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Council and state leadership applaud opening of newly constructed Chichiltah Chapter

Photo: Council Delegate Seth Damon addresses Chichiltah community members at the opening of the new chapter facility on June 2, 2017.

CHICHILTAH, N.M. – On Friday, Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), New Mexico State Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon (D – Dist. 6), and Congressional staff from U.S. Sen. Tom Udall's (D – NM) office, celebrated with the Chichiltah community for the opening of its newly constructed chapter facility.

Chapter community services coordinator Roselyn John said over nine years ago the chapter assessed the state of the former building and sought to carry out a renovation of its water

pipelines. However, it was later found that the entire building needed to be demolished and replaced for structural and safety reasons.

Delegate Damon, who was invited as a guest speaker, thanked the attendees and stressed that the continued dedication of the chapter officials and staff, with the support of the Chichiltah community, made it possible to construct the new chapter.

“We all come from somewhere, we are all relatives in some form or fashion, so with that said I say welcome and thank you for showing support to this chapter and what we have accomplished here up until today,” said Delegate Damon. “I am very proud to represent a community that takes the initiative and exemplifies true self-determination.”

Delegate Damon also expressed appreciation to chapter leaders, state leaders and officials, and Sen. Udall’s staff for their support and aid in attaining the funding to complete the construction of the chapter facility.

“You have become a friend and a believer in the Navajo people, and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We respect your hard work and dedication, and we know you will continue to uphold that honor for our Navajo area,” said Delegate Damon.

Construction of the chapter building started in early 2016, and in Jan. 2017, the building was completed and included a paved parking lot, said John. She added that the project obtained funding from the Navajo Nation and received matching funds from the state. Chichiltah Chapter also utilized a portion of their budget funding towards the project.

John stated that former Council Delegate Charles Damon, III, who served four terms on the Navajo Nation Council, advocated for funding since the inception of the project and thanked him and the Navajo Nation Council for their continued support.

“I want to thank the Navajo Nation leadership, who have remained consistent in aiding our efforts to get our new chapter, especially Council who approved the funding in order to get the state of New Mexico’s matching dollars,” said John. “I also want to thank the Office of the President and Vice President for their advocacy at the state level.”

John expressed gratitude to the Chichiltah Chapter staff and the Navajo Nation Design and Engineering Services for “fighting and never giving up” on the project. Although the community had to operate out of schools and other local chapter buildings for the last nine years, John said their chapter never fell behind on daily business and operations.

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