training facilitator Franklin Sandoval said the partnership between Navajo County, NNDOT, and the BIA is an effort to allow chapters to localize road construction and maintenance in their areas.

Delegate Begay said he believes the initiative sets an example for other chapters to localize road construction and maintenance through training in their communities.

“If you go to other local governments, they haven’t gone this far with certification [training],” said Delegate Begay.

Navajo County Public Works Transportation project manager Alberto Peshlakai said the training was developed by the Southwestern Navajo Region Transportation Planning Council, comprised of chapter officials from Birdsprings, Tolani Lake, Teesto, Dilkon, Indian Wells, White Cone, Greasewood, and Jeddito.

Peshlakai added that NNDOT, BIA, and Navajo County collaborated in the past to maintain roads throughout Navajo land and broke down jurisdictional barriers to increase cost-effective initiatives for road construction and maintenance.

Navajo County supervisor Jesse Thompson reasserted Delegate Begay’s support for the partnership.

“Teaming up is important for NNDOT [and other agencies] to work as a functional unit for the community,” said Thompson.

Thompson, Peshlakai, and Sandoval worked to plan and implement the training with support from Delegate Begay and chapter officials.

Delegate Begay said the training will improve over time, and expand to other areas aside from road construction and maintenance.

At the conclusion of his welcome address, Delegate Begay expressed appreciation to the trainees and officials for working together for the benefit of their communities.

“I really am thankful for your participation because this is for the people in our communities,” said Delegate Begay.

The one-week training concludes on June 28.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)

## Brewer signs SB 1317, allows tribes stake in Aviation Fund



*Arlando Teller, program manager for Department of Airport Management, said the seed for Senate Bill 1317 was originally planted in 2011. Governor Jan Brewer recently signed the legislation into law on June 20, allowing tribally-owned airports a chance to compete for Arizona Aviation Fund grants. Sponsored by Senator Jack Jackson, Jr., the bill gives tribes a chance to submit proposals for infrastructure improvements at tribal airports in Arizona. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*

WINDOW ROCK-After a lengthy six-month process winding its way through the Arizona Legislature, Senate Bill 1317 was signed into law by Arizona Governor Jan Brewer on June 20, 2013.

Sponsored by Senator Jack Jackson, Jr., SB 1317 allows tribally-owned airports to participate in the Arizona Department of Transportation's Aviation Fund program.

The purpose of the fund is to allow competitive grants for infrastructure and improvements to public airports in Arizona. The fund is financed by aviation fuel and aircraft

registration fees imposed upon pilots in Arizona.

There is no taxpayer dollars included in the Arizona Aviation Fund.

"This bill is a great opportunity for the 14 tribally-owned airports of Arizona to compete with other public airports to improve their runways and other needs," said Paulson Chaco, director of the Navajo Division of Transportation.

He said pilots from these tribally-owned airports have contributed to the aviation fund since its inception and that it is only fair they are allowed to compete for approved infra-

structure projects through the fund.

"The Navajo Nation has five airports in Arizona that can benefit from this legislation. We look forward to improving mobility for the northern part of the state," Chaco said.

The Navajo Nation owns airports in the Arizona communities of Chinle, Ganado, Kayenta, Tuba City and Window Rock.

The responsibility of guiding the Navajo Nation's airports is shouldered by Arlando Teller, program manager for the Department of Airport Management.

He explained that the seed for SB 1317 was planted in 2011. The Arizona Airports Association initially supported the bill but cited concerns that tabled the legislation.

"They were supportive of allowing tribal airports to become eligible to utilize state aviation grants but they questioned the differing regulatory environment such as taxation and how tribes would pay into the program," Teller explained.

Eventually in Dec. 2012, AAA's new president, Corinne Nystrom, supported amending the Arizona Revised Statutes 28-8202, to include tribal

governments to participate in the program.

Subsequently, Sen. Jackson reintroduced SB 1317 in Jan. 2013 for consideration by the Arizona Legislature.

Teller said the disparity allowing for recognition of tribal governments to compete for the aviation funding was finally addressed after years of inequity.

He noted that a white paper report from Mike Klein, aeronautics manager for ADOT, was instrumental in the approval process for the legislation.

Klein's report explained that airport users are the funding source for the fund, through their purchase of aviation fuel and compliance with aircraft registration fees.

Teller said the operations

airport on an annual basis.

The grants from the Aviation Fund can be utilized to improve airport infrastructure that directly relate to safety, such as runway and taxiway pavement rehabilitation.

Teller prioritized the top three needs of Navajo-owned airports in Arizona in the following order: Chinle, Window Rock and Tuba City.

He said all of the airports require a total rehabilitation of the runways, taxiways, aprons and ramps. They also require electrical upgrades for lighting, perimeter fencing and drainage improvements.

All of the Navajo Nation runways are at a dimension of 7,500-feet long by 75-feet wide.

The Navajo Nation owns three aircraft, which are main-



*The Department of Airport Management is responsible for the seven Navajo Nation airports in Arizona and New Mexico. Five of the airports are located in the Arizona communities of Chinle, Ganado, Kayenta, Tuba City and Window Rock. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*

---

## **“Partnership is the key. Working with our state and tribal leaders is the key in communicating.”**

---

for each of the reservation airports have increased through the years. Air transportation for medical purposes comprises the primary bulk of the flight operations.

Also on the increase are tribal government use and visitors traveling to the Navajo Nation as a destination spot.

“Last month, visitors from Israel rented an aircraft in Sedona and flew to Chinle to visit Canyon de Chelly,” Teller said.

Available to eligible public airports for more than 15 years, the Arizona Aviation Fund is distributed by the State Transportation Board.

There are currently 196 active and pending grants, amounting to \$37 million in obligations. The fund stands at \$24 million presently.

Only 10 percent of the fund can be used as the maximum grant award for any individual

tained by the Air Transport Department under the Division of General Services.

The signing of SB 1317 by Gov. Brewer was a collaborative effort.

“Partnership is the key. Working with our state and tribal leaders is the key in communicating,” Teller said. “A decade from now, I envision well-maintained and equipped airports that encourage economic opportunities and self-sustainment that enhance safe and secure airport operations.”

The Navajo Nation owns a total of seven airports located in Arizona and New Mexico.

Information:  
[www.navajodot.org](http://www.navajodot.org)

-30-



*The Window Rock Airport is at an elevation of 6,750 feet and covers an area of 88 acres. The airport is located one nautical mile south of the central business district of Window Rock, Ariz. The airport has one runway measuring 7,000-feet by 75-feet and averages about 5,000 general aviation aircraft operations per year, or 13 flights per day. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*



Contact: Erny Zah  
Director of Communications  
Cell: (928) 380-0771  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 24, 2013

---

## Navajo President and Vice President Congratulate High Wire Artist Nik Wallenda



**LITTLE COLORADO RIVER GORGE, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim congratulated high wire artist Nik Wallenda after he successfully walked across the Little Colorado River Gorge on a two inch steel cable on Sunday evening near the Grand Canyon.

Wallenda's tightrope walk, which was near the Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park, was broadcasted live on the Discovery Channel to 217 countries throughout the world.

"I want to congratulate Nik on his successful walk. I want to thank the Discovery Channel, NBC and all the workers who made this event successful. This is an example of what can happen when we work together.

I am pleased that the Navajo Nation was a part of this project and that we helped Nik achieve one of his life long goals. It was exciting to Nik walk on the tightrope with windy conditions and I am happy that he was successful.

The worldwide audience was able to see the Navajo Nation and now we invite you to come Navajo land. Come see the pristine landscape for yourself, with your own eyes, you won't regret it. We invite travelers near and far to come experience Navajo land," President Shelly said.



High wire artist Nik Wallenda walking just after clearing the halfway marker during his successful tightrope walk across the Little Colorado River Gorge Sunday evening near the Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park.

President Shelly, Navajo First Lady Martha Shelly and Vice President Jim sat together near the edge of the Little Colorado Gorge and watched Wallenda walk across the gorge.

President Shelly gave a bolo tie to Wallenda after the walk and Vice President Jim presented Wallenda a silver and turquoise belt buckle.

Vice President Jim said Wallenda's success is about achievement.

"I want our Navajo children to know that they can dream big and have big success. Just like Nik dreamed about walking over the Grand Canyon, our young children can dream big about their goals in life and they can achieve them.

We can use each success and build upon that. Each success builds for bigger dreams and larger successes. We can accomplish that for the Navajo Nation," Vice President Jim said.

###



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 21, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Council Delegate Kenneth Maryboy and Teec Nos Pos  
chapter officials declare state of emergency due to water shortages**

**Teec Nos Pos, Ariz.** – On Thursday afternoon, Council Delegate Kenneth Maryboy (Mexican Water, Aneth, Teecnospos, Tólikan, Red Mesa) and chapter officials issued a memo declaring a state of emergency due to water shortages that have resulted in the deaths of livestock in the community of Teec Nos Pos, located near the four corners region.

The memo signed by Delegate Maryboy, chapter president Alfred Jim, grazing officer Herman Lee, and CLUP member Herbert Peterson states, “Ranchers and livestock owners have a concern for water for the livestock. In addition, because of limited water, livestock are beginning to perish.”

Delegate Maryboy attributed water shortages to the closing of several local water wells due to high levels of contamination.

“We had elderly people come by the chapter house saying they are worried about their sheep, horses, and cows because there is no water for them,” said Delegate Maryboy.

Chapter president Alfred Jim noted that many local residents have relied on one water trough that is currently not in operation.

Delegate Maryboy said the chapter notified and is awaiting responses from the Division of Community Development, Navajo Nation Emergency Management, Division of Community Development, Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, Apache County, and San Juan County in Utah.

Jim and Delegate Maryboy expressed dissatisfaction with the policies and procedures of the Local Governance Support Centers when dealing with emergency situations.

“We have to go through a lot of red tape and we can’t afford to do that,” stated Jim. “We need to get water out there as soon as possible.”

Delegate Maryboy added that the Tólikan chapter and Mexican Water chapter may soon declare a state of emergency due to water contamination in the area.

“We would like to get water tanks to haul water out there, but we need assistance,” said Delegate Maryboy. “We are open to any help that our community can get.”

###



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 21, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Budget and Finance Committee votes down supplemental funding for the demolition of former Tuba City District Court Building**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Budget and Finance Committee met Tuesday to discuss Legislation No. 0144-13, which sought to approve supplemental funding from the Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance in the amount of \$150,000 to demolish the former Tuba City District Court Building.

In Nov. 2012, the Tuba City Local Government approved a resolution supporting the efforts to demolish the former Tuba City District Court Building, citing environmental and safety concerns, and its infringement on the new Tuba City Judicial Complex.

“The building is at a point where it is condemned,” said director of the Navajo Nation Judicial Administration Edward Martin.

“This building is located about ten feet from the brand new courthouse and we’re afraid [that] at some point if it’s not demolished, it could [collapse and] damage the new court building,” Martin added.

In Jan. 2013, Program Supervisor III Herman Shorty from the Navajo Nation Division of Health’s Office of Environmental Health/Code Enforcement, issued an Order of Closure for the former Tuba City District Court building.

The legislation garnered opposition from BFC members including BFC vice chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts’ah Bii Kin).

“Today, we all know that there is a need for office space,” said Delegate Nez.

