



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2015

President Shelly urges caution when traveling during winter storm



Storm clouds from the major winter storm scheduled to move in this weekend are beginning to roll into the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— It’s going to be cold and snowy on parts of the Navajo Nation for the next week as a major winter storm rolls in on Feb. 27.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly encourages tribal members to check on the elderly and ensure they are taken care of before hunkering down as the storm hits home.

“Please visit your elders and make sure they have enough wood, food and water for the storm. A lot of our elders live in remote areas and they are the ones most in need of assistance,” President Shelly said.

He noted that some elders might be in need medical attention or assistance with feeding their livestock.

“Use caution when traveling, especially under snowy and icy conditions. Please don’t attempt

to travel if it isn’t necessary,” President Shelly said.

During the recent snowstorm earlier this week, five to six chapters were affected by the heavy snow, which made travel on several roads impossible.

Mexican Water, Montezuma Creek, Navajo Mountain and Teec Nos Pos faced heavy snow and requested snowplows to clear the roadways.

The Navajo Division of Transportation implemented their snow removal plan and is working with state and county resources to provide snowplow services on essential roads and school bus routes.

The winter storm will last from Friday through Thursday next week.

The National Weather Service in Flagstaff has alerted travelers that a hazardous weather outlook

is in effect for the next week. One to three inches of snow is expected in the lower elevations, with anywhere from one to three feet of snow expected in higher elevations.

The NWS also expects periods of heavy rain during the storm and potential flooding in the lower elevations. The greatest amounts of precipitation will be around the central and eastern Mogollon Rim and White Mountain areas.

If it is absolutely necessary to travel, please ensure you have tire chains or cables, water, blankets and road flares, if available. Make sure you have enough time to reach your destination and tell family where you are traveling to and your expected time of arrival.

The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency

Management and Department of Emergency Management will be on standby during the storm, along with the road crews of NDOT.

President Shelly reminds all tribal members that NDOT snowplows focus on school bus routes and roads with high average daily traffic numbers. Snow removal for private and residential roads is the responsibility of the homeowners.

For snow emergencies, please contact NNDEM at 928-871-6892/6893.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 25, 2015

Navajo veteran commanders provide updates, plan of action for Veterans Act



Veteran commanders from the five agencies provide an update on the Navajo veterans housing initiative and their plans to implement the Navajo Nation Veterans Act. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The Office of the President and Vice President hosted a meeting for the five agency veteran commanders of the Navajo Nation today.

Chief of Staff Deswood Tome met with Edsel Pete, Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs manager, veteran service officers, and agency commanders from all five agencies. Division of Human Resources executive director Lorenzo Curley served an important role in the meeting, as he has worked with the veterans department for the last two weeks, providing direction.

The regular monthly meeting provided an opportunity for the Executive Branch to hear agency updates on the Navajo veterans housing project and discussions on formulating a plan of operation for implementation of

the Navajo Nation Veterans Act.

President Shelly was in Washington, D.C. meeting with federal officials, but took time out of his schedule to comment on Navajo veterans and said they must work together toward the common goal of implementing the Navajo Nation Veterans Act.

Before serving as president and vice president, President Shelly was a council delegate for 16 years and served as chairman of the Budget and Finance Committee. During his tenure, the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund was established.

“I supported the Veterans Trust Fund and the set aside that was established to fund services,” President Shelly said. “We will continue working to implement the Veterans Act to provide services.

“Many of our kids are

returning home from combat in need of health care, counseling and employment. It’s our turn to protect them,” the president said.

President Shelly said the need for Navajo veterans from the five agencies not only include housing, health care, retirement and employment, but other areas such as communication and common courtesy.

“We will complete the plan of operation and other new developments, like the veterans apartment complex we want to construct in Window Rock,” he said.

On Jan. 27, 2014, President Shelly approved more than \$1.9 million to begin construction of 300 veterans homes in four years. The initiative was for construction of 15 homes per agency, which equals 75 homes annually.

For 2014, the agencies averaged 12-13 homes completed. Many agency commanders are anticipating completion of their initial 15 homes by the end of March. The agencies are preparing for construction of the next 15 homes in 2015.

There is a need for veterans in need of housing who qualify for the program at the agency level. As the agencies prepare to begin construction of the next 75 homes for 2015, Navajo veterans must step forward for assistance.

The two biggest challenges for many veterans to overcome in order to participate in the housing initiative are having a home site lease and supporting chapter resolution.



President Shelly appoints Deswood Tome as OPVP Chief of Staff



Deswood Tome

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Today, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly appointed Deswood Tome as chief of staff for his administration. Tome previously served as special advisor to the president.

Arbin Mitchell, Tome’s predecessor as chief of staff for President Shelly, resigned on Feb. 20. Mitchell began his new appointment for the Office of the Speaker today as their new chief of staff.

“I have every confidence in Deswood Tome as our new chief of staff,” President Shelly said. “His dedication and unwavering commitment to the Navajo people will continue through his new appointment.

“Our office also thanks Arbin Mitchell for serving the Navajo people and our administration these past few years,” he added.

Tome said he will resume the daily government operation up to the oath of office of the incoming administration, upon which time he will step down with the president and vice president.



Summary remarks of President Shelly at Utah State Legislature



President Shelly reports before the Utah State Legislature on Feb. 12 in Salt Lake City. (Photo by Leo Hoskie)

Summary Remarks The Honorable Ben Shelly President, The Navajo Nation Salt Lake City Utah Thursday, February 12, 2015

Good morning Governor Herbert, Mr. Speaker, legislators, tribal leaders and other invited guests.

Thank you for the opportunity to join you today to strengthen our relationship between the Navajo Nation and the state of Utah.

We have worked with the Utah State Legislature for decades to address the needs of the Navajo people living in the state. We appreciate your commitment to the Navajo Nation and we look forward to growing this relationship to meet the needs of our ever-changing world.

\$3.5 MILLION CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDING

In November 2014, the Navajo Nation received a letter that stated grants amounting to \$3.5 million for projects on the Navajo Nation were approved by the State of Utah. These funds were from the Navajo Nation Revitalization Fund and the Navajo Royalties Holding Fund.

Leveraging these funds for capital outlay projects has been greatly beneficial to the Navajo Nation. We will continue contributing matching funds to stretch our dollar and meet the needs of our tribal members residing in Utah.

The \$3.5 million from the State of Utah are for 21 capital outlay projects ranging from power lines, multipurpose buildings, roads, solid

waste disposal, waterlines, bathroom and kitchen additions, and senior citizen centers.

We appreciate this partnership and the Navajo Nation looks forward to growing this relationship to meet the needs of the estimated 33,000 Navajos living in the State of Utah. These residents are members of six Navajo chapters located in the state.

Our Utah tribal members have identified seven areas of focus: Transportation, Education, Health, Public Safety, General Services, Community Development, and Economic Development. Our projects for capital outlay funding are for these priority areas.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a major priority. Roads are what connect our Navajo chapters to the rest of the state. Our Tribal Transportation Improvement Project listing includes the road reconstruction of Highway 162.

Highway 162 is a Utah Department of Transportation road that is vital to the Aneth Chapter. This project is for eight miles of roadway reconstruction at a cost of \$38 million. The project is currently not on the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

Instead, UDOT has recommended that work on the road be completed in two-mile increments over several years. We are requesting that this project be included in the state priority listing for immediate road construction.

The Navajo Nation is willing to cost share with the state at 10 percent of the cost of construction. These funds will come from the Navajo Nation TTIP and we are hoping the state will assist us with road design, preliminary engineering and construction costs.

The state roads connecting our Navajo chapters are narrow, winding roads designed in the 1960s. We are concerned with the safety of travelers in this region of the state.

The Oljato Chapter has requested UDOT to construct right-of-way fencing along State Road 163 to prevent livestock collisions. Keeping travelers safe is our primary concern.

SENATE BILL 90

The Navajo Nation is strongly urging the 2015 Utah State Legislature to enact Senate Bill 90. This bill is to reactivate the Utah Navajo Trust Fund for reinstating services and benefits to Navajo citizens in San Juan County, Utah.

