23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
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Council members join NTUA in celebrating the completion of the Kayenta Solar Facility

PHOTO: Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye, Vice President Jonathan Nez, NTUA officials, and SRP partners during the ribbon cutting ceremony to mark the completion of the Kayenta Solar Facility in Kayenta, Arizona on Aug. 24, 2017.

KAYENTA, Ariz. – On Thursday, Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) spoke on behalf of the Navajo Nation Council at the opening ceremony for the newly constructed Kayenta Solar Facility, which is located approximately five-miles north of the community of Kayenta. The celebration marked the completion of the first-ever large-scale solar farm on the Navajo Nation.

The solar facility, located on 300-acres of land, will provide approximately 27.3-megawatts of solar electricity. Navajo Tribal Utility Authority entered into a two-year energy and environmental attribute agreement with the Salt River Project to develop the solar farm, which was constructed by a company known as Isolux Corsan.

During the celebration, Delegate Shepherd who serves as chair of the Resources and Development Committee, commended the NTUA, SRP, Kayenta community members and local leaders, and Isolux Corsan for successfully completing the solar farm.

“The project was successfully completed due to strong community and leadership efforts. This is the first-of-its-kind for the Nation and I strongly believe that our prayers and songs made it possible,” stated Delegate Shepherd.

“I also want to extend my gratitude to the families that voluntarily gave their grazing lands to build the facility. The families truly know the vision and need of the Nation and they have invested into our children’s and Nation’s future in renewable energy. The families laid the foundation for the Nation to explore renewable energy,” added Delegate Shepherd.

The families of John Todacheene, Bessie Parrish, Jefferson Yazzie Black, and Florence Parrish, who each held grazing permits within area, consented to land withdrawals within their designated grazing areas to allow NTUA and SRP to construct the solar farm.

NTUA general manager Walter W. Haase expressed his appreciation to the families, community leadership, and the Nation’s leadership.

“The project would not have been possible without continuous leadership support. The President and the Navajo Nation Council have been supportive since the beginning of the initiative. The Council knew the initiative was important because it would provide electricity for families, create jobs, and create opportunities for solar energy growth,” stated Haase.

Speaker of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) expressed his gratitude to all of the entities for working collaboratively together and for setting the Navajo Nation on a path toward increased renewable energy development.

“The solar farm serves as a model for the Nation to coordinate and develop future projects. Renewable energy development remains a priority for the Council and the entire Navajo Nation,” said Speaker Bates.

President Russell Begaye, Vice President Jonathan Nez, and officials from the Kayenta Township and Kayenta Chapter were also in attendance at the celebration.

According to NTUA, the Kayenta Solar Facility consists of over 119,000 photovoltaic panels, which follow the daily path of the sun. The 27.3-megawatt production capacity provides enough energy to service approximately 13,000 homes. The service life of the solar facility is estimated to exceed 25-years. NTUA currently provides electricity to Navajo communities served by NTUA.

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