After months of planning and negotiations, the Navajo Division of Transportation and Arizona Department of Transportation are ready to break ground on Navajo Route 20.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the paving construction of N20 will take place at 11 a.m. (DST) on June 9 at Tsinaabas Habitiin Elementary School in Bodaway-Gap.

On May 28, ADOT officially began construction activities on N20. The $35 million project will pave a 28-mile portion of dirt road, which travels from Bodaway-Gap north through Coppermine and ending in LeChee.

N20 stretches a total length of 44-miles and has connected all three Navajo communities for over 40 years. Navajo community members are excited about the road construction after decades of traveling rough road conditions.

The construction project is eligible for reimbursement through the Federal Highway Administration’s emergency relief program, which funds the repairs of roadways damaged by natural disasters.

Upon completion of paving, N20 will be designated as U.S. 89T and will serve as an emergency detour route for traffic from U.S. 89. After the reconstruction of U.S. 89 is complete, the newly-paved U.S. 89T will be returned to the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

ADOT closed U.S. 89 on Feb. 20, after a dry slide occurred and damaged the roadway near Bitter Springs.

ADOT expects construction on U.S. 89T to be completed in mid-August to receive traffic. NDOT, ADOT, FHWA and Bureau of Indian Affairs have been working together since the closure of U.S. 89 to utilize N20 as a detour route.

“After months of planning and negotiations, the Navajo Division of Transportation and Arizona Department of Transportation are ready to break ground on Navajo Route 20.”

ADOT selected FNF Construction, Inc. as the contractor to complete the project by mid-August. Upon completion, N20 will be designated as U.S. 89T and will begin receiving traffic. (Photo by Rick Abasta)