In 2008, the State of Utah resigned as the federally appointed trustee for the Utah Navajo Trust Fund. The Utah Navajo Royalties Holding Fund was created the same year to serve as a receivership for trust royalties while Congress searched for a new trustee.

Because of this, there has been a freeze on new expenditures, including funding for capital projects and housing. Congress has not had any success in appointing a new trustee. Our Navajo chapters unanimously support the State of Utah to resume management of the Utah Navajo Trust Fund.

We ask for the support of Governor Herbert and the Utah Legislature to enact SB 90.

HOUSE BILL 33

House Bill 33 is in response to the alarming achievement gap that exists for Navajo schools in the San Juan School District. When the Utah State Office of Education released the results of a new statewide testing program, four Navajo schools in the district received failing grades.

These schools include Montezuma Creek Elementary School, Whitehorse High School, Tse'biidzizgai Elementary School and Monument Valley High School.

We acknowledge Representative Jack Draxler and the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee for sponsoring HB 33.

HB 33 includes creation of a tribal public education liaison position and creation of a tribal native education commission.

Additionally, adoption of a state plan addressing educational achievement is included, along with reporting to the Native American Legislative Liaison Committee for meaningful reform to improve the delivery of education to Navajo students.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION FOR NAVAJO WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENT

Senator David Hinkins is the chief sponsor of SCR 2. This resolution supports the negotiated settlement of federal reserved water rights between the Navajo Nation and the State of Utah.

In 2007, the Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission and the state reached an agreement in principal regarding the quantification of

the San Juan River.

Former Representative Christine Watkins sponsored HB 127 in the 2012 Utah State Legislature to establish the Navajo Water Rights Settlement Fund. The purpose was to have the state contribute annually to the settlement fund until a certain amount was reached.

However, because of the lengthy timeframe for Congress to ratify the water settlement, the state has decided not to deposit any more funds until the agreement is reached. SCR 2 reaffirms the state's commitment for the Utah Navajo Water Settlement Agreement and earmarks the state's settlement funds.

PUBLIC LANDS INITIATIVE

Utah Navajos established the Dine' Bikeyah organization to advocate for tribal interests, cultural beliefs and environmental stewardship. The organization worked with Navajo people to develop a 1.9 million acre conservation and wilderness area.

The Navajo Utah Commission requests the support of Governor Herbert and the Utah State Legislature in recognizing the interest, connection and sacredness of Utah's public lands for Native Americans.

GOVERNOR'S VISIT AND TOUR

The Navajo Nation and the State of Utah share a government-to-government relationship. During the annual Legislative Caucus, Governor Herbert makes one hour available during the Native American Summit to meet with tribal leaders to discuss the issues.

While this is an opportunity to address the tribal needs, it is not nearly enough to discuss issues in detail to find proper solutions. The Navajo Utah Commission attempted to have a meeting with Governor Herbert twice since 2013, but was unsuccessful.

We request that Governor Herbert travel to San Juan County to see the conditions of the reservation firsthand and the many challenges Navajo citizens face. We would also like for the governor to meet with the 23rd Navajo Nation Council this spring or summer to find meaningful solutions to the problems facing Navajo residents in Utah.

CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We remain hopeful about the future relationship between the Navajo Nation and the State of Utah. We've worked together for decades and our relationship has only been strengthened over time.

Thank you for supporting the Navajo residents in your great State of Utah. Let us continue working together for the benefit of the generations to come. Ahe'hee.





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 February 13, 2015

President Shelly reports before joint session of N.M. Senate



President Shelly reported before the Senate in a joint session with the House on Feb. 11 in Santa Fe. He also spoke before the House Agriculture, Wildlife and Water Committee in opposition to HB 291. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

SANTA FE—On Feb. 11, President Shelly spent the day at the Roundhouse to speak on behalf of the Navajo Nation on a number of issues.

During the Indian Day festivities on Feb. 6, President Shelly and a number of other tribal leaders from N.M. did not get to speak to the legislature. Instead, Gov. Susana Martinez spoke and provided an update from the state.

Sen. Michael Sanchez invited President Shelly and other tribal leaders to attend the Senate's session on Feb. 11 to speak on issues from their respective nations. Members from the House were also invited to join, so they could also hear the concerns from the tribes.

The invitation was a chance to makeup for the faux pas from the previous week.

The president began his report with an update on the Navajo Beef initiative. The project allows Navajo ranchers an opportunity to sell their cattle at

market value or better, which is then served as steaks at Navajo casinos.

He said the beef is of premium grade and can be made available for pueblo casinos as well. Such a partnership would strengthen tribal relations and foster unity, he added.

"It was some of the finest steak I've ever had," President Shelly said. "And I asked our gaming people to maybe invite some of our senators and representatives to taste some of that beef."

Other economic development initiatives were mentioned.

President Shelly encouraged the legislature to support the Thoreau rail spur along Highway 371 via a two-line rail system for the transport of goods and services from the Four Corners to the transcontinental rail line.

He thanked the state for funding the feasibility study on the rail spur and said its completion would be another successful exercise in economic development.

Burlington Northern Santa Fe has committed \$8 million for two rail loops that will accommodate 100 rail cars for each loop. Not only would the project increase gross revenue receipts for the tribe, state and county, but it would also temper the relationships between the respective governments.

"These are meaningful partnership ideas we need to continue with the growth we have created," President Shelly said.

During his term of office, 2,440 new jobs were added and the president said the Thoreau rail port would be an opportunity to create more N.M. jobs.

The Tribal Infrastructure Fund and capital outlay funding was another area of concern shared by President Shelly. He said the importance of the funding cannot be stressed enough, especially since they're often use to leverage other funding to complete projects.

He thanked the House and Senate for providing funding all these years for tribal infrastructure development and noted that conventional wisdom dictates that the state foster tribal efforts for self-determination.

To make such self-sufficiency possible, President Shelly encouraged the legislators to approve the Navajo Nation gaming compact with the state.

He said that Navajo gaming provides employment, taxes, revenue and other business opportunities with vendors that are crucial to Navajo self-determination.

"We need your support," President Shelly said.

Gaming provides tribes

the opportunity to generate funds independently, the president said, adding that the Navajo Nation supported early gaming compacts from pueblos operating casinos.

"It takes us working side-by-side. We all share this great state as neighbors," President Shelly said. "On behalf of the Navajo Nation, I wish you success in this legislative session of 2015."

Earlier the same day, the president also reported before the House Agriculture, Water and Wildlife Committee to voice his opposition to House Bill 291.

Sponsored by Rep. Yvette Herrell, the bill is related to public lands for the creation of the N.M. Federal Land Management Commission.

The fact that tribes and pueblos of N.M. are not involved with the formation of the proposed commission, there are serious concerns from the Navajo Nation, the president said.

"We are alarmed because the State of New Mexico could easily sell such lands to private interests, even out-of-state interests," President Shelly said.

The potential for the state to sell public lands held sacred by tribes is too great, he maintained, especially with the recent fight to get the traditional cultural property designation for Mount Taylor after private interests attempted to open the mountain up to uranium mining.

"Further, House Bill 291 does not address the government-to-government agreements in place that we have to manage federal lands, nor does it address federal laws and policies tribes utilize to relate to the federal government," President Shelly said.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 13, 2015

President Shelly praises Rep. Kirkpatrick for tribal advocacy on Capitol Hill



Top, President Shelly praises Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick for her advocacy on Capitol Hill. Bottom, Rep. Kirkpatrick is sworn-in by Judge Carol Perry inside the council chamber. (Photo by Michele Morris)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On the morning of Feb. 9, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly joined Speaker LoRenzo Bates, members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council and the general public for the special Navajo swearing-in ceremony for Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Ariz.).

The Navajo Nation Council hosted the event.

Administering the oath of office was Judge Carol Perry. The Twin Warriors Society of Ft. Defiance provided color guard duties and the students of Dine’ Bi’ Olta recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Navajo.

Council delegate Jonathan

Nez served as master of ceremonies and provided the welcome address.

