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Navajo President Shelly Says New Budget Will Create 28 job Layoffs

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly’s efforts to save 28 jobs took a blow Monday as the Navajo Council Budget and Finance Committee unanimously approved a \$170 million budget for the Executive Branch in FY 2013.

However, President Shelly said he is still asking for division directors and program managers to consider other methods of saving those jobs.

“Protecting existing jobs on the Navajo Nation is my priority. I hoped that we wouldn’t have any layoffs of any positions, but with a \$2.3 million budget shortfall, we lessened the hit that we could’ve taken,” President Shelly said.

Initial layoff projections called for more than 150 layoffs, but President Shelly’s executive budget team used cost saving measures to save about 120 jobs.

The budget team reduced operational, travel, and contract service spending, as well as cutting 47 vacant positions.

In a memorandum today, President Shelly assigned the division directors to begin examining the potential of reassigning personnel to other positions, or finding federal or state funding for those positions.

“I am doing everything I can to save these jobs,” President Shelly said.

Budget forecasts for Fiscal Year 2013 were reduced by \$2.3 million for the Executive Branch and by about \$3 million for the Navajo Nation as a whole.

Reductions came after Four Corners Power Plant announced the closing of three of five units, reducing projected Navajo Nation revenues from leases and royalties.

“I have told people for months about possible budget cuts, and here we are. It’s unfortunate but we will find ways to move forward,” President Shelly said.

“We still have layoffs, that’s disappointing, but we also saved about 120 jobs. I’m still not happy with that. We hope that the Council and its committees will find other ways to increase the budget to save 28 jobs,” President Shelly said.

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