President Shelly urges caution when traveling during winter storm

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—It’s going to be cold and snowy on parts of the Navajo Nation for the next week as a major winter storm rolls in on Feb. 27.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly encourages tribal members to check on the elderly and ensure they are taken care of before hunkering down as the storm hits home.

“Please visit your elders and make sure they have enough wood, food and water for the storm. A lot of our elders live in remote areas and they are the ones most in need of assistance,” President Shelly said.

He noted that some elders might be in need medical attention or assistance with feeding their livestock.

“Use caution when traveling, especially under snowy and icy conditions. Please don’t attempt to travel if it isn’t necessary,” President Shelly said.

During the recent snowstorm earlier this week, five to six chapters were affected by the heavy snow, which made travel on several roads impossible.

Mexican Water, Montezuma Creek, Navajo Mountain and Teec Nos Pos faced heavy snow and requested snowplows to clear the roadways.

The Navajo Division of Transportation implemented their snow removal plan and is working with state and county resources to provide snowplow services on essential roads and school bus routes.

The winter storm will last from Friday through Thursday next week.

The National Weather Service in Flagstaff has alerted travelers that a hazardous weather outlook is in effect for the next week. One to three inches of snow is expected in the lower elevations, with anywhere from one to three feet of snow expected in higher elevations.

The NWS also expects periods of heavy rain during the storm and potential flooding in the lower elevations. The greatest amounts of precipitation will be around the central and eastern Mogollon Rim and White Mountain areas.

If it is absolutely necessary to travel, please ensure you have tire chains or cables, water, blankets and road flares, if available. Make sure you have enough time to reach your destination and tell family where you are traveling to and your expected time of arrival.

The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management and Department of Emergency Management will be on standby during the storm, along with the road crews of NDOT.

President Shelly reminds all tribal members that NDOT snowplows focus on school bus routes and roads with high average daily traffic numbers. Snow removal for private and residential roads is the responsibility of the homeowners.

For snow emergencies, please contact NNDEM at 928-871-6892/6893.

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Storm clouds from the major winter storm scheduled to move in this weekend are beginning to roll into the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)
Navajo veteran commanders provide updates, plan of action for Veterans Act

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—

The Office of the President and Vice President hosted a meeting for the five agency veteran commanders of the Navajo Nation today.

Chief of Staff Deswood Tome met with Edsel Pete, Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs manager, veteran service officers, and agency commanders from all five agencies. Division of Human Resources executive director Lorenzo Curley served an important role in the meeting, as he has worked with the veterans department for the last two weeks, providing direction.

The regular monthly meeting provided an opportunity for the Executive Branch to hear agency updates on the Navajo veterans housing project and discussions on formulating a plan of operation for implementation of the Navajo Nation Veterans Act.

President Shelly was in Washington, D.C. meeting with federal officials, but took time out of his schedule to comment on Navajo veterans and said they must work together toward the common goal of implementing the Navajo Nation Veterans Act.

Before serving as president and vice president, President Shelly was a council delegate for 16 years and served as chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. During his tenure, the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund was established.

“I supported the Veterans Trust Fund and the set aside that was established to fund services,” President Shelly said. “We will continue working to implement the Veterans Act to provide services.

“Many of our kids are returning home from combat in need of health care, counseling and employment. It’s our turn to protect them,” the president said.

President Shelly said the need for Navajo veterans from the five agencies not only include housing, health care, retirement and employment, but other areas such as communication and common courtesy.

“We will complete the plan of operation and other new developments, like the veterans apartment complex we want to construct in Window Rock,” he said.

On Jan. 27, 2014, President Shelly approved more than $1.9 million to begin construction of 300 veterans homes in four years. The initiative was for construction of 15 homes per agency, which equals 75 homes annually.

For 2014, the agencies averaged 12-13 homes completed. Many agency commanders are anticipating completion of their initial 15 homes by the end of March. The agencies are preparing for construction of the next 15 homes in 2015.

There is a need for veterans in need of housing who qualify for the program at the agency level. As the agencies prepare to begin construction of the next 75 homes for 2015, Navajo veterans must step forward for assistance.

The two biggest challenges for many veterans to overcome in order to participate in the housing initiative are having a home site lease and supporting chapter resolution.

-30-
WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Today, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly appointed Deswood Tome as chief of staff for his administration. Tome previously served as special advisor to the president.

Arbin Mitchell, Tome’s predecessor as chief of staff for President Shelly, resigned on Feb. 20. Mitchell began his new appointment for the Office of the Speaker today as their new chief of staff.

“I have every confidence in Deswood Tome as our new chief of staff,” President Shelly said. “His dedication and unswerving commitment to the Navajo people will continue through his new appointment.

“Our office also thanks Arbin Mitchell for serving the Navajo people and our administration these past few years,” he added.

Tome said he will resume the daily government operation up to the oath of office of the incoming administration, upon which time he will step down with the president and vice president.
Summary Remarks
The Honorable Ben Shelly
President, The Navajo Nation
Salt Lake City Utah
Thursday, February 12, 2015

Good morning Governor Herbert, Mr. Speaker, legislators, tribal leaders and other invited guests.

Thank you for the opportunity to join you today to strengthen our relationship between the Navajo Nation and the state of Utah.

We have worked with the Utah State Legislature for decades to address the needs of the Navajo people living in the state. We appreciate your commitment to the Navajo Nation and we look forward to growing this relationship to meet the needs of our ever-changing world.

$3.5 MILLION CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING
In November 2014, the Navajo Nation received a letter that stated grants amounting to $3.5 million for projects on the Navajo Nation were approved by the State of Utah. These funds were from the Navajo Nation Revitalization Fund and the Navajo Royalties Holding Fund.

Leveraging these funds for capital outlay projects has been greatly beneficial to the Navajo Nation. We will continue contributing matching funds to stretch our dollar and meet the needs of our tribal members residing in Utah.