Nez thanked Rep. Kirkpatrick for working with the Navajo Nation and for being the people’s voice on Capitol Hill.

President Shelly said it’s rare for a congressional leader to go above and beyond the call of duty to meet the needs of Native Americans.

Rep. Kirkpatrick was raised on the White Mountain Apache Reservation, which she said shaped her understanding and appreciation of the issues facing tribes today.

“The Navajo Nation is thankful

for all that you have done for us,” President Shelly said. “We showed our appreciation for you at the voting polls this past year.”

He noted that residents in the Western Agency of the Navajo Nation were particularly grateful, after 27 miles of dirt road on Navajo Route 20 was paved in 78 days, connecting the Navajo communities of Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine and LeChee.

The roadway on U.S. Route 89 collapsed on Feb. 20, 2013. N20 was eventually selected as the detour route to restore essential traffic and the decision was made to pave the road.

The Navajo Nation worked with Arizona Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to get the \$35 million project completed.

“But it was Rep. Kirkpatrick that lobbied in Washington, D.C. and secured the funding to make the project a reality,” President Shelly said.

While the highway improved the quality of life for thousands of Navajos in one portion of the Western Agency, Rep. Kirkpatrick is also working to assist tribal members in another portion of the agency.

In Jan., Rep. Kirkpatrick traveled to Ariz. with a congressional delegation from the U.S. House of Representatives to discuss issues facing the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe with the Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation in Flagstaff.

The members of the House Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee on the Interior and Environment traveled to the Navajo and Hopi Reservations

to see conditions firsthand and meet with tribal leaders.

During their Window Rock visit, President Shelly advocated for residents raising livestock for their survival. Recent livestock seizures by the Hopi Tribe have reawakened a generations old divide between the two tribes, he said.

“For many Navajo families living on (NPL, HPL and Bennett Freeze), raising livestock is a way of life and the only means of survival in those remote locations,” he said.

However, the president said he was confident that Rep. Kirkpatrick would find an amicable resolution to the livestock seizures.

Such advocacy has garnered praise for the “Navajo Nation’s Congresswoman” throughout her term of office. The oath of office ceremony in the Navajo Nation Council Chamber was an opportunity to say thanks to a hardworking congresswoman.

“It’s very rare to have a politician in Washington, D.C. that cares about tribal issues. The Navajo Nation is fortunate to have one in Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick,” President Shelly said.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 13, 2015

President Shelly praises Navajo Beef and hard work of Navajo ranchers



Left to right, Cattle buyer Billy Hall, Navajo Gaming CEO Derrick Watchman, President Shelly, Labatt chief operating officer Al Silva, and Navajo rancher Elwood Pahi of 14R Ranch Corp. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

BERNALILLO, N.M.—Since 2011, the Navajo Beef initiative has been growing and offering unmatched culinary delights at casinos owned and operated by Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise.

On Feb. 10, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with representatives of NNGE and Labatt Food Service at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort at Santa Ana Pueblo to discuss progress with the Navajo Beef program.

The group dined on Navajo Beef prepared by the executive chef of the Corn Maiden Restaurant for a high class dining experience that was one part celebration and one part demonstration.

Joining in the dinner were representatives from NNGE, Labatt, Navajo ranchers participating in the program and board members from gaming.

The Labatt Premium Verified Native American Beef program partners select Navajo ranchers with Navajo casinos. The company has expanded their program to include other tribes

and pueblos.

Navajo cattle is purchased, placed on to feed and ultimately processed into boxed beef items upon market readiness. The beef is then distributed to Navajo casinos to be enjoyed by the consumer.

Local Navajo ranchers ship their cattle to feedlots owned by Billy Hall, a cattle buyer who owns the number one certified Angus feedlot in the country. From there, cattle are shipped to a harvest facility and then to direct source meat processing facilities.

Finally, Labatt distributes the beef to casinos, schools, travel and health centers in the southwest. “Navajos supporting Navajos” is the overarching theme.

President Shelly said the Navajo Beef initiative is not only a source of pride, but also a tremendous opportunity for self-sufficiency.

“For generations, we have known that livestock is an important Navajo way of life that must be preserved,” President

Shelly said. “By working with our partners at Navajo Gaming Enterprise and Labatt, we are enriching our tribal economy and traditional way of life.

“We look forward to growing this partnership for the generations to come,” he added.

Labatt is the eighth largest broad line food service distributor nationally, said Al Silva, chief operating officer of Labatt Food Service.

Silva said the idea to incorporate Navajo Beef into the menus of Navajo casinos was an important step to prove the quality of the meat. The decision by NNGE to become the first customer for Navajo Beef has opened the door to other opportunities like tribal schools and hospitals.

The partnership connects producers with consumers and Navajo cattle ranchers are able to market their cattle at a premium and increase their bottom line for economic stability.

In 2013, Navajo ranchers had a ranching economic impact of \$439,768 through sales of their cattle. In 2014, that number increased by 15 percent to \$745,940 for 236,000 pounds of usable meat harvested.

In 2014, there were 481 head of cattle in the Navajo Beef Program. For 2015, that number grew to 561 and estimates for future project continued growth.

Silva said, “You can see the product is superior to anybody else’s product. There’s no apology there.”

The steaks served at the dinner were flavorful and marbled with succulent cuts of tenderness that Silva says is unmatched because of ranching

techniques incorporating a low stress environment and low antibiotic use.

Navajo ranchers are literally doting on their head of cattle, Silva said, ensuring they are vaccinated, watered and fed. They are herded by cattlemen on foot or on horseback, which reduces the stress on the cattle and in turn means a tender meat product.

“A calf needs a booster shot like your kid needs a booster shot,” Silva said.

Proper vaccinations mean the cattle are less susceptible to diseases and illnesses. Healthy cattle equals weight increase and a superior product for the growing niche market of Navajo Beef.

Last year, Navajo ranchers averaged \$1,200 per head through the Navajo Beef program, Silva said. Labatt serves Navajo Beef at all Navajo casinos and plans are to pitch the product to other industries on the Navajo Nation.

President Shelly is proud of the Navajo Beef initiative and said the steak was the best he’s ever tasted.

“Where’s the beef? It’s on Navajo,” he said.

Navajo Beef won the People’s Choice Award at the Arizona Indian Gaming Association Expo Cook Off in 2014.

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23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 2015

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Navajo Nation Council confirms standing committees

Standing Committees of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council				
	Budget and Finance Committee	Health, Education, and Human Services Committee	Resources and Development Committee	Law and Order Committee
Chair	Jonathan Nez (Western)	Jonathan Hale (Ft. Defiance)	Alton Joe Shepherd (Ft. Defiance)	Edmund Yazzie (Eastern)
Vice Chair	Dwight Witherspoon (Central)	Norman M. Begay (Eastern)	Benjamin Bennett (Ft. Defiance)	Raymond Smith, Jr. (Ft. Defiance)
Member	Tom Chee (Northern)	Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Northern)	Davis Filfred (Northern)	Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Central)
Member	Mel R. Begay (Ft. Defiance)	Nelson S. BeGaye (Central)	Leonard H. Pete (Central)	Otto Tso (Western)
Member	Seth Damon (Eastern)	Nathaniel Brown (Western)	Leonard Tsosie (Eastern)	Jonathan Perry (Eastern)
Member	Lee Jack, Jr. (Ft. Defiance)	Tuchoney Slim, Jr. (Western)	Walter Phelps (Western)	

Photo: The table above displays committee membership along the agency represented by each delegate. Also displayed are the chair, vice chair, and members for each standing committee.

WINDOW ROCK—During a special session held on Tuesday, the Navajo Nation Council confirmed membership to four standing committees including the Budget and Finance Committee, Law and Order Committee, Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, and the Resources and Development Committee.

The proposed standing committee memberships were confirmed through Legislation No. 0038-15, sponsored by Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

Speaker Bates introduced the legislation in accordance with 2 N.N.C. §181 which states that the Speaker is authorized to select committee membership, which is subject to confirmation by the Navajo Nation Council.

Following the adjournment of the special council session, each of the four standing committees convened in special meetings to confirm a chair and vice chair for each committee.