Delegate Nez added that the poor condition of the building is likely due to a lack of upkeep and maintenance, and that renovating the office space could be a feasible task instead of demolition.

BFC member Council Delegate Lorenzo Curley (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si áni, Wide Ruins) also opposed the legislation saying, “Saving the building is a cheaper alternative.”

The former judicial complex was transferred from the Navajo Nation Courts to Navajo Nation Property, and no maintenance to the building continued thereafter, according to Martin.

Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') recommended that an assessment and report be conducted on the building by Navajo Nation Property.

Legislation sponsor Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) pointed out that an assessment of the closed property had already taken place by a certified building inspector.

"There is a liability issue with having someone move in there, which I think is a huge concern," stressed Delegate Begaye.

Despite the completion of the building assessment and official closure of the former district court complex, BFC members recommended the Navajo Nation Property Department consider renovating the facility for future use.

At the conclusion of the discussion, BFC members opposed Legislation No. 0144-13 with a 0-3 vote.

The legislation now moves on to the Naabik'iyáti' Committee for consideration.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 20, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Council Delegate Walter Phelps highlights the  
importance of education in presentation to Girl Scout Troops**



**Photo: Council Delegate Walter Phelps (center) speaks to Girl Scout Troops representing the Arizona Cactus-Pine Council at St. Michael Indian School.**

**ST. MICHAELS, Ariz.** – Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) took time on Wednesday to share words of encouragement to a group of 30 Girl Scout Troops participating in a week-long summer camp at St. Michael Indian School.

Delegate Phelps, a member of the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, recalled a conversation with a former leader that took place while the two participated in the Navajo Nation parade years ago.

“I remember a great leader and he said, ‘I know the Navajo Nation will continue to grow stronger and the Nation will be strong for many more generations,’” said Delegate Phelps.

“I tell you this because that’s who you are, you are the future of our Nation,” Delegate Phelps told the group. “You are the future leaders, the future doctors, the future police women of the Navajo Nation.”

Delegate Phelps commended the girls for taking part in the summer camp and recommended their continued participation in the Girl Scouts to help overcome adversity and setbacks that often affect the youth throughout the Nation.

Crystalyne Curley, legislative district assistant for Delegate Phelps and Celena McCray, legislative district assistant for HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) were also in attendance and urged the group to adhere to the teachings of their elders and to continue with their education despite obstacles that may stand in their way.

Delegate Phelps concluded his brief presentation by encouraging the Girl Scouts to become involved in their communities by attending chapter meetings.

“You learn a lot about your community by attending meetings, and many important decisions are made at the local levels that affect your lives on a daily basis,” Delegate Phelps said.

Troop Leader Carla Moerike said the group will be given the opportunity to earn a Girl Scouts badge if they attend chapter meetings in the near future.

The week-long summer camp is the first to be held in St. Michaels for the Girl Scouts of the Arizona Cactus-Pine Council.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 20, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

**Law and Order Committee receives report regarding the Judicial/Public Safety Complex Priority Listing**

**CROWNPOINT, NM** – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee received a report from director of the Navajo Nation Judicial Administration Edward Martin, regarding the Judicial/Public Safety Complex Priority Listing.

The discussion focused on Legislation No. 0083-13 sponsored by Council Delegate Alton Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat), aiming to expand the judicial/public safety facilities priority listing from five to ten.

On Mar. 26, the Budget and Finance Committee considered and tabled Legislation No. 0083-13, until a listing of locations was finalized.

The Judicial/Public Safety Facilities Fund receives 25 percent of its revenue from the Navajo Sales Tax to construct new facilities, such as the newly constructed judicial/public safety complexes in Tuba City and Crownpoint.

Originally, the priority listing consisted of five locations including Chinle, Shiprock, Fort Defiance, Pinon, and Dilkon.

LOC members recommended the addition of five locations to include Aneth, Ramah, Kayenta, Alamo, and Pueblo Pintado, pending approval from Chief Justice Herb Yazzie and Public Safety Division Director John Billison.

Chief Justice Yazzie and Billison signed off on the initial agreement. However, when the agreement was amended to add five additional locations, Billison's signature was absent, according to Exhibit A of the legislation.

LOC member Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Whitecone) expressed support and advocated for his community of Dilkon.

"They still have to transport their prisoners all the way to Window Rock," said Council Delegate Elmer Begay, explaining the need for additional sites to alleviate detainment and transportation issues in Dilkon.

LOC vice-chair Delegate Shepherd explained that the added five locations would allow chapters the opportunity to advocate for funding, pointing out that funding agencies often request a priority listing. It would illustrate the need and optimal focus the NN is taking on these prioritized projects, thus attracting outside resources, said Delegate Shepherd.

“They have received the appropriate resolutions and clearances to go forward with this project, but they have run out of funding to complete construction,” Martin said.

The Kayenta judicial complex is currently under construction, and has made preparations for the construction of a police station and corrections facility, Martin added.

At the conclusion of the discussion, LOC members agreed that the expansion of the list would be beneficial to the Public Safety Division and surrounding communities.

The LOC voted 3-0 to accept the report.

On Tuesday, the BFC voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0083-13, including two amendments to expand the priority list from seven to ten sites, and moving Ramah to the top of the list.

The BFC is the final authority for this legislation.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



Contact: Erny Zah  
Director of Communications  
Cell: (928) 380-0771  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 19, 2013

---

## Navajo President Shelly Says Navajo Nation is Capable of Running Buy-Back Program



President Ben Shelly (center) speaks with Navajo Regional BIA Director Sharon Pinto (left) during a tribal government-to-government consultation about the Department of Interior's Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations.

**ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said to the Department of Interior that the Navajo Nation is capable of implementing the recently announced a Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations.

Wednesday's meeting was the first government-to-government consultation between DOI and the Navajo Nation about the buy-back program, which was announced on Tuesday.

"Navajo Nation has the capability to acquire lands efficiently which provides an opportunity to the Navajo people to maximize their interest and provided a valuation methods through the Buy-Back Program," President Shelly said.

“Navajo Nation strongly recommends for the American Indian Trust Land funds to be allocated directly to Navajo Nation through a contract to administer the Buy-Back land for its Navajo people,” President Shelly added.

As part of the program, DOI has made \$1.9 billion available to American Indian tribes to buy allotted lands that have multiple owners. The Navajo Nation’s portion is about \$103 million to potentially buy 4,355 tracts of land that have multiple owners.

The program would only buy land from owners who agree to sell their land.

John McClanahan, program manager for the Land Buy-Back Program, said the program plans to have multiple meetings to with Navajo leaders, allotment landowners and other interested parties.

“We want to make sure we are tailoring the program to the unique needs of the Navajo Nation,” McClanahan said during his opening presentation.

Another suggestion President Shelly presented was that lands that are purchased under the program should have environmental clearances to reduce environmental liabilities.

“This will strengthen the chapters on Navajo Nation and the opportunity to enhance residential, community and economic development through their comprehensive community land use plans,” President Shelly said.

Sharon Pinto, Navajo Region director for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, said having a centralized location for the program would make it easier for landowners to learn about the Buy-Back Program.

“I think it is important to have a centralized location for landowners. We need to take this and move it forward to make it successful,” Pinto said.

Navajo Chief of Staff Arbin Mitchell said the buy-back program could help achieve rights of ways for new projects since some allotment lands have multiple owners.

“If one says no, that puts the whole project on hold or we have to change plans,” Mitchell said.

President Shelly stated after the meeting that though New Mexico has the most fractionalized allotted lands, the Navajo Nation has to be concerned with the needs of all Navajo allottees, including allottees in Arizona and Utah.

“We have Navajo families in all three states that have allotted lands. We have to listen to all the people about how we can make this program work for them,” President Shelly said.

###

## Navajo DOT enhances Navajo Nation Zoo parking lot



Zoologist David Mikesic of the Navajo Nation Zoo, right, presents Paulson Chaco, director of Navajo Division of Transportation, with a plaque designating appreciation for NDOT's donation of equipment, material, and manpower to gravel the zoo parking lot and entry way. Mikesic presented the award at the Navajo Transportation Complex in Tse Bonito, N.M. in June 2013. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK-To say David Mikesic loves animals is an understatement.

Mikesic is the zoologist for the Navajo Nation Zoo. Educated as a biologist and zoologist, he spent most of his free time working with animals before moving to the Navajo Nation.

His passion for helping animals in need brought him to Window Rock in Oct. 1994 to work for the Navajo Fish and Wildlife Department as a zoologist. Mikesic was eventually promoted to zoologist for the Navajo Nation Zoo in 2010.

Since then, he has been squarely focused on improving the living conditions of animals at the zoo and enhancing the zoo experience for visitors.

Recently, one such improvement elevated the Navajo Nation Zoo experience exponentially.

The Navajo Division of Transportation graveled the zoo parking lot and roadway in early 2013 and made the facilities accessible for employees and visitors alike.

NDOT director Paulson Chaco was awarded a plaque in appreciation for donation of goods and services in completing major

renovations to the Navajo Nation Zoo parking lot and entry road.

Mikesic presented the award to Chaco in June 2013 at the Navajo Transportation Complex in Tse Bonito, N.M.

"The graveling effort for the Navajo Nation Zoo was another improvement project completed by the Navajo Division of Transportation," Chaco said. "We continue to move forward with the mission of NDOT, which is to improve transportation infrastructure on the Navajo Nation."

Project costs for the Navajo Nation Zoo were in excess of \$15,000 when manpower, equipment, and materials are factored in together. Over \$10,000 in general funds covered the cost of gravel.

Mikesic said the zoo was greatly improved for employee access and parking. Previously, employees and visitors had to slog through mud during adverse weather. Compounding the challenges for the zoo was mud and dirt tracked inside the facilities as well.

"It has reduced our need to clean mud from the office space as often. When it rained or snowed, the parking lot was difficult and

dangerous to drive into,” Mikesic said.

The zoo was officially opened on July 4, 1977.

Today, it features over 100 animals from 50 different species. Most of the animals are native to the Navajo Nation and were taken in as injured or orphaned animals.

Six permanent staff members operate the Navajo Nation Zoo, in addition to dedicated volunteers from the Office of Youth Development, Workforce Development, and Program for Self Reliance.

Over 40,000 people visit the zoo annually, which is nestled into the sandstone rocks by the Arizona-New Mexico state line. Educational tours are provided to over 3,000 school kids each year.

Popular exhibits at the zoo include the Golden Eagles, Black Bear, Raccoons, and Cougars.

Mikesic has a vision of modernity for the future.

“Within 10 years, I want to see the zoo as a more modern zoo with renovated animal enclosures and more education and recreational opportunities for the Navajo people and visitors from around the world,” he said.

Plans include an eagle aviary, nocturnal mammal house, duck pond, and other additions.

The Navajo Nation Zoo welcomes donations from the public.

People can sponsor an animal through the zoo’s Adopt-an-Animal program. Organizations can also contribute by sponsoring



*Top photos, before the NDOT graveling project was completed, employees and visitors of the Navajo Nation Zoo had to slog through mud during adverse weather to access the facilities. Bottom photos, NDOT crewmembers graveled the parking lot and entry way to the zoo, which made a major difference for access to and from the zoo. (Photos by David Mikesic)*

---

**“Within 10 years, I want to see the zoo as a more modern zoo with renovated animal enclosures and more education and recreational opportunities for the Navajo people and visitors from around the world.”**

---

renovation or construction projects via funding or labor. Donations are also accepted.