The $3.5 million from the State of Utah are for 21 capital outlay projects ranging from power lines, multipurpose buildings, roads, solid
waste disposal, waterlines, bathroom and kitchen additions, and senior citizen centers.

We appreciate this partnership and the Navajo Nation looks forward to growing this relationship to meet the needs of the estimated 33,000 Navajos living in the State of Utah. These residents are members of six Navajo chapters located in the state.

Our Utah tribal members have identified seven areas of focus: Transportation, Education, Health, Public Safety, General Services, Community Development, and Economic Development. Our projects for capital outlay funding are for these priority areas.

**TRANSPORTATION**
Transportation is a major priority. Roads are what connect our Navajo chapters to the rest of the state. Our Tribal Transportation Improvement Project listing includes the road reconstruction of Highway 162.

Highway 162 is a Utah Department of Transportation road that is vital to the Aneth Chapter. This project is for eight miles of roadway reconstruction at a cost of $38 million. The project is currently not on the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

Instead, UDOT has recommended that work on the road be completed in two-mile increments over several years. We are requesting that this project be included in the state priority listing for immediate road construction.

The Navajo Nation is willing to cost share with the state at 10 percent of the cost of construction. These funds will come from the Navajo Nation TTIP and we are hoping the state will assist us with road design, preliminary engineering and construction costs.

The state roads connecting our Navajo chapters are narrow, winding roads designed in the 1960s. We are concerned with the safety of travelers in this region of the state.

The Oljato Chapter has requested UDOT to construct right-of-way fencing along State Road 163 to prevent livestock collisions. Keeping travelers safe is our primary concern.

**SENATE BILL 90**
The Navajo Nation is strongly urging the 2015 Utah State Legislature to enact Senate Bill 90. This bill is to reactivate the Utah Navajo Trust Fund for reinstating services and benefits to Navajo citizens in San Juan County, Utah.

In 2008, the State of Utah resigned as the federally appointed trustee for the Utah Navajo Trust Fund. The Utah Navajo Royalties Holding Fund was created the same year to serve as a receivership for trust royalties while Congress searched for a new trustee.

Because of this, there has been a freeze on new expenditures, including funding for capital projects and housing. Congress has not had any success in appointing a new trustee. Our Navajo chapters unanimously support the State of Utah to resume management of the Utah Navajo Trust Fund.

We ask for the support of Governor Herbert and the Utah Legislature to enact SB 90.

**HOUSE BILL 33**
House Bill 33 is in response to the alarming achievement gap that exists for Navajo schools in the San Juan School District. When the Utah State Office of Education released the results of a new statewide testing program, four Navajo schools in the district received failing grades.

These schools include Montezuma Creek Elementary School, Whitehorse High School, Tse’bii’nidzisgai Elementary School and Monument Valley High School.

We acknowledge Representative Jack Draxler and the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee for sponsoring HB 33.

HB 33 includes creation of a tribal public education liaison position and creation of a tribal native education commission.

Additionally, adoption of a state plan addressing educational achievement is included, along with reporting to the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee for meaningful reform to improve the delivery of education to Navajo students.

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION FOR NAVAJO WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT**
Senator David Hinkins is the chief sponsor of SCR 2. This resolution supports the negotiated settlement of federal reserved water rights between the Navajo Nation and the State of Utah.

In 2007, the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission and the state reached an agreement in principle regarding the quantification of
the San Juan River.

Former Representative Christine Watkins sponsored HB 127 in the 2012 Utah State Legislature to establish the Navajo Water Rights Settlement Fund. The purpose was to have the state contribute annually to the settlement fund until a certain amount was reached.

However, because of the lengthy timeframe for Congress to ratify the water settlement, the state has decided not to deposit any more funds until the agreement is reached. SCR 2 reaffirms the state’s commitment for the Utah Navajo Water Settlement Agreement and earmarks the state’s settlement funds.

PUBLIC LANDS INITIATIVE
Utah Navajos established the Dine’ Bikeyah organization to advocate for tribal interests, cultural beliefs and environmental stewardship. The organization worked with Navajo people to develop a 1.9 million acre conservation and wilderness area.

The Navajo Utah Commission requests the support of Governor Herbert and the Utah State Legislature in recognizing the interest, connection and sacredness of Utah’s public lands for Native Americans.

GOVERNOR’S VISIT AND TOUR
The Navajo Nation and the State of Utah share a government-to-government relationship. During the annual Legislative Caucus, Governor Herbert makes one hour available during the Native American Summit to meet with tribal leaders to discuss the issues.

While this is an opportunity to address the tribal needs, it is not nearly enough to discuss issues in detail to find proper solutions. The Navajo Utah Commission attempted to have a meeting with Governor Herbert twice since 2013, but was unsuccessful.

We request that Governor Herbert travel to San Juan County to see the conditions of the reservation firsthand and the many challenges Navajo citizens face. We would also like for the governor to meet with the 23rd Navajo Nation Council this spring or summer to find meaningful solutions to the problems facing Navajo residents in Utah.

CONCLUSION
Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We remain hopeful about the future relationship between the Navajo Nation and the State of Utah. We’ve worked together for decades and our relationship has only been strengthened over time.

Thank you for supporting the Navajo residents in your great State of Utah. Let us continue working together for the benefit of the generations to come. Ahe’hee.
President Shelly reports before joint session of N.M. Senate

Burlington Northern Santa Fe has committed $8 million for two rail loops that will accommodate 100 rail cars for each loop. Not only would the project increase gross revenue receipts for the tribe, state and county, but it would also temper the relationships between the respective governments.

“These are meaningful partnership ideas we need to continue with the growth we have created,” President Shelly said.

During his term of office, 2,440 new jobs were added and the president said the Thoreau rail port would be an opportunity to create more N.M. jobs.