In accordance with 2 N.N.C. each delegate is appointed to no more than one standing committee for a term coinciding with their term of office as a delegate. Additionally, Title II also mandates each standing committee to have one member from each of the five Navajo agencies.

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For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, search for keywords: Navajo Nation Council



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 2015

President Shelly tours Hooghan Hozho', announces plans for veterans housing



President Shelly toured Hooghan Hozho' and said the Nation is planning a similar complex. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

GALLUP, N.M.— Creating opportunities to end homelessness is the mission of Community Area Resources Enterprise, Inc. of Gallup.

The non-profit organization is also known as CARE 66 and is dedicated to providing affordable housing opportunities to homeless people. Their belief is that by providing opportunities for people to improve work and life skills, they will become self-sufficient.

On Feb. 9, President Shelly toured the \$8.4 million Hooghan Hozho' and Liberty Hotel development in Gallup. First Lady Martha Shelly and executive staff assistant Carl Smith joined the president, plus staff from CARE 66.

The mixed income family housing development is located at 201 East Coal Ave., near downtown Gallup and stands in stark contrast to other buildings in the area. The three-story building features bright colors and bold architectural design.

Phase one of the project is for

the apartment complex and phase two will be for construction of the hotel.

Navajo Housing Authority provided \$7.1 million for the project. A multitude of other funding sources contributed more than \$1.3 million for the complex.

There will be a total of 44 units for rent at Hooghan Hozho' for Navajo families in need of housing. Construction began in Aug. 2013 and the project will be completed in June 2015.

According to CARE 66 statistics, the median income for a household in McKinley County is \$25,005 and the median income for a family is \$26,806. The per capita income for the county is \$9,872.

About 31.9 percent of families and 36.1 percent of the population are below the poverty line, including 42.3 percent of those under age 18 and 31.5 percent for those 65 and over. The county's per capita income makes it one of the poorest counties in the U.S.

President Shelly said the building was "exceptional" and said the Navajo Nation would like to pursue a similar apartment complex in Window Rock for veterans.

"Our veterans are in dire need for housing and this development is an excellent model that we can follow," President Shelly said. "Carl Smith worked for CARE 66 and he is our point person for our veterans housing initiative."

Thomas Gifford Architect, LLC of Santa Fe provided the building design. Pavilion Construction provided the construction of the building.

The apartment complex will consist of 11 one-bedroom, one-bathroom units, 30 two-bedroom, one-bathroom units and three three-bedroom, two-bathroom units.

Hooghan Hozho' also features a secured courtyard, resident facilities and offices for the property manager. The units feature innovative floor plans with balconies.

Residents will have access to an onsite laundry facility, community computer rooms, onsite parking, a central recreation area and onsite social services.

Sanjay Choudhrie, executive director of CARE 66 said future plans include construction of micro apartments for the homeless at 100 square feet per unit, similar to their current program at the Lexington Hotel.

"We have 21 people at the Lexington Hotel and 175 people on the waiting list. We'd like to build (a hotel) so we can get people off the streets," he said.

Choudhrie said they only accept tenants who are sober and that CARE 66 is the only Native American model in the country that providing housing first to tenants, followed by social services and other forms of assistance to get the homeless on their feet.

Smith said the Navajo Nation has plans to construct a similar apartment complex in Window Rock for veterans in need of housing.

"We have over 10,000 veterans on the Navajo Nation and more than 400 are homeless," Smith said. "We want to build a HUD rental unit with support

services."

Identifying funding sources for the project is the first step and Smith will approach NHA, the Navajo Nation Council and others for seed money to fund architecture and engineering.

"The rental units will provide transitional housing for our veterans for at least four to six years, until they are able to establish homeownership for themselves," Smith said.

In the meantime, Hooghan Hozho' will address the large population of working Navajo families in need of affordable housing in Gallup.

President Shelly said there's been a lot of misinformation about NHA in the media recently and the fact that they invested \$7.1 million for Hooghan Hozho' should prove they are spending money for housing.

"They're changing how they're spending money and how they do business," President Shelly said.

Choudhrie agreed and said, "Most of our projects have some level of NHA funding. We couldn't have done any of the things we've done without NHA. They've been a great partner for the last seven years."

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 9, 2015

President Shelly attends Indian at Santa Fe, shares issues facing Nation



President Shelly met with Gov. Susana Martinez during Indian Day on Feb. 6 at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe. He was joined by Sen. Pinto and Speaker Bates to discuss issues crucial to the Nation. (Photo by Michele Morris)

SANTA FE, N.M.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended Indian Day at the N.M. Legislature on Feb. 6, 2015 and shared a number of issues facing the Nation.

President Shelly told state legislators that the Navajo Nation grew by 2,440 new jobs that were created during his term of office. He expressed his hopes to see that number increase with new jobs in the Land of Enchantment.

“We need your support for the rail spur in Thoreau. This includes a two-line rail system for transport from the Transcontinental to the Four Corners,” President Shelly said. “We extend our gratitude to the State of New Mexico for funding the study.”

He said the opportunities with transportation and rail have resulted in a commitment from Burlington Northern Santa Fe to invest \$8 million for two loops that will accommodate 100 rail cars for each loop.

“From such projects, we can increase gross revenue receipts

for the Navajo Nation, Four Corners, counties and state,” President Shelly said.

He also spoke about the capital outlay and tribal infrastructure funds provided by the state for projects across tribal lands in N.M.

The funding provided to Indian tribes across the state for infrastructure projects are a demonstration of government-to-government partnerships to leverage funding, he said.

It provides an opportunity for tribes, pueblos and the state to come together to address infrastructure needs, said the president.

He thanked the leadership in the House and Senate, specifically mentioning Rep. Sharon Clahchischillige, Rep. Patty Lundstrom and Rep. Wanda Johnson. He also thanked Sen. John Pinto and Sen. Bennie Shendo.

President Shelly said their support would be crucial to passing the tribal gaming compact with the state.

“We need your support. Jobs, revenue, tax and business from the many vendors will come forth from this legislature as you pass our compact,” President Shelly said. “We will remain here in Santa Fe to work toward this accomplishment.”

By working together and negotiating with the pueblos and legislators, the Navajo Nation is looking forward to passing a gaming compact that is agreeable to all this legislative session.

He concluded by saying that the new rail system is an opportunity for growth in manufacturing and other future industries.

“The Navajo Nation is not a manufacturing nation. Although we produce natural resources and jobs in the energy market, we have no manufacturing workforce,” President Shelly said. “With your foresight and legislative fix, we can increase opportunity for a manufacturing base in northwest N.M., where there is an abundance of oil, natural gas, coal and agriculture.”





PRESIDENT SHELLY SAYS THANK YOU



A MAN OF ACTION Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly issued a statement of thanks to the Navajo people for electing him as their leader for the past four years. The Shelly-Jim administration has accomplished a lot of tremendous projects on behalf of the Navajo people, he said. The administration will vacate office when a presidential successor has been elected and installed into office. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

FOUR YEARS OF HONORABLE LEADERSHIP

No lawsuits, administrative leave or investigations launched against the presidential administration during the four year term of office - President Ben Shelly and VP Rex Lee Jim will stand the test of time.

Before he entered office and became Navajo Nation President, Ben Shelly ignited the general election of 2010 and made the comeback of ages to win the vote of the Navajo people for the highest office of Indian Country. President Shelly took over the reins to the tribal government and took the oath of office to become the first N.M. resident and sitting vice president to get elected as president. Conspicuously absent from the inauguration ceremony was Joe Shirley, former president. It was the first time the exiting president did not attend the inauguration ceremony for the transfer of

- * **163 bills signed into law**
- * **29 bills vetoed**
- * **16 executive orders issued**

power. Vice President Rex Lee Jim, who previously served as council delegate for Rock Point Chapter, joined President Shelly. Jim, an accomplished writer and graduate of Princeton, was given the responsibility of managing the divisions of health and education. This too, was a progressive action, to have the vice president directly involved in shaping the vision of the administration. Vice President Jim was also a skilled Navajo linguist and a medicine man that advocated for cultural preservation. See **RESTORING** >> Page 2

REPATRIATION

Navajo delegation successfully return sacred masks from Paris auction house



Vice President Rex Lee Jim

PARIS—Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim and Navajo Human Rights officials purchased seven confirmed Navajo sacred masks that were up for auction in Paris, France. Hundreds of items representing different Indigenous nations went on auction on Dec. 15, 2014.