On July 6, the zoo will celebrate their 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a party, free birthday cake, and 25 cent hotdogs. The public is welcome to attend.

The Navajo Nation Zoo continues to provide a sanctuary for nature and the human and animal spirit.

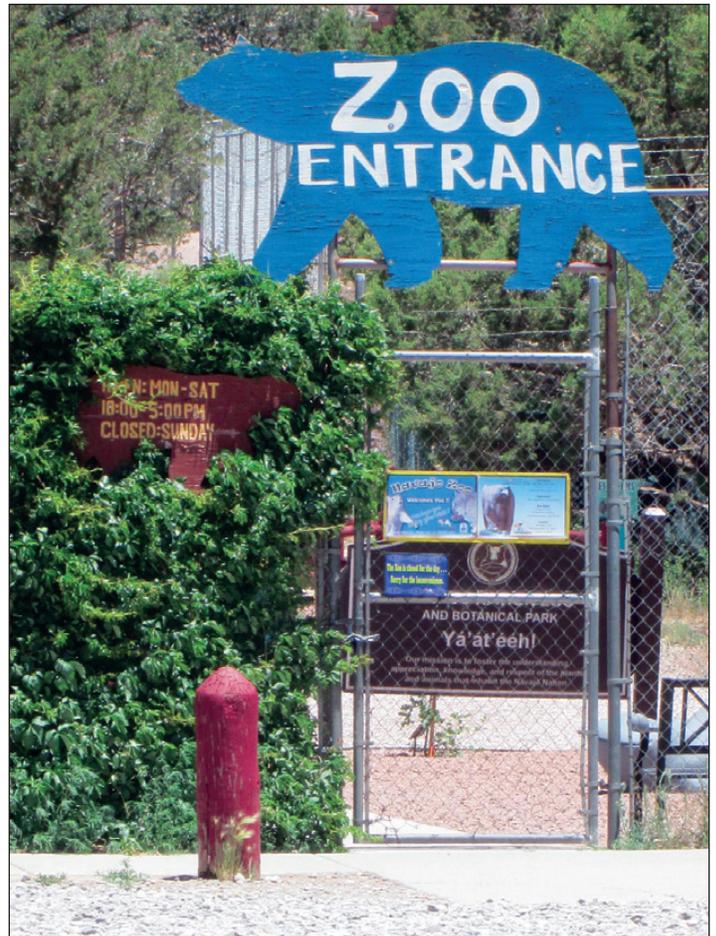
“We provide people with an opportunity to make a connection and learn about the plants and animals of the local Navajo lands,” Mikesic said. “We provide a quiet place in Window Rock to just calm the spirit among our wildlife.”

New additions to the family of injured and orphaned animals at the zoo are Abbey the Black Bear and Mule Deers Jasmine and Bella. They were adopted into the family in November 2012 and found a permanent home in Window Rock.

The Navajo Nation Zoo is the only full-scale zoo owned and operated by a Native American tribe.

The zoo is open Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is open on most major holidays.

Information: [www.navajozoo.org](http://www.navajozoo.org) or [www.navajodot.org](http://www.navajodot.org)



*The Navajo Nation Zoo was enhanced with a gravel parking lot and entry way leading to the facility. Zoologist David Mikesic said the gravel made a big difference for access to the facility for employees and visitors to the facility. The zoo is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and admission is free. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 19, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## Mariano Lake Chapter hosts annual Treaty Days Celebration



**MARIANO LAKE, N.M.** – Mariano Lake gathered with tribal and federal leaders last Friday to celebrate the annual Treaty Days Celebration.

“Treaty Days celebrates what the Navajo people has preserved since the signing of the Treaty of 1868,” said Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) to a crowd of approximately 300 guests and participants.

Delegate Yazzie noted that he and his council colleagues are working with congressional leaders to resolve several issues including obtaining funding for a new Gallup Indian Medical Center, securing the return of 300,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land to the Eastern Navajo Agency, and progressing with the Fort Wingate negotiations.

Mariano Lake Chapter collaborated with Delegate Yazzie, Navajo Technical College, the Navajo Nation Elections Office, and local vendors to offer activities for the entire community to enjoy.

Arts and crafts vendors, food stands and country bands filled the chapter house parking lot, while spectators enjoyed horseshoe games and a Navajo song-and-dance competition.

Event organizers showcased a traditional Navajo Hogan exhibit for visitors, that included a variety of traditional items such as a weaving loom, clothing, and a set of traditional silversmith tools.

Anthony Begay, Mariano Lake Chapter president, introduced field representatives from the offices of New Mexico Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich. Each noted that the senators continue to advocate for Navajo related issues and to honor the Treaty of 1868.

The event marked the tenth annual celebration for Mariano Lake Chapter.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



Contact: Erny Zah  
Director of Communications  
Cell: (928) 380-0771  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 18, 2013

---

## Navajo President Shelly Calls for More Defined Fundamental Law

**TWIN ARROWS, Ariz. –** Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly called for Diné Fundamental Law to be better defined to better protect Navajo children.

The Navajo Nation in 2002 adopted Diné Fundamental Law to recognize unwritten traditional Navajo laws and values in written statutes.

“Only the medicine men know what fundamental law is. We need it written out because we have repeat offenders being let off because of

fundamental law,” President Shelly said during opening remarks at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Navajo Division of Social Services conference on Tuesday.

President Shelly added that Fundamental Law needs to be more specific and urged the conference attendees to start dialogue to find solutions that would help social workers keep offenders accountable for their actions.

“We need stronger laws,” President Shelly added.



President Shelly also thanked the Division of Social Services for their commitment to helping Navajo families.

“I know each of you have had hardships because of the situations you are asked to handle. I want each of you to know that I am thankful for your service to our Nation but most importantly, to our children,” President Shelly said.

The division has been making internal policy changes throughout the past year in efforts to serve Navajo people with more efficiency. President Shelly supports the division’s strides to make changes.

“I strongly support the restructuring of the divisions and programs. We cannot longer operate as we have been for years. We have to become more and more efficient while we find creative ways to deliver services,” President Shelly said.

###



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Cell: (928) 380-0771**

[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 18, 2013

---

## Navajo President Shelly Delivers Long Anticipated FEMA Reimbursement Checks

**EASTERN NAVAJO AGENCY, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly delivered reimbursement checks from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for Navajo chapters from disasters stemming from as far back as 2005.



Throughout two days, Navajo President Ben Shelly hand delivered FEMA reimbursement checks to 12 different New Mexico chapters including Casamero Lake Chapter (above). Casamero Lake Chapter received a check of about \$9,800.

“Our chapters have been waiting years to be reimbursed for money they spent for emergencies since 2005. I am happy to report that we have completed a task that has been plaguing the Navajo Nation for years,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly personally delivered checks to 12 chapters in Navajo Eastern Agency last Friday and on Monday. Chapters in other agencies received hand delivered checks by Navajo Department of Emergency Management staff.

The reimbursement checks varied in amount depending upon the amount of money chapters spent during the emergencies from 2005 through 2010. At least \$2.6 million is being reimbursed to chapters and the Navajo Nation government.

Operations Hashtlish, Monsoon and Snowfall are all part of the reimbursements of emergency spending, along with emergency spending from monsoonal floods of 2006.

In total, the Navajo Nation had 846 disaster projects that were reimbursed up to 75 percent of the total costs.



President Shelly handed a check worth about \$11,700 to Iyanbito Chapter Friday afternoon.

“I know this has been a long time in the making. I am pleased that our Department of Emergency Management was able to move forward and help chapters receive their money,” President Shelly said.

Navajo Department of Emergency Management Director Rose Whitehair said the oldest projects are being reimbursed first, then other larger then smaller projects is expected to be reimbursed.



President Shelly handed a check worth about \$31,000 to Manuelito Chapter.

“We have many checks for many chapters and we have been coordinating with all of them to disburse their checks,” Whitehair said.

The Navajo Department of Emergency Management received and coordinated help with FEMA personnel and volunteers earlier this year, which helped chapters and Navajo DEM complete

necessary paperwork to complete reimbursement applications.

“We are thankful for all the hard work FEMA and FEMA Corps did for us in the past few months. They have been very helpful and provided great insight,” Whitehair said.

She added though that the money that is being reimbursed from FEMA must be used to certain projects.

For some chapter workers, the reimbursements are recognition of keeping sound chapter financial records and allocating funds to their specific purpose.

“Some chapters have been waiting eight years,” said Michelle Bitsie, account maintenance specialist for Tsayatoh Chapter. She also worked for Coyote Canyon Chapter.

President Shelly handed out checks to Tsayatoh, Manuelito, Red Rock, Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau, Casamero Lake, Crownpoint and Becenti Chapters.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 17, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.637.5603  
Jolene Holgate | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Health, Education, and Human Services Committee considers new legislation allowing Navajo Technical College to be named a university**

WINDOW ROCK – The Health, Education, and Human Services Committee discussed Legislation No. 0154-13 last Wednesday, which aims to approve amendments to Title 15 of the Navajo Nation Code. The amendments will allow for NTC to change its name to Navajo Technical University and the authority to establish its own institutional review board.

Legislation No. 0154-13 serves an amended version of Legislation No. 0077-13, which was previously voted down by the Navajo Nation Council, during the Spring Session on April 16.

The original legislation aimed to approve amendments to Title 2 and Title 15 of the Navajo Nation Code, however the legislation’s sponsor Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock), asked the Council to vote down the legislation to allow time to reintroduce new legislation that addressed their concerns.

Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) and the legislation’s co-sponsor, said the legislation’s primary purpose is to raise academic research standards on the Navajo Nation.

“The legislative documents are here for review and to approve Navajo Technical College’s request to become a university,” Delegate Hale said to his colleagues. “The proposed IRB is a necessity for the college to produce valuable research.”

Dr. Elmer Guy, president of Navajo Technical College, urged the committee to approve the legislation and emphasized the college’s accomplishment, mentioning NTC’s six bachelor degree programs, which will soon increase to eight.

Dr. Guy added that the college is working to implement a masters program, the first to be offered on the Navajo Nation.

“Once we are at the masters level of research we are no longer a college, we will be a university,” said Guy.

Delegate Hale addressed the second part of the legislation that seeks for NTC to establish its own IRB.

NTC has worked with the Navajo Division of Health and Department of Justice to clarify concerns over the proposed establishment of an IRB, said Delegate Hale.

“The college will only review and approve students’ research related to NTC’s academic programs,” said Delegate Hale. “Any medical research will continue to be reviewed by the Navajo Nation IRB.”

“Any and all research that can be done by our academic departments will be reviewed by the college,” added Dr. Guy.

Delegate Hale emphasized that Navajo Technical College has progressed and continues to encourage students to enhance their lives and to help Diné people through higher education.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tside To ii) expressed his appreciation and support for the legislation as an effort to improve the quality of education on the Navajo Nation, but also questioned additional support from other Navajo Nation entities.

“I’m grateful you were able to work with the Department of Justice,” said Delegate Phelps. “Will the Department of Justice or Navajo Nation IRB be providing any kind of support for this legislation?”

In response, Dr. Guy explained that NTC has maintained frequent communication with the Navajo Division of Health and Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board.