The Tribal Infrastructure Fund and capital outlay funding was another area of concern shared by President Shelly. He said the importance of the funding cannot be stressed enough, especially since they’re often use to leverage other funding to complete projects.

He thanked the House and Senate for providing funding for the Thoreau rail port to be an opportunity for the Navajo Nation. He said that Navajo gaming compacts from pueblos are not involved with the formation of the proposed commission, there are serious concerns from the Navajo Nation, the president said.

“We are alarmed because the State of New Mexico could easily sell such lands to private interests, even out-of-state interests,” President Shelly said.

The potential for the state to sell public lands held sacred by tribes is too great, he maintained, especially with the recent fight to get the traditional cultural property designation for Mount Taylor after private interests attempted to open the mountain up to uranium mining.

“Further, House Bill 291 does not address the government-to-government agreements in place that we have to manage federal lands, nor does it address federal laws and policies tribes utilize to relate to the federal government,” President Shelly said.
President Shelly praises Rep. Kirkpatrick for tribal advocacy on Capitol Hill

WINNER, Ariz.--On the morning of Feb. 9, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly joined Speaker LoRenzo Bates, members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council and the general public for the special Navajo swearing-in ceremony for Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Ariz.).

The Navajo Nation Council hosted the event.

Administrating the oath of office was Judge Carol Perry. The Twin Warriors Society of Ft. Defiance provided color guard duties and the students of Dine' Bi’ Olta recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Navajo.

Council delegate Jonathan Nez served as master of ceremonies and provided the welcome address.

Nez thanked Rep. Kirkpatrick for working with the Navajo Nation and for being the people's voice on Capitol Hill.

President Shelly said it’s rare for a congressional leader to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet the needs of Native Americans.

Rep. Kirkpatrick was raised on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, which she said shaped her understanding and appreciation of the issues facing tribes today.

“The Navajo Nation is thankful for all that you have done for us,” President Shelly said. “We showed our appreciation for you at the voting polls this past year.”

He noted that residents in the Western Agency of the Navajo Nation were particularly grateful, after 27 miles of dirt road on Navajo Route 20 was paved in 78 days, connecting the Navajo communities of Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine and LeChee.

The Navajo Nation worked with Arizona Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to get the $35 million project completed.

“But it was Rep. Kirkpatrick that lobbied in Washington, D.C. and secured the funding to make the project a reality,” President Shelly said.

While the highway improved the quality of life for thousands of Navajos in one portion of the Western Agency, Rep. Kirkpatrick is also working to assist tribal members in another portion of the agency.

In Jan., Rep. Kirkpatrick traveled to Ariz. with a congressional delegation from the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss issues facing the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe with the Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation in Flagstaff.

The members of the House Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee on the Interior and Environment traveled to the Navajo and Hopi Reservations to see conditions firsthand and meet with tribal leaders.

During their Window Rock visit, President Shelly advocated for residents raising livestock for their survival. Recent livestock seizures by the Hopi Tribe have reawakened a generations old divide between the two tribes, he said.

“For many Navajo families living on (NPL, HPL and Bennett Freeze), raising livestock is a way of life and the only means of survival in those remote locations,” he said.

However, the president said he was confident that Rep. Kirkpatrick would find an amicable resolution to the livestock seizures.

Such advocacy has garnered praise for the “Navajo Nation’s Congresswoman” throughout her term of office. The oath of office ceremony in the Navajo Nation Council Chamber was an opportunity to say thanks to a hardworking congresswoman.

“It's very rare to have a politician in Washington, D.C. that cares about tribal issues. The Navajo Nation is fortunate to have one in Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick,” President Shelly said.

-30-
BERNALILLO, N.M.—Since 2011, the Navajo Beef initiative has been growing and offering unmatched culinary delights at casinos owned and operated by Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

On Feb. 10, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with representatives of NNGE and Labatt Food Service at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort at Santa Ana Pueblo to discuss progress with the Navajo Beef program. The group dined on Navajo Beef prepared by the executive chef of the Corn Maiden Restaurant for a high class dining experience that was one part celebration and one part demonstration.

Joining in the dinner were representatives from NNGE, Labatt, Navajo ranchers participating in the program and board members from gaming. The Labatt Premium Verified Native American Beef program partners select Navajo ranchers with Navajo casinos. The company has expanded their program to include other tribes and pueblos.

Navajo cattle is purchased, placed on to feed and ultimately processed into boxed beef items upon market readiness. The beef is then distributed to Navajo casinos to be enjoyed by the consumer.

Local Navajo ranchers ship their cattle to feedlots owned by Billy Hall, a cattle buyer who owns the number one certified Angus feedlot in the country. From there, cattle are shipped to a harvest facility and then to direct source meat processing facilities.

Finally, Labatt distributes the beef to casinos, schools, travel and health centers in the southwest. “Navajos supporting Navajos” is the overarching theme.

President Shelly said the Navajo Beef initiative is not only a source of pride, but also a tremendous opportunity for self-sufficiency.

“If, for generations, we have known that livestock is an important Navajo way of life that must be preserved,” President Shelly said. “By working with our partners at Navajo Gaming Enterprise and Labatt, we are enriching our tribal economy and traditional way of life.

“We look forward to growing this partnership for the generations to come,” he added.

Labatt is the eighth largest broad line food service distributor nationally, said Al Silva, chief operating officer of Labatt Food Service.

Silva said the idea to incorporate Navajo Beef into the menus of Navajo casinos was an important step to prove the quality of the meat. The decision by NNGE to become the first customer for Navajo Beef has opened the door to other opportunities like tribal schools and hospitals.

The partnership connects producers with consumers and Navajo cattle ranchers are able to market their cattle at a premium and increase their bottom line for economic stability.

In 2013, Navajo ranchers had a ranching economic impact of $439,768 through sales of their cattle. In 2014, the same number increased by 15 percent to $745,940 for 236,000 pounds of usable meat harvested.