The Navajo delegation arrived in Paris on Dec. 12 and accomplished one of its goals by gaining access to the sacred masks at the Drouot auction house on Dec. 13. Vice President Jim offered Navajo prayers to restore harmony from the masks being removed from the Four Sacred Mountains.

It is also important to note that item 77 in the catalog is not of Navajo origin. Eve auction house does not know the origin of this item as indicated in the catalog.

While in Paris, the news media coverage of the Navajo mission spread throughout Europe. Jane Hartley, U.S. ambassador to France, made a public appeal for the sacred masks to be returned to the respective indigenous tribes, including the Navajo Nation. The Navajo delegation raised

awareness of how the sacred masks belong to the Navajo Nation, and the right course of action was to return them.

The vice president called the masks “living and breathing beings,” in Navajo, and as sacred to the people used for healing ceremonies during the winter. It was important that they were taken home.

See **CEREMONIAL** >> Page 2

The ultimate legislative fix

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—President Shelly said a “legislative fix” is needed to balance government responsibility.

First and foremost, he has said time and again that a referendum vote must occur that recognizes the Navajo people as the governing body. Each time legislation was introduced the tribal council voted it down.

“The power lies with the Navajo people, not the council,” he said.

President Shelly also said that delegates should not serve on boards or commissions because the potential for politics preventing progress is great.

In addition, he said that the Office of the Auditor General, Navajo Election Administration, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Ethics and Rules, and Government Development need to be repositioned to the Executive Branch.

“These need to be separate and independent entities not subject to the will of the council. That is the only way the Navajo Nation will truly move forward,” President Shelly said. “I am hoping that the next generation of leadership will see the logic in this legislative fix.

“However, it is also important that we work together with our legislators to get the job done for the people,” he added.

The president maintained that it is the Navajo people that are the governing body.

2015 WINTER SESSION STATE OF THE NAVAJO NATION



STATE OF THE NATION Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim reported before 23rd Navajo Nation Council during the winter session for the State of the Navajo Nation. President Shelly provided the address in Navajo and provided an update of accomplishments from the past quarter and a vision for the future. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—President Ben Shelly delivered the State of the Navajo Nation on Jan. 25, outlining significant accomplishments from the past quarter and providing a vision for the future.

Flanked by Vice President Rex Lee Jim and Chief of Staff Arbin Mitchell, the president delivered his address in Navajo and highlighted the partnership between the Executive and Legislative Branches that made the accomplishments possible.

He began with lauding the efforts between both branches to fund the remediation of Administration Building No. 1, which reopened in early Jan. Funding came from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance, indirect costs and carryover funding, which totaled more than \$5.5 million for construction.

“Several tribal divisions and departments stepped up to the plate and housed our displaced employees until the building could be renovated,” President Shelly said.

He noted that the health and welfare of tribal employees was the primary concern and that renovations have already begun on Administrative Building No. 2, which was also shutdown due See **STATE OF** >> Page 8

President Shelly and Vice President Jim take oath of office to extend term



HISTORIC OATH Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim both took the oath of office on Jan. 13 for continuity of government. They will meet with the 23rd Navajo Nation Council during the winter session to discuss plans moving forward to June and August presidential elections. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim took the oath of office at noon today and extended their presidency.

The decision to extend the term of office for President Shelly came on the heels of a late night negotiation meeting and subsequent letter of agreement between Executive and Legislative Branches of government.

The terms of the agreement state, “In the spirit of K’é and Hózhó the Executive and Legislative leaders have come together to talk things out in resolving a controversy that would impact the stability of the Navajo Nation.”

The agreement further states that President Shelly will maintain all power and duties under the provisions of the Navajo Nation Code. The president will meet with



members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council during the winter session to discuss the best interests of the Nation moving forward.

Until then, President Shelly and Vice President Jim will maintain continuity of government until a new president is elected.

Chief Justice Herb Yazzie administered the oath of office at the Office of the President



and Vice President. The State Room was packed with cabinet members, OPVP staff and members of the media to witness the event.

Standing in front of the mahogany Great Seal of the Navajo Nation, President Shelly placed his left hand on the Bible and raised his right hand to take his oath of office.

President Shelly repeated See **EXTENDED** >> Page 2



LEGISLATION

FTA grant approved

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On Dec. 30, 2014, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly enacted two bills to provide funding to the Navajo Transit System and approval of purchasing individual allotment land.

Legislation No. CD-65-14 was for approval of the \$166,000 grant to the Navajo Transit System from the Federal Transit Administration for public transportation operation. Also included was approval of the indirect cost rate of 10 percent.

“The Navajo Transit System continues to provide important services to the Navajo people, that of mobility,” President Shelly said. “I applaud their tenacity in seeking funds outside the Nation to continue their mission of public transportation.

“I hereby sign into law the foregoing legislation, pursuant to 2 NNC Subsection 1005 (C) (10), on this 30th day of December 2014,” he added.

The FTA awarded the Navajo Transit System the grant award of \$166,000 on Jan. 8, 2013. The maximum rate of 10 percent was levied on the FTA, which waived the Navajo Nation indirect cost rate of 16.95 percent.

The FTA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation that is tasked with providing financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems. With headquarters in Washington, D.C. and 10 regional offices, the FTA oversees public transportation including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, monorail, passenger ferry boats, trolleys, inclined railways and other modes of transportation.

The resolution was approved by a vote of 18-0 by the Navajo

Nation Council on Dec. 23. Speaker Pro Tem LoRenzo Bates signed the resolution on Dec. 29 before sending it to the Office of the President and Vice President.

Legislation No. CD-67-14 was for approval of purchasing of individual allotment land for 160 acres located within the Ramah Chapter by Roy Chap Martinez. The cost of the purchase, including closing costs, amounted to \$128,000.

Martinez made contact with the BIA Southwest Regional Estate Office and expressed his decision to sell his allotment to the Navajo Nation. On Sept. 24, 2013, Martinez agreed to the purchase price of \$800 per acre for a total sale price of \$128,000.

The Navajo Land Acquisition Trust Fund will cover the purchase price of the land, which will be utilized for the development of residential subdivisions, mutual help housing, home site leasing and community development purposes for the Ramah Chapter.

“I hereby execute the real estate purchase agreement on behalf of the Navajo Nation for purchase of lands held by the Roy Chap Martinez allotment,” President Shelly said. “The Navajo Nation will utilize this land to build homes for those living in the Ramah Chapter boundaries.”

The Navajo Nation Council approved the legislation by a vote of 18-0 on Dec. 23 and was signed by Speaker Pro Tem Bates on Dec. 29 before it reached President Shelly’s desk for approval.

President Shelly approves special runoff election, NBOES pardon

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On the afternoon of Jan. 10, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed the special runoff election legislation passed on the last day of the year by the Navajo Nation Council into law, as well as a bill that grants a pardon to the members of the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors who were stripped of their offices by order of the Navajo Nation Supreme Court.

“It is in the best interest of the Navajo people that we give the thousands of voters a new opportunity to choose their next leaders,” President Shelly said. “There have been too many discrepancies over the last several months. A new election will restore some hope among the voters and the people that their voice will be heard.”

Believing that individual rights are undeniable, President

Shelly signed “A new election will restore some hope among the voters.” of office on Tuesday. It was agreed by the parties that stability is important to the functioning government and to ensure a greater sense of continuity. The agreement does lend opportunity for the incoming lawmakers to introduce legislation that would otherwise address the matter of the presidency until an election is held.