“We have gained the support from Larry Curley, NDOH division director, and Beverly Becenti-Pigman, chairperson of the Navajo Nation Institutional Review Board,” said Guy. “We each believe this change is good for our children and students.”

At the conclusion of the discussion, HEHS members voted 3-0 to pass the legislation.

The legislation now moves forward to the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee for consideration.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Cell: (928) 380-0771**  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 14, 2013

---

## **Navajo President Shelly Excited About the Release of Navajo Dubbed Star Wars**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The Navajo language once helped save the United States from defeat in World War II, and now will transcend to a galaxy far, far away.

Last week, officials from Knifewing Studios in Gallup, N.M., announced that the Navajo dubbing of Star Wars, originally released in 1977, is now set for release with Navajo dubbing during the Navajo Nation Fourth of July Celebration.

“We are proud of this project,” Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said. “We have great value in our language. Our Code Talkers helped the Americans defeat the Japanese during World War II, and now we can look forward to seeing one of the most successful movies in history now be dubbed in Navajo. This is exciting.”

Deluxe’s Audio Mixer Francisco Rodriguez, was in charge of sound during the recording and Dubbing Director Ellen Stern of Epcar Entertainment coached Navajo actors to deliver voices that capture a realistic representation of the movie.

“We are proud that this project came to the Navajo Nation. It’s interesting to see how Navajo will sound with some of the characters in the movie. It’s a good thing to see our Navajo language on the big screen,” Division of Natural Resources Director Fred White said.

More than 20 voice actors gave their best over the two-week period. The seven primary characters were chosen and confirmed.

“This was an intense recording session that went 12 days straight. I know the public is going to be blown away when they get to see what we have done. The actors, translators, dubbing director, audio mixer, and Knifewing Studios made a great team and it couldn’t be done without all of their involvement.” Manuelito Wheeler, director of the Navajo Nation Museum, said.

“We are so pleased with how well it turned out. None of the cast had ever dubbed a film before. They picked it up quickly and the performances are outstanding.” Shana Priesz, Senior Director of Localization of Deluxe.

The seven actors taking lead roles as the Navajo language voice-overs in the production are:

Terry Teller as Luke Skywalker, James Junes as Han Solo, Clarissa Yazzie as Princess Leia, Anderson Kee as Obi Wan Kenobi, Marvin Yellowhair as Darth Vader, Geri Hongeva-Camarillo as C-3PO and James Bilagody as Grand Moff Tarkin.

For more information please contact Manuelito Wheeler, Director of Navajo Nation Museum (928) 810-7941.

###



Contact: Erny Zah  
Director of Communications  
Cell: (928) 380-0771  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 14, 2013

---

## **Navajo President Shelly Commemorates the Passing of Two Navajo Code Talkers This Week and Orders Lowering of the Navajo Flag**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly commemorated the passing of two Navajo Code Talker who were laid to rest earlier this week. In addition, he ordered the Navajo Nation Flag be flown at half-staff from sunrise June 14 through sundown June 18.

Code Talkers King Fowler and Milton M. Gishal both passed away earlier this week.

“It’s a sad week for our Navajo people knowing that we lost two more of our modern day heroes. The Navajo Nation’s prayers and condolences are with both families. Our Navajo Code Talkers are the sources of great pride for our people. There is a certain pride that our Code Talkers created because they used our language to defeat the Japanese in World War II. We will forever be indebted to the services of our Navajo Code Talkers,” President Shelly said.

Code Talker King Fowler passed away on June 7 at his home in Tonalea, Ariz. He was born on Dec. 12, 1915 in Kaibeto, Ariz.

Code Talker Fowler enlisted with the U.S. Marines on Oct. 27, 1944. After his honorable discharge, he assisted his Tonalea community as a public servant by holding positions in various community organizations and programs.

Code Talker Fowler was preceded in death by his wife Betty S. Fowler.

Code Talker Fowler is survived by his son Bobby Fowler Sr. of Tonalea; Dylon Jacob Fowler, grandson; eight grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

The other Code Talker who passed away was Milton M. Gishal was passed away June 8.

Code Talker Milton M. Gishal was from the Beshbito and Jeddito areas of the Navajo Nation.

Less than 60 Navajo Code Talkers are estimated to still be living with Code Talker Chester Nez being the only one of the original 29 Navajo Code Talkers.

Navajo Code Talkers served in the U.S. Marines in World War II in the Pacific Theater. The Navajo language, which some linguist say is one of the most difficult languages in the world to learn, was encoded and used to communicate during battle. The Navajo code was used in every major engagement in the Pacific Theater from 1942 through 1945.

“If it wasn’t for our language and our Code Talkers, we might not be here right now. Our people have provided a great service to the people of the United States. We are proud of them,” President Shelly said.

In addition, the Navajo Code Talkers Foundation has been raising money to build a museum. For more information visit [www.navajocodetalkers.org](http://www.navajocodetalkers.org).

###



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Cell: (928) 380-0771**  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 14, 2013

---

## Navajo President Shelly Calls the Sequester an Opportunity for Indian Nations



Tribal leaders that participated in the Economic and Energy Challenges and Opportunities for Indian Country round table discussion. Left to right: Ernie Stevens, chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association; Susan Masten, co-president of Women Empowering Women for Indian Nations; Jefferson Keel, president of the National Congress of American Indians; (front center) Tina Danforth, delegate for the Native American Finance Officers Association and treasure of the Onieda Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin; (back center) Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikira Nation; Ben Shelly, president of the Navajo Nation; Derrick Watchman, chief executive officer of the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise; and Roger Fragua, president of COTA Holdings LLC.

**SANDIA PUEBLO, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said the federal sequestration is an opportunity for American Indian nations to reduce federal red tape because tribal nations depend upon the federal government for funding.

“We’re part of the deficit. Give me the power to become more energy independent,” President Shelly said during opening remarks of a tribal leaders round table

discussion at the Developing Tribal Energy Resources and Economies Conference Tuesday morning. The two day conference ended on Wednesday.

“We have the opportunity to shoot a big buck,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly participated in a round table discussion that included leaders from throughout the country.

Some of the topics the panel spoke regarded protecting tribal culture while developing energy, gaining more young people involved with government, and other topics regarding tribal economies.

“I think that people need to bring productive solutions is really key,” said Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikira.

As for getting more young people involved with policy, President Shelly said policy change and allowing younger professionals a chance would help bring younger people into government.

“Tribal leaders need to look at their tribal policies,” President Shelly said.

He added that some Navajo college graduates aren’t qualified for positions at the Navajo Nation because of existing policies. Though legislation is being prepared to address the issue, President Shelly said change is difficult.

“We are trying to amend it. It’s tough. It’s like trying to pull out an old tree with a lot of old roots,” President Shelly said.

Another way to address engagement of young people into government is giving them the opportunity to do so.

“Some of us need to step aside and let the young people come up,” President Shelly said.

Derrick Watchman, chief executive at Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, responded to a statement that interoffice politics might be a reason why young people aren’t interested in tribal positions.

“It’s political no matter where you go,” Watchman said, adding that most of his working experience is working for large corporations.

Watchman said one solution that could be helpful is creating more internships for college students in tribal offices.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 13, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

**Resource and Development Committee sends  
large-quantity water use permits to Navajo Nation Council for final vote**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Resources and Development Committee considered significant legislation on Tuesday requesting the approval of two Navajo Nation water-use permits for the Animas La Plata Project Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline (ALP NNMP) in Upper Fruitland, N.M.

Council Delegate Roscoe Smith (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill) co-sponsored Legislation No. 0102-12, which sought water-use permits for two ALP NNMP projects.

One permit will authorize 4,680 acre-feet per year from the Animas La Plata Project, while the second permits will authorize 2,600 acre-feet per year from the Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline in Upper Fruitland.

The permits will be granted to the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, in order to convey water to its customers via the San Juan River Animas La Plata Project and the San Juan River “Run of the River” Water Project.

Jason John, principal hydrologist for the Navajo Department of Water Resources, provided the legislation’s technical and historical background.

John explained that the water is a part of the San Juan Navajo Water Rights Settlement signed in 2010 by former Navajo President Joe Shirley and former Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar.

“Usually these permits only require approval from the Department of Water Resources. However, the Navajo Nation Code states that water quantities of this size must be approved by the Resources and Development Committee,” John said.

Delegate Smith noted that the Navajo Department of Justice informed the Department of Water Resources that the RDC can exercise the discretion to refer the legislation to the Navajo Nation Council due to the large quantity of water.

“This is a large amount of water, and the legislation will go to the full Navajo Nation Council,” said RDC chair Katherine Benally (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta).

Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) questioned potential water usage, and if any would be used by nearby municipalities.

“If the water is kept behind the Ridges Basin Dam, it is untreated,” said Delegate Pete. “Will the water be pumped into a municipal treatment plant and used by our Navajo communities?”

The Navajo Nation has storage rights in the Ridges Basin Dam, said John, and will exercise those rights to deliver the 4,680 acre-feet of water.

“The water behind the dam is the same water being delivered to Navajo chapters between Farmington to even some west of Shiprock,” said John.

John also explained that the second permit authorizing 2,600 acre-feet for the “Run of the River” project serves Navajo municipal and industrial water needs.

Delegate Pete stated that water management is his biggest concern when it comes to all water settlements, such as those involving the San Juan River, Little Colorado River, and Colorado River.

“I do support this project, but we need to make sure to take every drop of what is allocated to us,” said Delegate Pete. “I do not want municipalities banking our Navajo water.”

Delegate Smith requested that the RDC amend the legislation’s language by inserting ‘Area’ between ‘Shiprock’ and ‘Chapters’ in lines 19 and 23 to prevent any confusion about the usage of the water.

The amendment passed 3-0, and now reads ‘Shiprock Area Chapters’.

At the conclusion of the discussion, RDC members voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0102-12.

The legislation will now move on to the Naabik’íyátí Committee, and then on to the Navajo Nation Council for final approval.

The Colorado Ute Settlement Act of 2000 approved the Animas-La Plata Project.

Upon passage of the settlement, the Navajo Nation received storage rights in the Ridges Basin Dam, located in Durango, Colorado, and the Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline.

The Navajo Nation Municipal Pipeline is 26 miles long, and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 13, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

## **Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie praises community teamwork efforts in the construction of new playground in Thoreau**



**Photo:** Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (far left) speaks on the importance of teamwork during a dedication ceremony for a new community playground in Thoreau, N.M. on June 8.

**THOREAU, N.M.** – Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) praised Thoreau community members and volunteers for donating their time last Saturday to help build a new state-of-the-art playground for the local children at the local St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School.

Approximately 100 people, donning blue work shirts, showed up on-site early that morning on June 8, equipped and ready for the challenge of building the grant-funded playground within eight hours.

“It is very encouraging to note how involved and devoted the community of Thoreau and the St. Bonaventure School has been in providing the youth here with a place where they can play and be active,” Delegate Yazzie said.

Delegate Yazzie, a continual advocator for collaborative and unifying teamwork efforts, said he was elated that with the addition of the new playground in the community, Thoreau children would have a positive reason to spend time outdoors playing and socializing.

“Kids need a safe place where they can laugh, play, and engage in fun physical activity,” said Delegate Yazzie, who added that such activity is valuable in the prevention of youth depression.

In March, the school was informed that they were the recipient of a grant to build a playground from KaBOOM, a national non-profit organization dedicated to creating play spaces for children.