In 2014, there were 481 head of cattle in the Navajo Beef Program. For 2015, that number grew to 561 and estimates for future project continued growth.

Silva said, “You can see the product is superior to anybody else’s product. There’s no apology there.”

Proper vaccinations mean the cattle are less susceptible to diseases and illnesses. Healthy cattle equals weight increase and a superior product for the growing niche market of Navajo Beef.

Last year, Navajo ranchers averaged $1,200 per head through the Navajo Beef program, Silva said. Labatt serves Navajo Beef at all Navajo casinos and plans are to pitch the product to other industries on the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly is proud of the Navajo Beef initiative and said the steak was the best he’s ever tasted.

“Where’s the beef? It’s on Navajo,” he said.

Navajo Beef won the People’s Choice Award at the Arizona Indian Gaming Association Expo Cook Off in 2014.
Navajo Nation Council confirms standing committees

Standing Committees of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council

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<th>Resources and Development Committee</th>
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<td>Chair</td>
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<td>Alon Joe Shepherd (Ft. Defiance)</td>
<td>Edmund Yazzie (Eastern)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice Chair</td>
<td>Dwight Witherspoon (Central)</td>
<td>Benjamin Bennett (Ft. Defiance)</td>
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<td>Member</td>
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<td>Member</td>
<td>Seth Damon (Eastern)</td>
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<td>Member</td>
<td>Lee Jack, Jr. (Ft. Defiance)</td>
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Photo: The table above displays committee membership along the agency represented by each delegate. Also displayed are the chair, vice chair, and members for each standing committee.

WINDOW ROCK—During a special session held on Tuesday, the Navajo Nation Council confirmed membership to four standing committees including the Budget and Finance Committee, Law and Order Committee, Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, and the Resources and Development Committee.

The proposed standing committee memberships were confirmed through Legislation No. 0038-15, sponsored by Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

Speaker Bates introduced the legislation in accordance with 2 N.N.C. §181 which states that the Speaker is authorized to select committee membership, which is subject to confirmation by the Navajo Nation Council.

Following the adjournment of the special council session, each of the four standing committees convened in special meetings to confirm a chair and vice chair for each committee.

In accordance with 2 N.N.C. each delegate is appointed to no more than one standing committee for a term coinciding with their term of office as a delegate. Additionally, Title II also mandates each standing committee to have one member from each of the five Navajo agencies.

# # #

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, search for keywords: Navajo Nation Council
President Shelly tours Hooghan Hozho’, announces plans for veterans housing

GALLUP, N.M.—
Creating opportunities to end homelessness is the mission of Community Area Resources Enterprise, Inc. of Gallup.

The non-profit organization is also known as CARE 66 and is dedicated to providing affordable housing opportunities to homeless people. Their belief is that by providing opportunities for people to improve work and life skills, they will become self-sufficient.

On Feb. 9, President Shelly toured the $8.4 million Hooghan Hozhó and Liberty Hotel development in Gallup. First Lady Martha Shelly and executive staff assistant Carl Smith joined the president, plus staff from CARE 66.

The mixed income family housing development is located at 201 East Coal Ave., near downtown Gallup and stands in stark contrast to other buildings in the area. The three-story building features bright colors and bold architectural design.

Phase one of the project is for the apartment complex and phase two will be for construction of the hotel.

Navajo Housing Authority provided $7.1 million for the project. A multitude of other funding sources contributed more than $1.3 million for the complex.

There will be a total of 44 units for rent at Hooghan Hozhó for Navajo families in need of housing. Construction began in Aug. 2013 and the project will be completed in June 2015.

According to CARE 66 statistics, the median income for a household in McKinley County is $25,005 and the median income for a family is $26,806. The per capita income for the county is $9,872.

About 31.9 percent of families and 36.1 percent of the population are below the poverty line, including 42.3 percent of those under age 18 and 31.5 percent for those 65 and over. The county’s per capita income makes it one of the poorest counties in the U.S.

President Shelly said the building was “exceptional” and said the Navajo Nation would like to pursue a similar apartment complex in Window Rock for veterans.

“Our veterans are in dire need for housing and this development is an excellent model that we can follow,” President Shelly said. “Carl Smith worked for CARE 66 and he is our point person for our veterans housing initiative.”

Thomas Gifford Architect, LLC of Santa Fe provided the building design. Pavilion Construction provided the construction of the building.

The apartment complex will consist of 11 one-bedroom, one-bathroom units, 30 two-bedroom, one-bathroom units and three three-bedroom, two-bathroom units.

Hooghan Hozhó also features a secured courtyard, resident facilities and offices for the property manager. The units feature innovative floor plans with balconies.

Residents will have access to an onsite laundry facility, community computer rooms, onsite parking, a central recreation area and onsite social services.

Sanjay Choudhrie, executive director of CARE 66 said future plans include construction of micro apartments for the homeless at 100 square feet per unit, similar to their current program at the Lexington Hotel.

“We have 21 people at the Lexington Hotel and 175 people on the waiting list. We’d like to build (a hotel) so we can get people off the streets,” he said.

Choudhrie said they only accept tenants who are sober and that CARE 66 is the only Native American model in the country that providing housing first to tenants, followed by social services.

Smith said the Navajo Nation has plans to construct a similar apartment complex in Window Rock for veterans in need of housing.

“We have over 10,000 veterans on the Navajo Nation and more than 400 are homeless,” Smith said. “We want to build a HUD rental unit with support services.”

Identifying funding sources for the project is the first step and Smith will approach NHA, the Navajo Nation Council and others for seed money to fund architecture and engineering.

“The rental units will provide transitional housing for our veterans for at least four to six years, until they are able to establish homeownership for themselves,” Smith said.

In the meantime, Hooghan Hozhó will address the large population of working Navajo families in need of affordable housing in Gallup.

President Shelly said there’s been a lot of misinformation about NHA in the media recently and the fact that they invested $7.1 million for Hooghan Hozhó should prove they are spending money for housing.