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The legislation sets forth a special election for June 2015, in which the 17 candidates who were contenders for the 2014 primary election are eligible to reapply as candidates for president. The two candidates with the highest votes will proceed to a special general

Extended term of office for President Shelly

From >> PAGE 1

the oath after Chief Justice Yazzie:

“I, Ben Shelly, do solemnly swear to continue to uphold and abide by the laws of the Navajo Nation and Treaty of 1868 between the Navajo Nation and the United States of America, and will faithfully execute the Office of the Navajo Nation President, representing the Navajo Nation, and will to the best of my ability continue to preserve, protect and defend the laws and government of the Navajo Nation, and advance the interests of the Navajo people, having due regard for the ethical duties and responsibilities of the office. So help me God.”

First Lady Martha Shelly held the Bible and witnessed her husband’s historic swearing in ceremony for the second time. Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim was next and took his oath of

office for the second term by swearing on his jish (medicine bundle), which was held by his mother.

“I, Rex Lee Jim, do solemnly swear to uphold and abide by the laws of the Navajo Nation and Treaty of 1868 between the Navajo Nation and the United States of America; and will faithfully execute the Office of the Navajo Nation Vice President, representing the Navajo Nation; and will to the best of my ability continue to preserve, protect and defend the laws and government of the Navajo Nation; and advance the interests of the Navajo people, having due regard for the ethical duties and responsibilities of the office. So help me God.”

Vice President Jim signed the affidavit of certification, followed by President Shelly.

“We’ll keep it together until somebody shows up,” President Shelly said after he

signed his name.

Cabinet members and others filed through to congratulate the president and vice president. The event was low key and lasted about 15 minutes. A press conference followed, where President Shelly spoke about conducting “business as usual.”

“The standard functions of a president’s protocol, we will continue to do that,” he said. “I will continue to function as a president, that’s what we agreed to.”

Approval or veto of tribal council legislation will continue, he added, noting that his standing as president will move forward with all authorities in place.

President Shelly’s staff and cabinet will continue on, if they chose to, he said. For those choosing to leave, they will be replaced with young Navajo professionals. For his future, the president will

return to private business as an entrepreneur.

Other options included running for state and national leadership.

“There’s a lot of work to be done, the Navajo people need help,” he said.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, OPVP staff and cabinet members convened with the president and vice president at the Navajo Nation Museum to discuss plans moving forward.

For the short time in office, staff must give 110 percent or more was the message, in order to complete projects that are still in progress. President Shelly told everybody that maintaining continuity of government was the order of the day.

All of his staff and cabinet members will continue working with the administration until a successor is elected into office.

Restoring integrity to the Office of the President and Vice President

From >> PAGE 1

“There is so much that this administration has done within the span of one term,” President Shelly said. “Despite the many challenges, we have accomplished more in four years than some administrations did for two terms. This administration was all about action.”

Health, education, economic prosperity, infrastructure, and transparency in governance, were the five pillars of the

administration. This platform became the focus of the administration when taking office in Jan. 2011. Another challenge the administration faced was the division between the branches of government – fallout from the council reduction – that took several months to fix because the laws had to reflect 24 delegates and not 88.

Throughout their administration, one thing became abundantly clear:

President Shelly and Vice President Jim were in office to work with the tribal council and move the Nation forward. This did not mean rubberstamp approval for everything, but rather, a mutual respect for tribal legislators whose goals were the same: serving the best interests of the Navajo people.

By working together, both branches of government were able to develop a Navajo Nation Energy Policy, respond to an emergency that

prevented residents of the Western Agency from being able to travel to their job sites, medical services and other essential needs, purchase a coal mine to bolster the Nation’s financial portfolio, and address longstanding concerns for the disabled citizens of Navajo.

“Nobody can do things all on their own, it takes all branches of government to get things done,” President Shelly said. “Thank you for working with us. Ahe’hee.”

Ceremonial masks returned to Navajo Nation from Paris auction house



TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim traveled to Paris on a repatriation mission. He was joined by staff from the Navajo Human Rights Commission. (Photos and story by Jared King)

From >> PAGE 1

“This is important because we have a cultural and spiritual connection with them. These are not art objects. They were not constructed for decorating homes or to hang art galleries. This is a major difference between the western concept of art and the Navajo concept

of cultural patrimony,” Vice President Jim said.

“We understand that many of the dealers do not understand this, that this concept is foreign to their culture,” he added.

“As an elected official of the Navajo people, one of my duties is to protect these sacred masks and that is why I am

here with the steadfast support of the Navajo government, our lawmakers and our people,” the vice president said.

The Navajo delegation called on Navajo medicine

people and all Navajos to pray for a successful mission in returning these sacred masks back to the Navajo Nation.

The delegation returned to the Navajo Nation on Dec. 16.

NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

BEN SHELLEY President	
REX LEE JIM Vice President	CYNDY TAYLOR Constituent Services
MARTHA SHELLEY First Lady	MORONI BENALLY Constituent Services
ARBIN MITCHELL Chief of Staff	ALBERTA LAUGHING Scheduler
CAROLYN DROUIN Legal Counsel	MAY KELEWOOD Staff Assistant
DESWOOD TOME Special Advisor	ZANE JAMES Executive Assistant
RICK ABASTA Communications Director	DWIGHT LARGIE Executive Assistant
MARJORIE JOHNSON Budget Director	PATRICIA BEGAY Scheduler
GERRI HARRISON Executive Staff Assistant	DESIREE ETSITTY Executive Assistant
CARL SMITH Executive Staff Assistant	BRITTANY SMITH Administrative Assistant
MICHELE MORRIS Executive Staff Assistant	BRIAN BEGAY Administrative Assistant
BESSIE YELLOWHAIR Constituent Services	MARY ROAN Office Liaison
ISABELLE WALKER Constituent Services	CHAD SINGER Office Assistant
PHIL KINLICHEE Constituent Services	AUSTIN YAZZIE Office Assistant

CABINET

PAULSON CHACO Division of Transportation	SHARON BEGAY-MCCABE Division of Social Services
VIRGIL BROWN JR. Division of General Services	LEONARD CHEE Division of Community Development
JOHN BILLISON Division of Public Safety	HARRISON TSOSIE Attorney General
ALBERT DAMON JR. Division of Economic Development	BRIAN TAGABAN Telecomm. Regulatory Commission
STEPHEN ETSITTY Environmental Protection Agency	RAMONA ANTOINE NEZ Division of Health
CLARA PRATTE Washington Office	SHARILENE JEFF Division of Natural Resources
THOMAS RANGER Division of Human Resources	

All stories, photos, graphics, layout and design by RICK ABASTA, except where noted.

NAVAJO NATION AND CITY OF GALLUP ARE FIGHTING BACK AGAINST ALCOHOLISM



FIGHTING BACK Left, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly said he joined Eddie Munoz in the 1980s to march on Santa Fe in opposition to the liquor establishment in Gallup. Center, delegate Edmund Yazzie said alcoholism is an all-race problem. Right, a Santa Fe staffer shared stats on the alcohol problem in Gallup. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



PUBLIC AWARENESS When the public spoke on the issues of alcohol, the sentiments were mixed. Some wanted the liquor establishments closed. Others (non-Indians) said the Nation should provide funds from the \$554 million settlement to pay for treatment and detox services. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

GALLUP, N.M.—Alcohol is big business.

Efforts to come to grips with alcohol related fatalities and crimes in the city of Gallup isn't anything new. In the 1980s, the city was dubbed "Drunk Town, USA" and sensationalized news reports spread the name nationally.

City leaders from that era joined forces with tribal and county leadership to march on Santa Fe to bring attention to the issue. During that time, McKinley County Commissioner Ben Shelly joined the contingent of citizens fed up with the alcohol related fatalities and crimes.

The group's efforts eventually resulted in closure of drive-up package liquor sales in Gallup and millions of dollars in federal funding for the construction and operation Na'nizhoozhi Center, Inc. In June 2013, the funding dried up for NCI and the non-profit organization was forced to close their doors after more than 20 years of service.

On Oct. 24, 2013, the Navajo Nation entered into a memorandum of agreement with the city of Gallup and McKinley County to reopen the center. Since taking over management of the Gallup Detoxification Center on Jan. 1, 2014, the Navajo Department of Behavioral Health Services has spent more than \$582,000 providing services.