The BlueCross BlueShield of New Mexico stepped up as the main sponsor of the playground building project, and transported about 80 volunteers to the new play site that morning to assist with construction.

“In Thoreau, there is not a whole lot for young people to do, and we wanted to help bring an opportunity and let the community know that we care about them,” said Chris Halter, executive director for the St. Bonaventure school, which applied for the grant two years ago.

Halter said they planned and collaborated with many of the local Navajo chapter communities surrounding Thoreau on the project.

Along with support from Delegate Yazzie, Halter credited the local chapters for their help in generating donations and volunteers to make the project a successful reality.

“I’m excited for the kids in Thoreau,” said Delegate Yazzie. “Their community rallied together in unity to give them a place where fond childhood memories will surely be created.”

###



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 12, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## **Budget and Finance Committee meets with the three branch chiefs to discuss the Nation's budget projections and shortfalls**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Members of the Budget and Finance Committee met with Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood), Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, Chief of Staff for the Office of the President and Vice President Arbin Mitchell, and representatives from various departments on June 5 to discuss the Navajo Nation's 2014 budget and the shortfall due to the federal sequestration.

BFC chair Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) called for the meeting to outline the Nation's priorities and discuss concerns with the three branch chiefs.

"What are the priorities? Is it the elderly, is it education, or is it public safety?" asked Delegate Bates. "At the end of the day, the Nation is going to have to make some tough choices."

Speaker Naize stated that the three branch chiefs had previously met three times this year, most recently on May 20, to discuss the budget issues and that the meeting with the BFC brings them a step closer to resolving the issues.

Delegate Bates warned of the lingering effects of the sequestration, and inquired as to whether the Nation should look into using funds from the Permanent Trust Fund, currently valued at over \$1 billion.

"The sequester is not a one-time occurrence. It has started and it will continue," cautioned Delegate Bates.

According to a report from Robert Willie, general accounting supervisor at the Office of the Controller, revenue for the Nation is projected to be approximately \$171 million in FY 2014, \$165 million in FY 2015, and \$125 million in FY 2016.

Although revenue projections are expected to decrease in the next few years, Delegate Bates said other factors will impact the projections including the ongoing Navajo Generating Station lease negotiations, the BHP Navajo Mine purchase, and the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance.

Approximately \$14 million is estimated to be remaining in the UUFB account, according to Delegate Bates.

Controller Mark Grant and Dominic Beyal, executive director of the Office of Management and Budget, were also in attendance to provide updates and answer questions about the Nation's finances.

BFC vice chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin) expressed skepticism over the proposed addition of a second volume of the Budget Instructions and Policies Manual for FY 2014.

Beyal explained that a second volume, which will focus only on external funds, may be necessary due to increased policies over the years regarding external funding.

Delegate Nez said the addition of a second volume would likely lead to increased confusion, especially among agencies and chapters, and reminded everyone that the original intent of the manual was to make it simple to navigate and comprehend its guidelines.

At the conclusion discussion, BFC chair Delegate Bates encouraged the three branch chiefs to continue meeting with the BFC throughout the budget process to address further questions or concerns.

"We will notify all parties of any changes that may further impact the budget and process, and we will continue to work through this together," Delegate Bates said.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



Roberta John, Senior Economic Development Specialist  
Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation  
(928) 871-7380  
Email: [bobbie@navajonationparks.org](mailto:bobbie@navajonationparks.org)

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE : June 11, 2013



(Nik Wallenda practicing his balance at Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park, May 2013. Photo by Geri Hongoeva-Camarillo, Navajo Parks & Recreation)

### “A Dream Come True”

CAMERON, ARIZONA – A prayer and a dream.

That’s what builds a new path or will take you to new heights....literally. Case in point, Navajo Nation Park Manager Helen Webster and World Famous Tight Rope Legend Nik Wallenda each had a dream.

It was a dream they had envisioned for many years....they just didn’t know their dreams would connect them. Webster is a park manager for Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park, which oversees the Little Colorado River Gorge on the western outskirts of

the Navajo reservation. Located just off the beaten path, it is a haven of solace that has been uniquely sculpted by the hands of Mother Nature. Wallenda on the other hand is a non-Navajo from Sarasota, Florida.

Webster began working for the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department in February 2006. It was never part of her goal in life to work for the Navajo Nation, but she believes everything happens for a reason.

In the beginning, Webster said she had to start from scratch to get the park off the ground. Reflecting back, Webster said her first major project was to establish a fee booth, which she

accomplished in a record time of four months. Her vision then, which continues today, is to have state of the art infrastructure and facilities to create an accommodating atmosphere for visitors.

Webster said, “Despite all the challenges and obstacles, I really enjoy my job. My goal is to provide quality customer service – I want our visitors to enjoy their visit here at Little Colorado River Gorge.”

Over the years and one step at a time, Webster worked to help install an entrance fee station, improve fencing, install picnic tables, develop a hiking trail, install signage and waterless restrooms while never losing hope that one day she would see paved parking.

Then one day there was an element of surprise when Location Scout PJ Connolly introduced Webster and Wallenda. It seems the “King of High Wire” wanted to fulfill a life-long goal and walk across a towering canyon without a harness. As fate would have it, Wallenda marveled the towering canyon walls at Little Colorado River Gorge as the perfect location to honor his great grandfather Karl Wallenda who died after falling from a tight rope in Puerto Rico in 1978.

Wallenda was captivated by the rustic and mystic beauty of the Navajo Nation and viewed Little Colorado River Gorge as the ideal place to achieve his ambition. It would be the highest walk he would attempt in his life yet. Webster saw this as an opportunity of a lifetime.

Although there was concern about the limited infrastructure and how an event of this magnitude could even happen, the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department rose to the occasion and agreed to work with Wallenda and make his dream come true.

Hence, many discussions and meetings have been held over the past several months to make this event become a reality. It is not an easy task, but the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department is working diligently behind the scenes to produce a triumphant event for the world to see.

In fact, just the land clearances alone took more than 10 months to complete. Some of these requirements included consent from local land users, and a biological, environmental and archaeological survey.

Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department Manager Martin L. Begaye, said “We are very honored and pleased that Nik Wallenda has selected the Navajo Nation as a location to help him achieve his life-long goal. Hosting an event of this caliber requires a lot of pre-production planning and approval. As stewards of our land, we are working cooperatively with many different individuals and entities to ensure that we also preserve and protect our natural resources so that future generations will continue to enjoy our native homeland.”

Echoing Begaye’s comment, Geri HONGEVA-CAMARILLO, media representative at Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation, said “We began video production in April to promote the majestic beauty of the

Navajo Nation. During the two-hour long broadcast from the Discovery Channel, spectators will see and learn about the Navajo Nation.”

The video will feature interviews with various Navajo leaders, distinguished Navajo people and it will showcase our tribal parks. Moreover, the Nik Wallenda Tight Rope Event is generating a lot of interest from worldwide media and the Navajo Nation is doing whatever it can do lay out the red carpet. There will be a fashionable ensemble of local Navajo entertainers who will perform at a nearby location for the first 600 people who are fortunate enough to watch the event on a jumbotron. Due to limited space, the public is encouraged to view the event on the Discovery Channel.

Considering the scope and distinction of this first-ever historic event, NBC and the Discovery Channel are collaborating to produce and air the June 23<sup>rd</sup> event live beginning at 6 p.m. It is estimated that more than one billion people from throughout the world and more than 100 countries will be able to see the live telecast.

As an act of goodwill and a spirit of camaraderie to the Navajo Nation, NBC hired a contractor to pave a road to the Nik Wallenda Tight Rope site and a parking lot specifically for the media. It was quite the challenge. What normally takes years or months took only a matter of days to lay a new foundation and pathway...It was like an overnight transformation.

Webster said, “I have been praying for improvements to Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park ever since I started. I had no idea NBC would be able to pay for a new road and parking lot for us. This is what you call a miracle.”

Begaye, added, “We have always wanted to make major improvements at Little Colorado River Navajo Tribal Park, but were unable to do so due to limited funding. We are very grateful to NBC for helping the Navajo Nation.”

Webster said after the event is over, she would like to see the new paved area as a new way to promote Little Colorado River Gorge, adding, “I want to thank my immediate staff , co-workers and other individuals who are assisting to make this event come to fruition. It is amazing to know just how many people from throughout the world will be able to catch a glimpse of our beautiful Navajo culture. After they see the video, I hope they will want to visit the Navajo Nation.”

And interestingly, it all started with a prayer and a dream from two individuals of two different worlds.

For more information about the event, please contact Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation at (928) 871-6647 or obtain information on their website at [www.navajonationparks.org](http://www.navajonationparks.org)

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 10, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## **Churchrock Chapter celebrates Fourth annual Treaty Day Celebration**

**CHURCHROCK, N.M.** – The 4<sup>th</sup> annual Churchrock Treaty Days commenced with a traditional Navajo morning blessing last Friday at the Churchrock chapter house to “recognize Navajo sovereignty from our treaty [Navajo Treaty of 1868],” said Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau).

Delegate Yazzie stated that he and the community collaborated with outside entities to strengthen community fellowship.

“We are creating a gathering place for our elders and encouraging youth participation in the events,” said Yazzie.

The event schedule included some of the following events: a song-and-dance social event, community fun runs, a revival, a fashion show and a veteran bike run.

Throughout the afternoon, visitors filled a walkway lined with food stands, jewelry vendors, and health education booths.

During the Commemoration Ceremony, Vice President Rex Lee Jim addressed a large audience to explain the significance of the treaty signing.

Titus Nez, planning committee president, explained that the chapter received growing support from the community.

“The Treaty Celebration has grown to be bigger and bigger every year,” said Delegate Yazzie. “We are already looking forward to next year’s festivities.”

The Office of the Speaker, Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, URI Inc. and Fire Rock Navajo Casino all participated as event sponsors.

The Churchrock Treaty Days originated from a community effort to commemorate the June 1, 1868, treaty signing with the United States, which ended the four-year incarceration of the Navajo People at Fort Sumner, allowing their return to their homelands.

Delegate Yazzie invites the public to attend Mariano Lake Treaty Day Celebration on June 14.

###

## Tribal, state, federal officials break ground for N20 paving construction



*Tsinaabaqs Ha'bitiin Elementary School hosted the groundbreaking ceremony for the paving of Navajo Route 20 on June 9. Officials from NDOT, ADOT, BIA and FHWA were on hand to share the history of the project. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*

GAP, ARIZ.-Humble gratitude was the emotional atmosphere and mindset, as the Navajo Division of Transportation, Arizona Department of Transportation, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Federal Highway Administration broke ground for the paving of a 27 mile dirt road located in rural northern Arizona.

After months of planning and negotiations between tribal, state and federal entities, the paving construction of Navajo Route 20 for use as an interim detour route for U.S. 89 is officially underway.

U.S. 89, a 1,252 mile highway stretching from Flagstaff to the Canadian border in Montana, was damaged on Feb. 20, 2013, after a dry landslide tore a segment of the road on the Navajo Nation, near Bitter Springs.

For the past three months, ADOT has been conducting geotechnical analysis to repair the roadway and diverted traffic for Page through U.S. 160 and State Route 98, an additional 115 miles of road to travel.

