24th Navajo Nation Council
Office of the Speaker

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MEDIA CONTACT
Carl Slater
(928) 871-6815
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Dennehotso Chapter Celebrates Opening of Convenience Store

Dignitaries help open the Dennehotso convenience store.

DENNEHOTSO, Ariz. – Today members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, including Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh), and the community of Dennehotso celebrated the opening of the Dennehotso Convenience Store. The store site includes a convenience store, gas station, deli, and laundromat.

Dennehotso is a community located next to US Hwy 160 in northern Arizona. The new site is well-positioned to capture highway travelers and support the basic needs of the local community.

In 2016, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council passed CAP-19-16, which provided $2.8 million to complete the project. The legislation approved the partial usage of interest income from the Navajo Nation Permanent Trust Fund for a suite of projects, most of which were focused on economic and community infrastructure development.

When the package of projects was originally developed by the Budget and Finance Committee, the convenience store project received resistance and the threat of a line-item veto from the Office of the President and Vice President. Through careful negotiation and the strong advocacy of Dennehotso residents led by Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown

(Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta), then-Budget and Finance Committee Chair Seth Damon was able to protect the project and ensure the president would sign the final package without a line-item veto.

Speaker Damon expressed his gratitude to Delegate Nathaniel Brown.

“I really want to thank Honorable Delegate Nate Brown…it’s because of your leadership…and more importantly, your dedication to your community in making sure that this facility is here today,” stated Speaker Damon.

For years, the Projects Management Department within the Division of Economic Development (DED) funded a piecemeal development approach of the 10-acre site. By the time the project received CAP-16-19 funding in 2016, the department had already invested approximately $2.2 million to complete all preliminary work, including all clearances; market studies; and all waterline, road-widening, and powerline improvements.

According to the department, the DED Navajo Nation Sales Tax Fund and Project Development Fund contributed $1.5 million in project financing. Additionally, Navajo Nation Road Fund monies financed the access road expansion.

Delegate Brown expressed how years of hard work by DED, the Navajo Division of Transportation, the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, the Arizona Department of Transportation, and most importantly, the local land users and leaders, finally led to the project’s completion.

“This store will provide food locally instead of having to travel miles away to other communities. I really want to thank all the community members. *Ahéhee’ nítsaagó*. This was all possible because of you,” said Delegate Brown.

Doug Adams from Native Markets, who will operate the store, explained that the store will stock some fresh produce at reasonable prices. Speaker Damon implored the community to shop at the store in order to keep Navajo money on the Nation.

The new store is projected to make a strong contribution to the Navajo economy. During construction, the project created 50 temporary jobs, and the store’s operations will create 20 permanent jobs. Surrounded by tourist destinations, the store is projected to provide annually $45k in sales tax revenue and $194k in fuel excise tax revenue.

The project was designed by Dyron Murphy Architects, P.C. and built by General Contractor Arviso Construction Company, Inc. The Native Markets brand of Sandia Oil Company will operate the store’s businesses.

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