“They’re changing how they’re spending money and how they do business,” President Shelly said.

Choudhrie agreed and said, “Most of our projects have some level of NHA funding. We couldn’t have done any of the things we’ve done without NHA. They’ve been a great partner for the last seven years.”

-30-
President Shelly attended Indian at Santa Fe, shares issues facing Nation

SANTA FE, N.M.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended Indian Day at the N.M. Legislature on Feb. 6, 2015 and shared a number of issues facing the Nation.

President Shelly told state legislators that the Navajo Nation grew by 2,440 new jobs that were created during his term of office. He expressed his hopes to see that number increase with new jobs in the Land of Enchantment.

“We need your support for the rail spur in Thoreau. This includes a two-line rail system for transport from the Transcontinental to the Four Corners,” President Shelly said. “We extend our gratitude to the State of New Mexico for funding the study.”

He said the opportunities with transportation and rail have resulted in a commitment from Burlington Northern Santa Fe to invest $8 million for two loops that will accommodate 100 rail cars for each loop.

“From such projects, we can increase gross revenue receipts for the Navajo Nation, Four Corners, counties and state,” President Shelly said.

He also spoke about the capital outlay and tribal infrastructure funds provided by the state for projects across tribal lands in N.M.

The funding provided to Indian tribes across the state for infrastructure projects are a demonstration of government-to-government partnerships to leverage funding, he said.

It provides an opportunity for tribes, pueblos and the state to come together to address infrastructure needs, said the president.


President Shelly said their support would be crucial to passing the tribal gaming compact with the state.

“We need your support. Jobs, revenue, tax and business from the many vendors will come forth from this legislature as you pass our compact,” President Shelly said. “We will remain here in Santa Fe to work toward this accomplishment.”

By working together and negotiating with the pueblos and legislators, the Navajo Nation is looking forward to passing a gaming compact that is agreeable to all this legislative session.

He concluded by saying that the new rail system is an opportunity for growth in manufacturing and other future industries.

“The Navajo Nation is not a manufacturing nation. Although we produce natural resources and jobs in the energy market, we have no manufacturing workforce,” President Shelly said. “With your foresight and legislative fix, we can increase opportunity for a manufacturing base in northwest N.M., where there is an abundance of oil, natural gas, coal and agriculture.”
President Shelly and Vice President Jim take oath of office to extend term

President Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim took the oath of office at noon today and extended their presidency. The decision to extend the term of office for President Shelly came on the heels of a late night negotiation meeting and subsequent letter of agreement between Executive and Legislative Branches of government. The terms of the agreement state, “In the spirit of Ké and Hózhó the Executive and Legislative leaders have come together to talk things out in resolving a controversy that would impact the stability of the Navajo Nation.” The agreement further states that President Shelly will maintain all power and duties under the provisions of the Navajo Nation Code. The President will meet with members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council during the winter session to discuss the best interests of the Nation moving forward. Until then, President Shelly and Vice President Jim will maintain continuity of government until a new president is elected. Chief Justice Herb Yazzie administered the oath of office at the Office of the President and Vice President. The State Room was packed with cabinet members, OPPV staff and members of the media to witness the event. Standing in front of the mahogany Great Seal of the Navajo Nation, President Shelly placed his left hand on the Bible and raised his right hand to take his oath of office. President Shelly repeated See EXTENDED >> Page 2

President Rex Lee Jim

PARIS—Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim and Navajo Human Rights officials purchased seven confirmed Navajo sacred masks that were up for auction in Paris, France. Handfuls of items representing different Indigenous nations went on auction on Dec. 15, 2014. The Navajo delegation arrived in Paris on Dec. 12 and accomplished one of its goals by gaining access to the sacred masks at the Drouot auction house on Dec. 13. Vice President Jim offered Navajo prayers to restore harmony from the masks being removed from the Four Sacred Mountains. It is also important to note that item 77 in the catalog is not of Navajo origin. Even auction house does not know the origin of this item as indicated in the catalog.

While in Paris, the news media coverage of the Navajo mission spread throughout Europe. Jane Hartley, U.S. ambassador to France, made a public appeal for the sacred masks to be returned to the respective indigenous tribes, including the Navajo Nation. The Navajo delegation raised awareness of how the sacred masks belong to the Navajo Nation, and the right course of action was to return them. The vice president called the masks “living and breathing beings,” in Navajo, and as sacred to the people used for healing ceremonies during the winter. It was important that they were taken home. See CEREMONIAL >> Page 7

The ultimate legislative fix

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—President Shelly said a “legislative fix” is needed to balance government responsibility.

“First and foremost, he has said time and again that a referendum vote must occur that recognizes the Navajo people as the governing body. Each time legislation was introduced the tribal council voted it down. “The power lies with the Navajo people, not the council,” he said.

President Shelly also said that delegates should not serve on boards or commissions because the potential for politics preventing progress is great.

In addition, he said that the Office of the Auditor General, Navajo Election Administration, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Ethics and Rules, and Government Development need to be repositioned to the Executive Branch.

“These need to be separate and independent entities not subject to the will of the council. That is the only way the Navajo Nation will truly move forward,” President Shelly said. “I am hoping that the next generation of leadership will see the logic in this legislative fix.”

However, it is also important that we work together with our legislators to get the job done for the people,” he added.

The president maintained that it is the Navajo people that are the governing body.

Repatriation

Navajo delegation successfully return sacred masks from Paris auction house

HISTORIC CATCH Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim with the oath of office on Jan. 15 for continuity of government. They will meet with the 23rd Navajo Nation Council during the winter session to discuss plans moving forward to June and August presidential elections. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

2015 WINTER SESSION STATE OF THE NAVAJO NATION

No lawsuits, administrative leave or investigations launched against the presidential administration during the four year term of office - President Ben Shelly and VP Rex Lee Jim will stand the test of time.