The groundbreaking ceremony at Tsinaabaqs Ha'bitiin Elementary School on Sunday was a major milestone for ADOT stakeholders. Upon completion, the tribal road will provide the most direct route to Page and beyond until repairs on U.S. 89 are made.

The new detour will be designated as U.S. 89T and shaves off half the distance and time to get to Page.

"I want to thank all of the people that were involved," said Paulson Chaco, division director for NDOT.

Speaking in Navajo, Chaco

said N20 would be paved, thanks to the tireless work of Navajo leaders, chapter officials and grazing officers.

"You helped us with chapter resolutions of support and I am very thankful and appreciative. (NDOT) helped with this road for over three months, working with ADOT, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Federal Highway Administration," Chaco said.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said working together and partnership was the key to success.

"I want to thank everyone for working together these past couple of months to bring us to this day where we can begin construction on Navajo Route 20," Shelly said.

Four days after the landslide, Shelly and staff met with community members in Bodaway-Gap to hear concerns

from the affected communities. He signed an emergency declaration the same day and sent it to Arizona Governor Jan Brewer.

"I'm happy to report that the paving of N20 now stands at \$35 million and will include fencing, culverts, turning lanes, and an appropriate speed limit for the safety of all." Shelly said.

He added, "By working together, we have proven that we can complete major projects like this and improve the quality of life for our Navajo people and our Arizona and American citizens."

The Bureau of Indian Affairs magnified the efforts from the affected Navajo communities.

"Based upon their willingness and ability to see the need for this particular road to

be built through their communities is what opened this door, is what made this come to realization,” said Sharon Pinto, regional director for BIA Navajo Region.

Tsinaabaqs Ha’bitiin (Wagon Wheel) has a new meaning, she said.

Jennifer Toth, ADOT state engineer, said transportation is very personal to the community and those that use the roads.

“U.S. 89 is not just another state highway. It’s a critical route along which children are transported to and from schools. Commuters, hard-working people use it to commute to their jobs and goods and services are delivered,” Toth said.

She echoed the sentiments of partnership and cooperation.

Toth said, “Based on my experience, I can tell you that generally road construction projects typically do not materialize in a three month time period. And a project where you’re paving 27 miles of roadway can really take years to become a reality.”

The enormity of the project was not lost on the stakeholders involved: paving a 27 mile dirt road that has needed improvement for over 40 years in a three month timeframe is not for the weak-hearted.

Since 2004, ADOT and the Navajo Nation have maintained a formal partnership and follow a standardized method of collaboration on projects and incidents related on the state roads running through tribal lands.

“Without that direct collaboration between ADOT, tribal leaders, chapter presidents, and the Navajo Division of Transportation, we wouldn’t be here today in such a quick timeframe to celebrate returning mobility to the region,” Toth said.

The federal efforts underscored improving the quality of

life for motorists.

FHWA division administrator Karla Petty said the importance and urgency of the recovery efforts of the U.S. 89 landslide is recognized at the highest level of the U.S. Department of Transportation and FHWA.

“Road closures such as U.S. 89 emphasize the importance of transportation in our daily lives,” Petty said.

She explained that funding from the FHWA Emergency Relieve program provided ADOT with \$37 million for U.S. 89 recovery efforts. To address immediate responses for ADOT, \$2 million in quick release funds was made available, followed by \$35 million for the detour.

Petty said the FHWA will secure additional funding as ADOT work towards a permanent solution for U.S. 89.

“I have traveled N20 and I do appreciate the need for an improved roadway,” Petty said. “But we would not be here today without the cooperation and partnership with the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Division of Transportation, BIA, ADOT and you, the communities.

“The spirit of teamwork is evident,” she added.

Floyd Stevens, president of Coppermine Chapter, was appreciative for the construction.

“This road has many problems. It’s dry, rough, sandy, washboard, muddy at times, and it tests the meddle of even some of the toughest drivers,” Stevens said.

Information:  
[www.navajodot.org](http://www.navajodot.org)



*Paulson Chaco, director of Navajo Division of Transportation, said the project would not have been possible without the consent of the grazing permit holders and the people who use the land. Chaco lauded the efforts of his staff, ADOT, FHWA, BIA and local community members. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*



*ADOT state engineer Jennifer Toth said road construction projects do not typically materialize in a three month time period. Toth said a project involving paving 27 miles of roadway can really take years to become a reality. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*



*Tribal, state and federal officials stood proudly after breaking ground for the paving of Navajo Route 20 as an interim detour route for the U.S. 89 road closure. All agencies echoed the same sentiments of collaboration and cooperation to make the project a reality for the Navajo Nation, Arizona and visitors from across the country. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*



Contact: Erny Zah  
Director of Communications  
Cell: (928) 380-0771  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 9, 2013

---

## Navajo President Shelly Breaks Ground for Paving of Navajo Route 20



**BODAWAY-GAP, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly broke ground on a project that has kept local residents in waiting for about 40 years.

A groundbreaking ceremony took place this in morning for the paving of Navajo Route 20. The ceremony took place at Tsinaabaas Habitiin Elementary School.

Plans call for about 28 miles of N. 20 to be paved and when paving is completed, then the route will serve as an alternative route for U.S. Highway 89 travelers.

The paving project is projected to cost about \$35 million and be ready for traffic by mid-August.

“Navajo Route 20 has been needing improvements for more than 40 years, and now we can begin a new chapter of travel not only for our local residents who will use

the road the most, but for our visitors who help sustain the tourism economy of Northern Arizona,” President Shelly said.

U.S. Hwy. 89 was closed February 20 after a landslide caused the road to partially collapse about 25 miles south of Page. Since then travelers have been detoured to U.S. 160 and north on State Route 98 for access to and from Page. The detour is 115-miles long and adds 45 minutes of travel time.

For local residents in the Bodaway/Gap and Bitter Springs areas, the detour increased a 30-minute drive to an hour and a half for residents to travel to Page, which is the nearest city.

President Shelly said the detour causes stress for local communities because the increased distance in travel results in longer hours for school children and people commuting to work.

“I understood the hardships the closing of U.S. 89 created for our Navajo people. Not only were our children rerouted on longer bus routes and workers had to put in extra hours just to get to work, the local economy also too was affected by the road closure,” President Shelly said.

The groundbreaking was the continuation of months of planning, said Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Regional Director Sharon Pinto.

After the U.S. Highway Administration, Arizona Department of Transportation and the BIA worked together, “this project became a reality,” Pinto said during the ceremony.

Navajo Division of Transportation Director Paulson Chaco said N20 is expected to be completed in mid August with plans to make the pavement suitable for heavier traffic.

President Shelly added that provision for road paving will include fencing to protect travelers and livestock, turning lanes and culverts for drainage.

Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine, Division Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration Karla Petty, ADOT State Engineer Jennifer Toth and local leaders spoke during the ceremony.

“This new road is a blessing for the Navajo Nation and shows how partnerships with tribal, state, and federal agencies can positively improve the lives of Navajo people,” President Shelly said.

###



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Cell: (928) 380-0771**  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 6, 2013

---

## **Navajo President Shelly and Vice President Jim Meet with BSNF for Thoreau Rail Port**

**GALLUP, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said the Navajo Nation is still on track to develop a 300-acre industrial park near Thoreau, which is scheduled for completion in 2014.

“We need to put the Navajo Nation in a direction of job creation and economic development,” President Shelly said during a Thursday morning meeting with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company.



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly addresses about 40 people during a Thursday morning meeting with BSNF and stakeholders for future railway projects.

The Thoreau industrial park would also serve as a railway port.

The meeting informed various stakeholders about BSNF’s plans for development in the McKinley and San Juan County regions.

Navajo Vice President Rex Lee Jim, New Mexico Indian Affairs Secretary Art Allison, N.M. State Representatives Sharon Clahchischillige and Patricia Lundstrom and other community leaders attended the informal meeting. LaTonya Finch, regional manager of economic development for BSNF, led the meeting.

“We need more jobs, more wealth and we have an opportunity to do that right now,” Finch said during the hour-long meeting.



"We firmly believe in the intellectual power of our children," Navajo Vice President Rex Lee Jim said.

Finch added that BNSF has four areas in which their railway company plans to invest to match forecasted growth. The areas included Gallup, Belen, Las Cruces and Clovis. The Gallup area also includes the Thoreau industrial park. As many 22 different companies are awaiting expansion between Gallup and Thoreau, she added.

"We got tremendous opportunity here," she said.

Vice President Jim said the rail port in Thoreau can bridge the principles of Navajo culture and economic development.

"I believe we can have economic development while maintaining the integrity of our culture," Vice President Jim said.

Sec. Allison said that Gov. Susana Martinez supports the Thoreau industrial park and building a railroad from the Four Corners area to Thoreau.

Products like oil, gas, coal and produce from Navajo Agriculture Products Industries would have more access to an international market, Allison said.

"Navajo Coal would be sold on the international market," Sec. Allison said.

President Shelly informed the attendees that the Navajo Nation is working to purchase Navajo Mine from BHP- Billiton this summer and would be interested in creating a larger market base to sell coal from Navajo Mine.

"We need to do this. Let's work together and do this," President Shelly said.

###



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 6, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

## **Health, Education, and Human Services Committee receives update on changes in delivery of social services to Leupp and Pinon communities**

**WINDOW ROCK** – Responding to a May 23 written request issued by the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, officials from the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services (DSS) appeared before the committee at a May 29 meeting to address concerns surrounding the delivery of services to the communities of Leupp and Pinon in the southwestern region of the Navajo Nation.

A report by DSS administrators was requested after concerned Leupp Chapter community members informed the committee on May 22 of news that DSS sub-offices in Leupp and Pinon were in the process of closing down, and that the Leupp sub-office would be relocated to Dilkon, Ariz.

“This is a serious concern and issue for all involved,” stated HEHSC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Hale (Oak Springs, St. Michaels) to Navajo DSS division director Sharon Begay-McCabe in a May 23 letter.

Navajo DSS legislative analyst Thomas Cody confirmed that the Pinon sub-office for the Program for Self-Reliance had been closed – primarily due to concerns that the current office facility had long been unmaintained, was “falling apart,” and DSS administrators were concerned for staff safety.

Inconsistent caseload ratio, the cost-efficiency of service delivery, limited resources in the community for clients to gain work experience and training, and the relocation of the Arizona Department of Economic Security services from Pinon to Chinle, Ariz. also contributed to the decision to close the Pinon sub-office, Cody said.

However, the division is working with Pinon Chapter officials to move and set-up three modular units across from the chapter, with hopes that one unit will be made into a DSS office for all area programs.

Currently, the Program for Self-Reliance has established an itinerant site and conducts weekly visits in Pinon to meet the needs of clients there.

Budget cuts from Navajo Nation, state, and federal funding sources had forced the division to “streamline services without impacting the welfare of [Navajo] children and families,” Cody stated.

“As you are aware, the [Bureau of Indian Affairs] has administered a 5% cut and the Navajo Nation anticipates another 14%,” wrote DSS division director Sharon Begay-McCabe in a May 28 response letter addressed to Delegate Hale.

As for the Leupp DSS sub-office, Cody said only two of current four employees would be relocated to Dilkon to provide services on a regional basis for the specialized child care program and case management.

“We’re not closing the Leupp office. All we’re doing is we’re attempting to move out of the current big facility,” said Cody, which has repeated been broken into and vandalized. The move to a smaller building would also be a cost-effective measure.