The city of Gallup has contributed \$320,000 to DBHS for an operating budget of close to \$1 million. The city funds were collected from the Alcohol Excise Tax at a rate of 10 percent. Despite this joint effort to fight alcoholism, the MOA has fallen short of meeting the full extent of needs related to providing treatment to those in need.

Partnership is the key

On the evening of Dec. 8, President Shelly joined state, county and city officials to focus on the swelling number of people going through the detox center, numbers that have averaged about 2,400 people per month. Sen. George Munoz hosted the meeting at the Lighthouse Church in

Gallup, which was packed with hundreds of people.

Munoz encouraged the audience not to dwell on what went wrong with NCI, but to instead focus on solutions and moving forward with the Gallup Detox Center. Given the number of people in attendance, he was determined to maintain a respectful atmosphere.

"I do have some ground rules for the meeting," Munoz said. "There will be no racial remarks. No outbursts, no speaking out of turn.

"This is not a blame game. This is solution road," he added.

President Shelly was the first to speak and reflected on the march to Santa Fe with former Gallup Mayor Eddie Munoz.

"We fought the liquor establishments. It's very hard to fight them, their lobbyists are very powerful," President Shelly said.

President Shelly said that during his tenure as county commissioner, he never approved the renewal of any alcohol licenses. The effort was often for naught, however, because the N.M. Gaming and Alcohol Division would eventually overrule their decision, he said.

"We need to put our heads together and take care of this alcohol thing. We need to start talking to business people," President Shelly said, in reference to liquor store and bar owners.

Gallup Fighting Back

David Conejo provided a history of Fighting Back initiative back from 1989, when Gallup was in the headlines for 31 deaths related to alcohol. The fatalities were from exposure, driving while intoxicated and people getting run over by trains. He said the turning point was a head-on collision involving a white

DWI motorist that killed three natives in the other vehicle. "In particular, this accident was important because it was an Anglo that ran into a Native American family. Now we (were able to) bring the attention to the universal aspect of this problem," Conejo said.

He said the march to Santa Fe resulted in \$400,000 in seed money to study the feasibility of a detoxification center in Gallup. Once the center was built, it was under the management of the hospital for a period of two years, and provided medical and social detoxification. A \$3 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation got the facility off the ground.

People who went through the center were held for three days and some were referred to a 28-day rehabilitation program, and others to an intake-sheltered program for adolescents. However, Conejo said the most important aspect was the work rehabilitation program that provided employment through construction and laundry services or a kiln that produced cups, plates and other wares.

"At the end of 90 days, people would be able to go out and seek employment and use us for a reference. We could say they've been through treatment, they've been through rehab and they've been gainfully employed," Conejo said.

Gallup Detox Center

Since taking over the Gallup Detox Center in Jan., the DBHS has averaged about 2,400 clients per month. The lowest admissions at the center occurred in June with 2,014 people and the highest was in August with 2,699.

Ramona Antone Nez, division director for the Navajo Department of Health, said DBHS is addressing the "revolving door" effect of the center. She said medical detox services will be contracted out and that the 12-hour hold will be increased to 72 hours for protective custody. Her timeline for implementation was one week.

"The Navajo Nation respectfully requests that the Gallup Police Department resume patrolling the ditches, arroyos and alleys for individuals who are intoxicated and the greatest at risk to exposure," Nez said.

She also mentioned the need to repair the HVAC system of the detox center. The meeting ended with a Q&A session.

Fluency amendment fails

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On New Year's Eve, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly vetoed CD-79-14, a Navajo Nation Council resolution to amend the Navajo language fluency requirements for Office of the President and Vice President.

The council attempted to pass a similar legislation in Oct. 2013, which was also vetoed by President Shelly, who favored a referendum vote for amending the language requirement. He said a thoughtful and deliberative conversation needed to occur with the Navajo people before changing the qualifications for tribal leadership.

"This conversation has yet to occur and, as such, my feelings on the matter have not changed," President Shelly said. "The people are divided and we need their participation in this decision that will affect the generations to come."

He said piecemeal changes to the Navajo Election Code in the form of council resolutions and Supreme Court opinions will not suffice. A major overhaul is needed to ensure

clear, concise and fair laws, he noted, adding that such important change can only be done through a referendum vote of the Navajo people.

"It's the people's right to determine this, not myself, the council or the courts," President Shelly said.

The same day, President Shelly also signed into law three bills.

Legislation no. CD-64-14 was for amendments to Title 11 of the Navajo Nation Code by authorizing the Navajo Board of Elections Supervisors to eliminate filing fees for elective positions filled by appointment.

Currently, filing fees by candidates are submitted when they file their candidacy application. The filing fees are non-refundable.

"For an appointment to fill an unexpired term, the applicable filing fee shall not be required," was the amendment to the code.

President Shelly also signed CD-76-14 into law and enacted the amendments to the Navajo Nation Farm Board plan of operation.

The amendments included

change of legislative oversight to Resources and Development Committee, purpose of farm boards, duties and responsibilities of officers, meetings, powers, accountability and compensation.

Legislation No. CD-68-14 was also signed into law by President Shelly and established the Sihasin Fund for the \$554 million settlement.

Establishment, purpose, investment, definitions, expenditure, annual audit report and expenses of the Sihasin Fund were outlined in the legislation.

"The Navajo people can rest easy knowing that the \$554 million from the trust settlement is properly accounted for and audited through the Sihasin Fund," President Shelly said. "This is the Navajo people's money and they deserve to know what it's spent on.

Such transparency in government has been a hallmark of this administration and we will continue to keep the Navajo people informed," he added.

President Shelly meets with U.S. EPA, discussions focus on carbon dioxide ruling



CARBON RULING President Shelly met with federal officials from the U.S. EPA to discuss the proposed carbon dioxide air quality ruling in Oct. 2014. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

SANTA FE—The U.S. EPA is expected to release their proposed carbon dioxide air quality supplemental ruling for Indian Country in mid-October.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with Janet McCabe, acting assistant administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation, along with Jane Nishida, acting assistant administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs and Jared Blumenfeld, regional administrator for U.S. EPA Region 9 on Sept. 15 in Santa Fe.

Joining the president were Navajo Nation representatives from Department of Justice, Navajo EPA, Division of Natural Resources and NTUA. The Navajo Nation delegation shared statistics demonstrating the economic disparities that exist on tribal lands.

Statistics from the Navajo Nation included the unemployment rate of 52 percent versus 6.3 percent for the U.S. More than 60 percent of Navajos do not have telephone service; 32 percent don't have electricity; and 38 percent do not have running water.

The relevance of the statistics was to demonstrate the disadvantages facing Navajo tribal members with regard to basic necessities and economic development. Those figures were contrasted against the Nation's abundance of coal, more than 100 years worth, which is an economic

boon and necessity for the tribe.

Recent air quality decisions by the U.S. EPA to limit the use of coal-fired power plants as an energy source have a negative impact on the tribal economy.

President Shelly said consultation with the U.S. EPA was absolutely critical for the proposed carbon dioxide ruling because the power plants located on the Navajo Nation provide tribal self-sufficiency.

"We just wrapped up the final BART decision for Navajo Generating Station and completed a very complex rulemaking," President Shelly said. "Now we have the proposed carbon dioxide rulemaking before us."

He explained that the economy of the Navajo Nation is dependent upon the coal power plants, not only for employment but also for revenue streams from taxes, lease payments and other royalties that support the direct services to the Navajo people.

Despite the push for restrictions on coal-fired plants across the country, the tribal air quality has always passed standards set by the federal government.

President Shelly said, "Ever since such data started being recorded, the Navajo Nation air quality has always been

good. Today, there is significantly less air pollution coming in from power plants on and near the Nation."

Blumenfeld commended President Shelly for his "hard work for the Navajo Nation" and said he will leave a lasting legacy for his work to protect public health and the environment.

McCabe echoed similar sentiments and said, "You are the most active tribal leader to advocate and conduct government-to-government discussions for every ruling."