Before he entered office and became Navajo Nation President, Ben Shelly guided the general election of 2010 and made the comeback of ages to win the vote of the Navajo people for the highest office of Indian Country. President Shelly took over the reins to the tribal government and took the oath of office to become the first N.M. resident and sitting vice president of the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly is a hardworking, dedicated, and devoted leader. From the beginning of his term, he has been focused and clear on the priorities of the nation and his goal was to improve the quality of life for our people.

President Shelly’s administration has been built on a foundation of integrity, trust, and a commitment to honor the people of the Navajo Nation. The administration has focused on improving the quality of life for the people of the Navajo Nation by addressing the critical issues facing the nation.

President Shelly has been a strong and effective leader, and his administration has been successful in addressing the challenges facing the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly has made significant progress on key initiatives, including:

- Strengthening our economy and creating jobs through the Navajo Nation Economic Development Corporation.
- Expanding access to education and workforce development through the Navajo Nation Education Department.
- Improving public safety and the criminal justice system through the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.
- Strengthening our health care system through the Navajo Nation Department of Health.
- Accelerating infrastructure development through the Navajo Nation Department of Public Works.
- Protecting and preserving our language and culture through the Navajo Language and Cultural Restoration Office.
- Enhancing our natural resources through the Navajo Nation Department of Natural Resources.
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President Shelly approves special runoff election, NBOES pardon

RESTORING TRUST

The Navajo Human Rights Commission and the Navajo Transit System continue to provide important services to the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Land Acquisition Trust Fund was approved by a vote of 18-0 by the Navajo Nation Council on Dec. 23. Speaker Pro Tem Lorenzo Bentz signed the resolution on Dec. 29 before sending it to the Office of the President and Vice President.

The Navajo Land Acquisition Trust Fund is used to acquire land for the benefit of the Navajo people. This fund will be utilized for the development of residential subdivisions, mutual aid housing, homes for the elderly, and community development purposes for the Ramah Chapter.

The Navajo Nation Council passed new legislation that creates an independent real estate purchase agreement on behalf of the Navajo Nation. The legislation states that the President and Vice President, Roy Chap Martzhalin, are authorized to sell land to the Navajo Nation. On Sept. 9, President Shelly signed the resolution to sell land for the Navajo people, having due regard for the ethical duties and responsibilities of the office.

First Lady Martha Shelly held a Bible and recited her husband’s historic swearing in ceremony for the second time. Navajo Vice President Rex Lee Jim was next and took his oath of office as vice president.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly was sworn in to office and will continue to function as president until Jan. 13. The agreement prescribes that President Shelly will remain as president and the chief legislative counsel with attorneys from the DOJ. Navajo Nation Council, along with Bates and members of the legislative leadership, will continue to consider and pass bills that would otherwise address the matter of the presidency until Jan. 13.

The Navajo Transit System continues to provide important services to the Navajo Nation. The legislation passed in the last several months. A new bill passed in the last several months. A new bill passed by the Board of Election Supervisors will continue to provide important services to the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Human Rights Commission is an independent agency of the Navajo Nation. It was established to protect the civil rights of Navajo people. As of Dec. 23, the Navajo Human Rights Commission has received 24 complaints.

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GALLUP, N.M.—Alcohol is a serious problem for the city of Gallup, which is pockmarked with numerous liquor establishments. City leaders from that era joined forces with tribal and community leaders to march on Santa Fe to bring attention to the issue. During that time, McKinley County Commissioner Ben Shelly joined the contingent of citizens organized to address related fatalities and crimes. The group’s efforts eventually resulted in closure of drive-up package liquor sales in Gallup and millions of dollars in federal funding for the operation Na’nízhozhí, Gallup, in 1994. In June 2013, the funding dried up for NCI and the nonprofit organization was forced to close their doors after more than 20 years of service.

On Oct. 24, 2013, the Navajo Nation entered into a memorandum of agreement with Munoz’s office and McKinley County to reopen the center. Since taking over management of the Gallup Detoxification Center on Jan. 1, 2014, the Navajo Department of Behavioral Health Services has spent more than $58,000 providing services.

The city of Gallup has contributed $320,000 to DHBS for an operating budget of close to $1 million. The city funds were collected from the Alcohol Excess Tax at a rate of 10 percent. Despite this joint effort to fight alcoholism, the MDA has had little success in meeting the full extent of needs related to providing treatment to those in need.


december 8, President Shelly joined state, county and tribal leaders in focusing the spotlight on the swelling number of people going through the detox center, numbers that have averaged about 2,400 people per month. Sen. George M. magnesium carbonate water at the Lighthouse Church in Gallup, which was pockmarked with numerous liquor establishments. Munoz encouraged the audience to not dwell on what went wrong 31 years ago but to instead focus on solutions and moving forward with the “drunk town” of Gallup. Gambling has been a contentious issue in Gallup. Efforts to come to grips with the problem were met with resistance, especially from those who favored a referendum vote for amending the language of the 1989 law. However, thoughtful and deliberative conversation needed to occur with the Navajo people before changing the qualifications for tribally owned entities. “This conversation has yet to occur and, as such, my frustration has increased,” he said. “President Shelly has said they are divided and are an example of this that the decision will affect the generations to come.”

The same day, President Shelly also signed into law three bills. Legislation no. CD-64-14 was for amendments to Title 11 of the Navajo Code of Civil Procedure which established the Board of Elections Supervisors to eliminate filing fees for all political positions as a form of appointment. Currently, filing fees by candidates are submitted when they file their candidacy with the office. The filing fees are non-refundable.

For an appointment to fill an unexpired term, the applicable filing fee shall not be required,” was the amendment to the code. President Shelly also signed CD-76-14 into law and enacted the amendments to the Navajo Tribal Board of Farm Board plan of operation. The amendments included change of legislative body: “For the Navajo Nation Board of Election Supervisors; purpose, investment, property, definition, compensation, term, filing fees, report and expenses of the Board of Election Supervisors.”