“I’m from Leupp. I think you should know that I would not close an office when I know there are services that are there, and I would fight for those services,” added Cody, who is a former Leupp Chapter president.

The Leupp sub-office will continue to provide adult in-care home services and a variety of financial services which includes general assistance and funerary burial assistance.

The two staff positions that will remain in Leupp to provide community social services will be those of the victim advocate and the community involvement specialist.

Speaking on the importance of retaining a victim advocate within the community, Cody said, “This is the individual that works with the chapter, housing, and schools. They coordinate those prevention activities and services.”

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi Tó ii) pointed out that there are a number of schools in the vicinity of Leupp.

“These [educational] institutions need that support. It’s critical that you maintain an office in the Leupp community. I’m happy to hear you will be retaining the victim advocate there, and that you’re taking that all into consideration,” Delegate Phelps said.

While he was sure DSS administrators were keenly aware of the situations in the two communities affected by sub-office changes, Delegate Phelps suggested to HEHSC members that perhaps they needed to consider having a reliable third-party conduct an assessment.

“What is the impact from an outside professional perspective...from the way that work was done before to the way that the current structure is set up and the way they are providing services now? Are the needs being met?” Delegate Phelps questioned.

Delegate Phelps likened the scenario to that of a health patient who is told by one physician that he needs heart surgery. People usually visit another practitioner for a second opinion, to see if surgery is indeed really necessary, Delegate Phelps said.

At the close of the discussion, HEHSC chair Delegate Hale requested for DSS to keep the committee abreast of their communications and other proceedings with the affected chapters as streamlining measures continue to unfold.

Both the HEHSC and DSS are currently waiting for written comments and recommendations to be finalized from a town hall meeting that was held in Leupp on May 8 to address the state of social services in the community.

###.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 6, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## **Resources and Development Committee discusses land withdrawal to boost commercial and economic development in Shiprock**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Resources and Development Committee on Tuesday addressed five legislations. One particular legislation sparked considerable committee discussion as it could potentially boost commercial and economic development in Shiprock, NM.

Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) presented Legislation No. 0143-13, a bill he sponsored which sought to relinquish 4.43 acres of Navajo Nation trust land for community development, and withdrawing the same acreage amount for commercial and economic development purposes.

The land is located west of U.S. Highway 491, approximately one-half mile south of the junction of U.S. Highway 491 and State Highway 64.

“We would like to take that one section, and use it for commercial development,” Delegate Begaye said.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) questioned the exhibits attached to the legislation.

“I’m looking for proposals... exactly how the land will be used,” said Delegate Tsosie. “Is Shiprock thinking of the idea of a township?”

“As long as we have this land withdrawn, we can be ready for proposals that come in,” responded Delegate Begaye. “We [Shiprock Chapter] are currently bouncing ideas around for a township.”

Sally Begay, senior economic development specialist for the Shiprock Regional Business Development Office Shiprock, told the committee that her office already has two interested developers, one of which is interested in building a mini-mall.

Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) expressed concern about the multitude of administrative regulations that hinder development.

In effort to streamline land withdrawals Delegate Pete said, “Right now, the RDC is working with land administration to get all withdrawn lands into one central area to improve the process.”

Delegate Begaye explained that he and the Shiprock Business Regulatory Office would work with potential developers to prevent them from becoming discouraged about their investment.

“We want to let businesses know this land is available. It has great potential for small businesses like restaurants, mini-malls and retail,” Delegate Begaye said.

The RDC, which serves as the final authority on the matter, voted to approve the legislation with a 3-0 vote.

As the next step, Delegate Begaye and the Shiprock Business Regulatory Office plan to review the two development proposals they have received.

In September 1993, the Resources Committee of the 17<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed resolution RSC-212-93, withdrawing 36.674-acres of Navajo Trust Land in Shiprock for community development purposes.

It is of the original 36.674 acres, that 4.43 acres will now be withdrawn for economic development purposes.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)

## Navajo Route 4 road construction resumes in Pinon



Construction activities on Navajo Route 4 in Pinon have resumed after being shut down in Oct. 2012 for safety reasons. Here, NDOT heavy equipment operator Cornelius Kenny prepares and mixes base material to be placed on the roadway. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

A little over seven months ago, construction was halted on Navajo Route 4, southwest of the remote Arizona community of Pinon, after Navajo Division of Transportation workers encountered armed community members driving through the worksite.

Construction on N4 has resumed and NDOT crewmembers are back onsite, continuing work on the dirt road at the edge of town that sees much traffic on a daily basis, ranging from school buses, personally-owned vehicles, to commercial vehicles that use the road as a short cut to Hopi land.

“The safety of our staff was the greatest concern for our division,” said Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT. “We are back out on the roadway and

construction will be completed this month.”

He said the N4 construction was only one of many projects under construction across the Navajo Nation this summer.

Chaco said, “N4 is one of several road projects that have been pending since 2005 that this administration is bringing to completion. NDOT continues to move forward improving the Navajo Nation’s transportation system.”

Cost for the Fuel Excise Tax road project is over \$600,000. The cost includes over \$400,000 in materials and \$200,000 in equipment and manpower from NDOT.

The completion date for the road improvement project is June 30, 2013. The location of the project site is from the intersection of N4 and Navajo

Route 8031, stretching west for three-miles.

Recently, geotech fabric was utilized to cover a section of N4 to protect an archaeological site that is located on the roadbed.

NDOT engineer-in-training Lyle Begay is leading the project.

“After this arch site is covered and protected, we will proceed with the tilling and compaction of the soil earth bed,” Begay said. “That is when the gravel and the stabilizing materials will be coming in.”

Hubert Dayzie from Recon Oil joined the NDOT crew to take soil samples within the project site.

The samples were taken to a geotechnical firm to perform soil testing and analysis to

determine the best mixture for the Road Bond stabilizer.

Recon Oil is the contractor providing aggregate base material for the construction.

“For this N4 project, we are planning to gravel and stabilize three-miles of roadway,” Begay said.

Project manager Priscilla Lee said the N4 FET project was budgeted in FY 2005.

“We started in the fall of 2012 originally but we had to shut down for safety reasons. Now that we started up again, police are patrolling the area periodically,” Lee said.

She said the work crew was awaiting 600,000 gallons of water from the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources.

NDOT purchased 6,442 tons of base-course for the

project. Navajo County matched \$52,146 to purchase 1,399 tons of base-course for the project.

Base course is the sub-layer of the roadway placed on the top soil to provide a foundation for the road.

Lee listed two graders, three rollers, one scraper, one loader, three water trucks, and one dozer for the project, including 10 crewmembers.

Begay noted the logistics of getting materials, equipment and workforce in place is only a part of the overall process.

He said NDOT is out in the field setting the gears in motion for infrastructure projects across the Navajo Nation, although many communities are often impatient with the lengthy timeframe for construction to begin.

“I would like people to understand the process that goes into working with Navajo Nation roads,” Begay said. “It requires compliance from several different fields of work that deal with the land.

“One of the major ones that we’re mitigating today is archaeology,” he said.

Other compliance factors he cited were environmental and water, which requires documentation and regulation of soils and materials falling into America’s waterways, or encumbering on biologically-sensitive areas.

Using those two fields of work as an example, preconstruction can take up to a year before compliance is made and we can go out and actually mobilize equipment and labor, he said.

“We are out here. If not out here on the road, we’re behind the scenes trying to get the roads improved,” Begay said.

Information:

[www.navajodot.org](http://www.navajodot.org)



NDOT engineer-in-training Lyle Begay is leading the N4 project in Pinon. The road improvement project was funded by Fuel Excise Tax dollars in FY 2005 and is one of several projects across the Navajo Nation that will be completed by summer’s end. Begay said Navajo communities must understand the mandatory compliance process that takes up most of the time required to complete the construction projects. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Geraldine Jones, senior environmental specialist for NDOT, measures the roadway to determine the length of geotech fabric required to protect an archaeological site located on the roadbed. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Top, NDOT crewmembers carry a roll of geotech fabric that was used to cover an archaeological site located on the roadbed. Right, an NDOT dump truck delivers boulders that will be used in the road improvement project. The N4 road project will be completed by June 30, 2013. (Photo by Rick Abasta)





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 5, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## **Delegates advocate for development of a Congressional bill to benefit the Eastern Agency to three New Mexico Congressmen**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Council Delegate Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse’ii’ahi, Whiterock) and Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) met with New Mexico Congressman Ben Lujan (District-3) and Senators Martin Heinrich (D-NM), and Tom Udall (D-NM) on May 29 to advocate for the development of a congressional bill that would enact the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project (NIIP) and Navajo Exchange Legislative Initiative (NELI).

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council passed resolution CO-47-12 last October requesting for Congress to resolve the federal government’s obligations to the NIIP by giving its sole authority to the Navajo Nation and to take into trust Navajo lands in the Eastern Agency.

“After the Council passed the resolution, we provided a presentation to the congressmen and they agreed to support it,” said Delegate Yazzie. “Congressman Lujan is going to sponsor the legislation for the Navajo People.”

In 1962, President Kennedy signed legislation authorizing an agreement between the Navajo Nation, New Mexico and the United States to divert water from the San Juan Basin in exchange for a 110,630-acre irrigated farm, now known as Navajo Agriculture Products Industry (NAPI).

As of today the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project is only 80 percent complete.

Delegate Simpson, a member of the Budget and Finance Committee, stated that he and Delegate Yazzie urged the New Mexico leaders not to ignore the projects, even during the sequestration.

According to Delegate Simpson, NIIP used to be appropriated \$30 million per year. The project is now only appropriated \$3 million.

“At this rate it will take 150 years to complete,” said Simpson

One portion of the bill aims to pass sole authority of NIIP from the United States to the Navajo Nation and includes necessary funds for its future construction, maintenance and rehabilitation.

The bill will also consolidate most of the Bureau of Land Management lands in the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation and place them into trust.

“These lands have always belonged to the Navajo people. We are working to move them into trust,” Delegate Yazzie said. “BLM is supportive and wants to give back the acreage of land.”

The Eastern Navajo Land Commission (ENLC) – which consists of Council Delegates Charles Damon II (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), George Apachito (Alamo, Ramah, Tohajiilee), Delegate Simpson, and Delegate Yazzie – worked to develop legislation that combines NELI and NIIP. “

“NIIP is similar to the NELI project, instead of two separate bills, Eastern Navajo Land Commission and the congressional leaders suggest one comprehensive bill,” Delegate Yazzie said.

“I feel good about it being passed because Udall is a ranking member in D.C.,” Delegate Yazzie said, adding that the rights of Navajo People in the Eastern Agency are undeniable and by fixing the current situation, it will encourage development.

“This problem started back in 1907, and we as Navajo Leaders are working to resolve it with the help of the three New Mexico Congressmen,” said Delegate Simpson. “We are carrying through with an initiative supported by thirty-one Eastern Agency Chapters, the Eastern Navajo Land Commission, and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council.”

Delegate Yazzie remains optimistic about the meeting, and believes if all parties work together, the legislation can be passed within one year.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 5, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
Krista Thompson | 928.871.7160  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## **Law and Order Committee receives update regarding 911 service initiatives**

**WINDOW ROCK** – On Monday, Law and Order Committee members received a report in which Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission acting director Brian Tagaban presented a proposed plan to implement a 911 emergency system for the Navajo Nation.

