



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Resources and Development Committee receives tourism report from LeChee Chapter officials

TONALEA/RED LAKE, Ariz. – On Wednesday, the Resources and Development Committee met in the community of Tonalea/RedLake and received a report from LeChee Chapter officials, regarding concerns with vendors, tourism, and small business establishments.

The report also touched on Navajo Parks and Recreation’s boundaries and management issues within the vicinity of the chapter, which is located approximately five-miles south of Page, Ariz.

Council Delegate Tuchoney Slim, Jr. (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K’ai’Bii’To, LeChee, Tonalea/Red Lake) said LeChee Chapter is located in a unique area with many economic establishments and opportunities due to its close proximity to many tourist attractions.

“Antelope Point, Horseshoe Bend, Antelope Point Marina, and Navajo Generating Station are within the vicinity of LeChee. The community relies heavily on the tourism market, but there are many issues that make it difficult for the chapter to prosper economically,” said Delegate Slim.

LeChee Chapter president Jerry Williams stressed during his report to the committee that the community does not have a clear and suitable plan to capture the tourism market from Navajo Parks and Recreation. The lack of a plan causes the City of Page to gain more economically rather than the Nation, said Williams.

“The City of Page is growing and we see new hotels and establishments every year and we have not seen any developments in our community. The Nation profits from the tribal parks, but we never see the investments and returns,” added Williams, who also questioned how much revenue Parks and Recreation collects and what those revenues are used for.

RDC member Council Delegate Leonard H. Pete (Chinle) agreed that Navajo Parks and Recreation should develop and present a plan that captures the tourism market on the Nation.

“The same plan from five years ago will not work, because the market is always changing. Our tribal parks have great potential to generate revenues, but we are not strategically addressing it,” said Delegate Pete.

In addition to his report, Williams added that the common boundaries between the Navajo Parks and Recreation, National Park Services, and LeChee Chapter needs to be clarified because it presents many challenges and adds another obstacle to pursuing economic development opportunities.

RDC chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jedito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat) recommended a follow-up meeting with all entities, such as Navajo Parks and Recreation, Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, Office of the Auditor General, Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, Navajo Nation Department of Justice, Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development, and the Navajo Nation Tax Commission Office, to address the chapter's concerns during a joint committee meeting with the Budget and Finance Committee on Nov. 3 at LeChee Chapter.

The Resources and Development Committee approved the report with a 3-0 vote with one directive.

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