The Navajo people can now realize that the $554 million from the trust settlement is properly accounted for and distributed through the Navajo Governance. President Shelly said, “This is the Navajo people’s money and they deserve to know what it’s spent on.”

Such transparency in government has been a hallmark of this administration and proved to be the key to the Navajo people informed,” he added.

President Shelly meets with U.S. EPA, discussions focus on carbon dioxide ruling

The Navajo Nation council is facing an historic financial challenge for the eleventh time in its history. Its finances are in such dire straits that it is considering options that would require the tribe to accept a new economic entity. The Navajo Nation as a sovereign entity has always been good. The Navajo Nation has always been good.
Dear Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly,

I am writing this letter to you to give you my support and appreciation of working at the Klagetoh Chapter House. I really enjoyed working here. I am looking forward to next year and working again. Many things got completed but it is still not enough. I am very happy and thank you again for giving me the opportunity for working here. Sincerely yours,

Delcon Stigler

Dear President Shelly,

Thank you for giving me this job opportunity at the Klagetoh Chapter House. Also thank you for the money you gave. I made a decision that it is going to be giving me to help me buy new clothes and supplies. Again, thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Rosalinda Begay Klagetoh

To: Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly

On behalf of the Klagetoh summer Navajo community youth, we would like to thank you for your continued support. We had funds set aside for youth. Not many job opportunities are given to or for the youth. This helps provide job experience and is well needed for school expenses. Again, thank you for the opportunity.

Kirk S. Wilson

Dear Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly

Greetings, I am a member of the Klagetoh community that has been here for a long time. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to work and gain job experience in the process.

You have given our chapter funds in order for students to be temporarily employed. We are very much working hard to learn how and acknowledge each other. I would like to say thank you for the opportunities. We appreciate what you have done for us and our community members.

Sincerely,

Nichelle Ashley Klagetoh

Who are the modern Navajo?

Dear President Ben Shelly,

I am a seventh grader at Hualapai Middle School in Moab, Utah. I am writing a report on the Navajo and I need some help with finding resources on the modern day Navajo.

Some of the information I could use is the history of the Navajo, the places they moved, and what did the Code Talkers do?

Were your people affected by the European explorers? In the traditional Navajo religion, what were the beliefs and customs?

Any information would be helpful so thanks for the help.

Sincerely,

Khalil McBride Moab, UT


Page 4

Reasons why President Shelly and Vice President Jim should remain in office

The 2014 presidential election taught us anything, it is a disaster. Five months have passed since the primary election and things have not improved. The endless litany of questions continues to pop up constantly. Who will hold the will? There will be a write-in option for voters? Why is the Navajo Nation government necessary?

Of course, the real question is “Why is anybody’s mind is who will fill the role of president until the next election?”

The obvious and correct answer is President Rex Lee Jim was the last candidate to be elected by the voting body – the Navajo people – to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the presidency.

They both took the oath of office on Jan. 13, after reaching a late-night agreement with tribal leadership and members of the House of Representatives. The terms of the agreement will remain in place until the end of the winter session.

Legislation will be introduced to provide for the removal of President Shelly and replaced by the speaker or delegate from the council. This does not follow the opinion issued by the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.

On Dec. 15, 2014, DOJ issued a legal opinion stating that President Shelly may continue in office as president until a successor is elected and sworn into office. The election code states that expiration of a successor’s term of office is contingent upon two things: that a general election occurs and a president is elected, and that the new president is “installed in office” when they take the oath of office.

To provide an objective opinion, the attorney general and deputy attorney general were recused from contributing to the opinion. Instead, five attorneys from DOJ drafted the opinion.

They cited Navajo Nation Supreme Court decisions, language from the tribal code, and court decisions to support their opinion.

On Dec. 22, the legislative council issued an opinion and made the claim that a special session could take place as interim president. Such a decision would only hinder the tribes processes underway and compound an already challenging situation for the Nation.

Continuity of government operations is another central reason why President Shelly and Vice President Jim remain in office. The responsibilities of the presidency have already been in their hands over the past four years and will not face any lawsuits, investigations or administrative leave during their terms of office.

In short, they have consistently maintained the internal resources of their tribe during their administration. With all the political uncertainties confusing the public at large, the primary focus should be continuity until a new leader is elected.

President Shelly said he would be reprimand and doing the Navajo people a disservice if he were to vacate office without a successor being elected.

“I took an oath to uphold the presidency until a new president was elected and installed. My administration will continue the responsibilities of the presidency until a new president takes the oath of office.”

Kirk S. Wilson

Navajo D.O.T.

Line item veto

On Dec. 15, President Shelly executed his line-item veto authority on Legislation No. CN-63-14, which was for more than $1 million from the FY 2015 general fund budget. The legislation, which was to transition from five billion dollar corporation with water rights and resources that is going to be giving to me for the Klagetoh community.

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Navajo D.O.T.
President Shelly approves Navajo Department of Health Act

The legislation was originally approved for $600,000 from the UUF for the purchase of an operating expenses, planning and demolition project. The funds will be distributed to the Navajo Nation's general fund. The district grazing officials will receive $877,500. The farm board will receive $843,750. The Eastern Navajo Land Board will receive $518,750.

During this administration, we have let go of the minimum balance because it does not mention the bus purchase, but OMB will pay for it.

President Shelly also approved Legislation No. CD-73-14 for $1,591,250 from the UUF for elected officials operating expenses, planning and demolition project. The legislation does not authorize the Navajo Nation to use the Navajo Nation's general fund. Instead, it will take hard work to make sure they are completed.

President Shelly said the legislation does not authorize the Navajo Nation to use its own funds to buy goods or services. We will utilize NDOT equipment and operators to complete the projects. Since the NDOT equipment and operators are already trained, we will not need to require immediate attention. For now, NDOT continues to assist the Navajo people receive uniform coverage, regardless of the status of the legislation. President Shelly said the funding agreement was only in place for a limited time. It was just one of hundreds approved by the department. The legislation does not authorize the Navajo Nation to use its own funds to buy goods or services. Instead, it will take hard work to make sure they are completed.