Established under the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President pursuant to 2 N.N.C. § 3451, the NNTRC is an independent commission authorized by the Navajo Nation Council to establish and enforce rules, regulations, policies, for the health and safety of the general public in regard to telecommunications matters.

LOC chair Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) requested an update from the commission after members of the LOC and the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee convened on Mar. 14 in the community of Black Falls, Ariz. to hear firsthand accounts from residents on delayed emergency response times due to a lack of communication infrastructure and rural landscapes.

Black Falls, located approximately 27 miles northwest of the community of Leupp, is a remote area in which most residents lack basic utility services such as electricity and running water.

According to the proposed organizational structure for the Navajo 911 program, three necessary components will need to be developed to stabilize the program: public safety answering point, location information system, and rural addressing.

LOC member Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock) reminded his colleagues that jurisdictional boundaries are also a necessary component that needs to be addressed.

“Based on the testimony we heard from residents of Black Falls, it’s clear that jurisdictional issues need to be ironed out so that emergency services are not delayed, jeopardizing the lives of our people,” Delegate Begaye said.

The proposed 911 program drew support from LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) who urged NNTRC and fellow colleagues to expedite the process that began years ago.

“My chapters are telling me they’ve done a lot of work on their part to begin this process, and it doesn’t seem to be moving forward fast enough,” Delegate Shepherd said.

Tagaban told LOC members the proposed plan was developed after months of consultation and feedback from various entities, including various wireless communications organizations, Frontier Communications Corporation, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety, and individuals who experienced delayed emergency response times.

To fund the 911 program, Tagaban explained that perhaps a tax and/or a surcharge will be necessary to ensure continued funding, especially in times of budget shortfalls.

LOC member Council Delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K'ai'Bii'To, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake) reminded those in attendance that construction of Navajo Route 20 will begin this month.

Cell phone reception, Delegate Tsinigine said, is not available along most or all of the 28-mile stretch of road from Bodaway/Gap to Coppermine.

“As more and more traffic passes through this road, there is an increased need for phone and emergency services,” said Delegate Tsinigine. “It is a public safety concern for people in my area.”

Tagaban told LOC members that the plan is an overview and does not include many details that still need to be worked out between various entities and members of Council.

At the conclusion of the discussion, LOC members voiced continued support for the 911 program and agreed to continue working with all sides to make the program a reality.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 3, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
Jared Touchin | 928.221.9253  
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

## **Naabik'iyáti Committee approves IGA between the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona for U.S. Highway 89 maintenance**

**STANDING ROCK, N.M.** – Last Thursday, Naabik'iyáti Committee members convened at the Standing Rock Chapter House, located approximately 12 miles west of Crownpoint, NM, as part of committee's initiative to "take the government out to the people," said Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood).

"We are happy to have you all with us today, and we are even more happy to see so many of you take part in your government," said Speaker Naize to the audience of approximately 50 people who attended the first in a series of Naabik'iyáti Committee meetings that will be held in chapter houses across the Navajo Nation.

Prior to the start of the meeting, committee members spent over an hour listening to concerns and suggestions from community members.

During the course of the meeting, Naabik'iyáti Committee members approved Legislation No. 0132-13, an intergovernmental agreement between the Navajo Nation and the State of Arizona which establishes the maintenance responsibilities of the Navajo Nation for several construction projects on U.S. Highway 89 in Cameron, Ariz.

The Arizona Department of Transportation will design and construct a four-lane urban section on U.S. 89 through Cameron from SR 64 to Little Colorado River that includes a new roundabout, new northbound roadway, 16 foot-wide raised median, 8 foot-wide sidewalks, four pedestrian underpasses, and two bridges over the LCR.

Upon completion of the \$35 million two-phased project, legislation sponsor Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii), explained that the Navajo Division of Transportation will be responsible for sweeping and cleaning sidewalks and underpasses, minor sidewalk repairs, removal of weeds and snow, and the maintenance and repair of lighting fixtures.

Delegate Phelps added that the Cameron Chapter, the District III Council of the Western Navajo Agency, the Western Navajo Agency Council, and the Western Navajo Agency Roads Committee have passed resolutions in support of the projects and maintenance responsibilities.

NDOT principal civil engineer Darryl Bradley said the Naabik'iyáti Committee's approval would be the last step necessary before ADOT can advertise the projects and begin construction.

Council Delegate Leonard Tsosie (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) expressed concern over language in the agreement stating that, “any claim or dispute arising hereunder submitted to binding arbitration shall be governed by the laws of the State of Arizona.”

“If there’s any litigation, we’re agreeing to throw out Navajo Nation laws,” said Delegate Tsosie. “Subjecting ourselves to Arizona laws is an item of concern.”

Delegate Tsosie, a member of the Resources and Development Committee, said the RDC tabled the legislation due to this concern, prior to RDC’s approval on May 22. However, he also stated that he understands that the projects also promote economic development for the community of Cameron.

Responding to a concern by Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl’a’a’) regarding the question of who would fund the maintenance, Bradley stated that in the past, the Cameron Chapter had agreed to fund the maintenance.

However, chapters are unable to enter into an IGA with the state, Bradley said.

Bradley added that NDOT is receiving more requests for similar projects for communities throughout the Nation, and many have expressed consent to fund the maintenance and upkeep.

At the conclusion of the one-hour discussion, Naabik’iyátí Committee members voted 10-0 to approve Legislation No. 0132-13.

Upcoming Naabik’iyátí Committee meetings are tentatively scheduled to take place in Dilkon, Tuba City, and Shiprock.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)



**Contact: Erny Zah**  
**Director of Communications**  
**Cell: (928) 380-0771**  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
June 3, 2013

---

## **Navajo President Shelly Ensures a Healthy Work Environment for DODE**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said appropriate measures are being taken to ensure that conditions Department of Diné Education offices are cleaner for DODE employees. The offices are in the Education Center.

“We are going to make sure that we clean the offices to reduce mold spores and want to ensure that our workers have a safe and healthy work place. The Department of Diné Education has many projects they are working on to better the educational future of our children and our workers need healthy conditions in their work space,” President Shelly said.

The DODE offices were closed Monday due to cleaning after tests confirmed a higher than average mold spore count was found after air and on surfaces testing for mold in the DODE offices. Navajo Nation Facilities Maintenance department were slated to clean the offices to reduce mold spores in the offices.

Navajo Nation Occupational Safety and Health Administration initially confirmed higher than average mold spores was present in the DODE offices on Wednesday afternoon, which prompted a closure of the DODE offices.

Mold is commonly found in air we breathe, but elevated levels can be a health risk, Navajo health officials said in a meeting last week.

Since then, EnviroScience further tested for mold and is expected to deliver a full report regarding their findings early this week, including findings from a HVAC system inspection. However, preliminary reports that mold spore counts are not nearly as high as those that prompted the mold remediation of Administration Complexes 1 and 2.

“We know our employees are concerned about the mold in DODE. But we need to keep in mind that the mold infestation in Administration Buildings 1 and 2 were

much higher. A thorough cleaning of the offices and ducts will help reduce the mold count,” President Shelly said.

Facility maintenance personnel added that ducts in the offices were also covered limiting the amount of air circulation in the building, which reduces airflow and allows for dust and mold build up.

After the cleaning, the offices are expected to be tested for mold again. In addition, the full report from EnviroScience will provide officials more information about other steps that may need to be taken to further eradicate the mold in the DODE offices.

“We want to see the report from EnviroScience so we have a better understanding of what needs to be done to ensure a healthy environment for our employees,” President Shelly said.

The Office of the Controller, which occupies the auditorium of the Education Center, is expected to remain open after testing showed average mold counts. About 90 employees at DODE were affected by Monday’s office closure.

###

## N20 (U.S. 89T) groundbreaking slated for June 9



Construction activities on Navajo Route 20 officially began on May 28 by the Arizona Department of Transportation. ADOT selected FNF Construction, Inc. as the contractor to complete the project by mid-August. Upon completion, N20 will be designated as U.S. 89T and will begin receiving traffic. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

**A**fter months of planning and negotiations, the Navajo Division of Transportation and Arizona Department of Transportation are ready to break ground on Navajo Route 20.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the paving construction of N20 will take place at 11 a.m. (DST) on June 9 at Tsinaabaas Habitiin Elementary School in Bodaway-Gap.

On May 28, ADOT officially began construction activities on N20.

The \$35 million project will pave a 28-mile portion of dirt road, which travels from Bodaway-Gap north through Coppermine and ending in LeChee.

N20 stretches a total length of 44-miles and has connected all three Navajo communities for over 40 years. Navajo community members are excited about the road construction after decades of traveling rough

road conditions.

The construction project is eligible for reimbursement through the Federal Highway Administration's emergency relief program, which funds the repairs of roadways damaged by natural disasters.

Upon completion of paving, N20 will be designated as U.S. 89T and will serve as a temporary detour route for traffic from U.S. 89. After the reconstruction of U.S. 89 is complete, the newly-paved U.S. 89T will be returned to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

ADOT closed U.S. 89 on Feb. 20, after a dry slide occurred and damaged the roadway near Bitter Springs.

ADOT expects construction on U.S. 89T to be completed in mid-August to receive traffic.

NDOT, ADOT, FHWA and Bureau of Indian Affairs have been working together since the closure of U.S. 89 to utilize N20 as a detour route.

"The paving of 28-miles of

dirt road for use as an emergency detour route is unprecedented for Indian Country," said Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT. "We have worked closely with ADOT and our other partners to realize this project."

Immediately after the road closure, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly directed NDOT to work with ADOT on the possibility of paving N20 as an alternative detour route.

On Feb. 24, Shelly and Navajo Nation Executive Branch leadership organized a meeting at Bodaway-Gap Chapter and met with residents affected by the road closure.

"We have followed President Shelly's directive and here we are three-months later, with a groundbreaking ceremony scheduled and construction underway," Chaco said.

NDOT assisted ADOT with the expedient processing of a temporary construction easement for construction. The

lengthy tribal process typically takes months and even years to complete.

ADOT's easement was processed within weeks through assistance from tribal departments and the BIA.

Chaco said the cooperation between NDOT and ADOT has been a great working relationship and he is optimistic the collaboration will lead to other opportunities to improve the transportation system on the Navajo Nation.

Currently, motorists are traveling a 115-mile detour, driving east on U.S. 160 to State Route 98 north for access to and from Page. The U.S. 89T detour route will reduce travel time and mileage to Page by half.

Festivities for the groundbreaking ceremony are scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. with chapter officials from Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine and LeChee.

President Shelly will provide the opening statement. Arizona State Representative Jamescita Peshlakai (D-Dist. 7) will also be in attendance.

An overview of the project will be provided by Paulson Chaco of NDOT, Sharon Pinto from the BIA Navajo Region, Jennifer Toth of ADOT, and Karla Petty from the FHWA.

Additional speakers include Navajo Nation Council delegate Duane Tsinigine (Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine, Kaibeto, LeChee, Red Lake-Tonalea) and members of the Resources and Development Committee. Coconino County Supervisor Lena Fowler is also scheduled to attend.

Information:

[www.navajodot.org](http://www.navajodot.org) or  
[www.azdot.gov/us89](http://www.azdot.gov/us89)