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OPVP provides interns opportunity for government reform

"I want to give these young Navajo students an opportunity to see the operation of the tribal government."

President Shelly honors Navajo Veterans during Festivities for 2014 Veterans Day in Window Rock

Sec. Sally Jewell joins President Shelly for historic $554 million settlement signing ceremony
President Shelly enacts Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014

WINDSOR ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, with a stroke of his pen, signed the Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014 into law on Nov. 20, 2014. The act will form the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, which will provide $1.7 billion for economic development projects and initiatives.

President Shelly enacts criminal code amendments

WINDBERG, Ariz.—President Shelly enacted Council standing committees resulting from the 88-to-24-member reduction. President Shelly also signed into law CN-53-14, which covers 148,325 acres of land in Farmington, N.M.

When the legislation was first presented, President Shelly’s concerns with definitions of junk food and the monitoring processes of tax collections resulted in a veto. At the time, he called the Healthy Dine’ Nation Act “a clear cultural misunderstanding.” For further clarification.

The amendments to Title 24 of the Navajo Code would be imposed upon gross receipts at a rate of two percent upon minimal-to-in-nutritional value food items sold.

The Navajo Nation Code, was signed into law to continue our efforts to address the 520 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation. The new amendments to the Healthy Dine’ Nation Act of 2014 into law on Nov. 20, 2014.

President Shelly said. “Today, I am signing this legislation into law to continue our commitment to healthy lifestyles for our people. ‘Diabetes is an enemy that we will conquer by fighting this war together,’ he added. The amendments to Title 24 of the Navajo Code will be imposed upon gross receipts at a rate of two percent upon minimal-to-in-nutritional value food items sold.

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When you add these two buildings, it probably runs close to $10 million. Thank you Speaker Pro Tem Bates and Delegate Hale for securing that money. More than $5 million was spent to remediate the building. It was a team effort. That's the only way that things get going fast. Administration Building No. 2 is being built right now and Administration Building No. 1 took a lead role on the project and directed his crew from Design and Engineering Services. Also Facilities Maintenance and NOSHA. Those are a few departments that were leveraged to cover the costs of construction. We worked very hard on this building. I would like to thank the design team and other tribal divisions and departments. It took a lot of money, just like president said,” he added.

President Shelly said that the renovated building was like your own home; it was your family. “You were all in crowded workspaces. You know what it’s like to be waiting. For this reason, quickly process your work and don’t let the public get frustrated,” he said. “We worked very hard on this building. I would like to thank the design team and other tribal divisions and departments.”

He said employees had to endure cramped conditions for the spread and other issues. “It took a lot of money, just like president said,” he added. “We worked very hard on this building. I would like to thank the design team and other tribal divisions and departments.”

He also encouraged employees to quickly process the requests. “We worked very hard on this building. I would like to thank the design team and other tribal divisions and departments.”

“Thank you. Take this blueprints for the work that was done. Take care of it in case you need to refer to it. Also you should be aware that the building is finally after 28 months of renovation activities. The renovation was the result of non-maintenance. “To date, we have spent more than $1.6 million providing services,” President Shelly said. “Despite our partnership with the city, it is not enough to operate the facility and provide necessary services. “We are looking at more than $2 million annually that is needed,” he added.

President Shelly also mentioned a House bill on Indian Energy that was introduced during the 113th Congress by Congressman Don Young, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee. The bill proposes that the federal government provide a process in energy development for large land base tribes.”

In June 2013, the former Na'nizhoozhi Center Inc. closed its doors after providing more than 20 years of service when funding closed the administration building due to black mold contamination. Employers were complaining of headaches and other unusual incidents.

Personal protective gear was required for employees to retrieve documents and equipment that needed to be decontaminated. The most important thing was to complete the work. “If your building eventually resulted in a strong odor that gave employees headaches. Something had to be done. Closing the building meant employees had to find available workspace from other tribal divisions and departments. We had to reposition employees to complete the work. We were at very high on this building. I would like to thank the Design and Engineering Services. Also Facilities Maintenance and NOSHA,” Mitchell said. “Those are a few departments that assisted with making this happen.”

“Staff had to endure cramped conditions for the past two years and that many complained about illness being spread and other issues. We’re at a time when we are facing in need of more housing and education. We are facing another challenge. Don’t you see the needs of your home? Are you going to fix it? I’m thankful for your work here,” Hale said.

In 2013, the former Na'nizhoozhi Center Inc. closed its doors after providing more than 20 years of service when the bill was voted out of committee and is up for debate. It is the administration building that was finally after 28 months of renovation activities.

“Some families are forced to live in camper shells. I hope the people that are going to be relocated are having trouble adjusting. Bottom, Joining the delegation is Rep. Jocelyn Kiefer, who represents the House Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, and member of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council to discuss the Office of the Inspector General. The federal relocation program administered by ONHIR. Jodi Gillette, Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs for the White House Domestic Policy Council joined the delegation. The federal relocation program awarded the Navajo Nation Hopi Tribes. He also shared issues impacting families in the former Bennett Freeze area, where time has stood still for more than four decades. He also shared issues impacting families in the former Bennett Freeze area, where time has stood still for more than four decades.

“Some of these projects were not in compliance with the Appropriation Act. The Office of the Inspector General has reviewed the projects because of their importance to their respective chapters,” President Shelly said. “Some of these projects were not in compliance with the Appropriation Act.”

The president also mentioned that the Appropriations Act states that project funding will be approved only if they are listed on the five-year CIP plan, which was recently approved in the summer of 2014 and 14 years earlier. He also shared issues impacting families in the former Bennett Freeze area, where time has stood still for more than four decades.

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