"On behalf of the Obama administration, we are committed to working with the Navajo Nation as a sovereign entity and consider

your comments before issuing a supplemental ruling," she added.

In Nov. 1984, the U.S. EPA enacted a policy for the administration of environmental programs on Indian reservations. The policy was in accordance with the Federal Indian Policy that was enacted on Jan. 24, 1983.

The main themes of the policy stated "that the Federal Government will pursue the principle of Indian 'self-government' and that it will work directly with Tribal Governments on a 'government-to-government' basis."

Because of this, President Shelly said the U.S. EPA must carefully consider the tribal concerns and recommendations and make regulatory decisions that uphold trust responsibilities and obligations as a trustee.

His said the U.S. EPA needs to find a balance between economic development, progress and environmental protection that will allow the Navajo Nation to thrive in the years to come.

"We want to request for a public comment period extension from 30 to 45 days," President Shelly said. "Don't treat us similar to states, we are different and deserve to

be treated as a sovereign." Sixty years ago, the initial agreements for the power plants was negotiated by the federal government and power plant owners for long term sweetheart deals. Today, the Navajo Nation stands poised to realize the benefits of renewed leases that it has negotiated directly with the power plant owners, which are lessees to the Nation.



Letters to the editor

Adopting new water management tactics

Mr. President and Vice President,

I hope you will join us June 6, 2014, Friday at 2 p.m. in Window Rock for my presentation on the Navajo Rain Catcher Project, provided your schedules permit. I am going to encourage the Navajo Tribe to adopt some water management tactics that stress sustainable rather than depletionary use of one of our most important life-giving resources... and that will allow the tribe to both flourish and prosper in the years to come.

Natural springs on Indian lands that have been diminished by aquifer overdrafts in the past will be revived as the aquifers are replenished with even more fresh water than was in them in the past. In addition, rainfall will be harvested to provide the Navajo Nation's domestic, municipal, agricultural and industrial supply with some of the freshest, least contaminated water on the planet.

At the same time, Navajo fresh water allotments from the San Juan River and other sources covered by the Winter's Doctrine will be freed for commercial sale downstream to selected, well-established and ever-growing markets across the arid, if not also drought-stricken Southwest. This includes large casino consortiums, land developers and the southern Nevada Water Authority in the greater Las Vegas metropolitan area; Los Angeles, San Diego, Riverside and other water supply areas connected to the Colorado River Aquaduct across southern California, where fresh water is already selling for \$2,000 an acre-foot; and to Phoenix, Tucson and others connected to the Central Arizona Project. This endeavor alone stands to put more than one-half billion dollars in the Navajo Nation's coffers annually at current day prices for "Blue Gold" or fresh water supply across the Southwest.

Finally, I intend to invite the Navajo Nation to join others and me in establishing a new, multi-billion dollar corporation with worldwide distribution capabilities under the heading: NAVAJO RAIN CATCHER ENTERPRISES, INC. As an international corporation designed to stimulate the Navajo Nation's economic health and well-being, selected goals will include manufacturing and distributing rain catchment materials and products that can be used readily for emergency relief and response operations as well as for providing for military; industrial; agricultural; municipal; and domestic freshwater supply. There are already multi-million dollar prizes being offered by international foundations to any who can help solve the problem of a world over-stressed already for fresh water. The Navajo Beauty Way does apply

J.A. Tony Fellin
Boulder, Colo.

Klagetoh summer workers say thanks

Dear President Shelly,

Thank you for letting students work at the chapter house. It was an honor to have you as Navajo Nation President. During our job, we learned a lot more about our culture. I'm glad we have a community chapter house because it represents the people who live around here.

Sincerely,

Cailin Smith
Klagetoh

Dear Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly,

I'm writing this letter to you to thank you for the opportunity of working at the Klagetoh Chapter House. My experience of working here was fun. I really enjoyed working here. I'm looking forward to next year and working again. Many things got completed here at Klagetoh Chapter. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity of working here.

Sincerely yours,

Delvin Slivers
Klagetoh

Dear President Shelly,

Thank you for giving me this job here at the Klagetoh Chapter House. Also thank you for the money you gave us. The money that is going to be giving to me for working is going to help me buy my school clothes and supplies. Again, thank you very much.

Sincerely,

RaiShanna Begay
Klagetoh

To: Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly

On behalf of the Klagetoh summer youth employees, we would like to say thank you. Klagetoh Chapter had funds set aside for the youth. Not many job opportunities are given to or for the youth. This helps provide job experience and money that is well needed for school expenses. Again, thank you for the opportunity.

Kirk S. Wilson
Klagetoh

To: Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly

Greetings, I am a member of the Klagetoh community and have been here for a long time. I would like to thank you on behalf of the students employed at the Klagetoh Chapter for allowing us to work. We have been given the opportunity to work and gain job experience in the process.

You have given our chapter funds in order for students to be temporarily employed. We have learned to work as a team and acknowledge each other. I would like to thank you for these opportunities. We appreciate what you have done for us and for our Klagetoh community members.

Sincerely,

Nicholette Ashley
Klagetoh

Who are the modern day Navajo?

Dear President Ben Shelly,

I'm a seventh grader at Hawfields Middle School in Mebane, North Carolina.

I am writing a report on the Navajo and I need some help with finding information on the modern day Navajo.

Some of the information I could use is the history of the Navajo, the places where they moved, and what did the Code Talkers do?

Were your people affected by the European explorers? In the traditional Navajo religion, what was the beliefs and customs?

Any information would be helpful so thanks for the help.

Sincerely,

Kohl McGuire
Mebane, NC

Reasons why President Shelly and Vice President Jim should remain in office

If the 2014 presidential election taught us anything, it was to expect the unexpected.

Five months have passed since the primary election and things are clear as mud.

The endless litany of questions continues to pop up: when will the election be held? Will there be a write-in option for voters? Why is the Navajo fluency requirement necessary?

Of course, the real question itching at the back of everybody's mind is who will fill the role of president until this mess is sorted out?

The obvious and correct answer is President Ben Shelly.

President Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim were the last candidates to be elected by the voting body – the Navajo people – to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the presidency.

They both took the oath of office for a second time at noon on Jan. 13, after reaching a late night agreement with tribal legislators on Jan. 9. However, the terms of the agreement will expire with the start of the winter session.

Legislation will be introduced at the session for the removal of President Shelly and replaced by the speaker or a delegate from the council. This does not follow the opinion issued by the Navajo

Nation Department of Justice.

On Dec. 15, 2014, DOJ issued a legal opinion stating that President Shelly may continue in office as president until a successor was elected and sworn into office. They cited 11 NNC §6 (B) as the source of their opinion.

The election code states that expiration of a predecessor's term of office is contingent upon two things: that a general election occurs and a president is elected; and that the new president is "installed in office" when they take the oath of office.

To provide an objective opinion, the attorney general and deputy attorney general were recused from contributing to the opinion. Instead, five attorneys from DOJ drafted the opinion.

They cited Navajo Nation Supreme Court decisions, language from the tribal code, and court decisions to support their opinion.

On Dec. 22, the legislative counsel issued a dissenting opinion and made the claim that the speaker should take office as interim president. Such a decision would only hinder the tribal processes underway and complicate an already challenging situation for the Nation.

Continuity of government operations is another central

reason why President Shelly and Vice President Jim remain in office. The responsibilities of the presidency have already been in their hands over the past four years and they did not face any lawsuits, investigations or administrative leave during their term of office.

In short, they have consistently maintained the interests of the Navajo people during their administration. With all the political uncertainties confusing the public at large, the primary focus should be continuity until a new leader is elected.

President Shelly said he would be remiss and doing the Navajo people a disservice if he were to vacate office without a successor being elected.

"I took an oath to uphold the presidency until a new president was elected and installed. My administration will continue the responsibilities of the presidency until a new president takes the oath of office," he said.

President Shelly's staff at the Office of the President and Vice President and his cabinet members are already in place and familiar with the issues facing the Nation. It's common sense that they would continue in office until the election debacle is finally resolved.

The last and quite possibly the most important reason why

President Shelly should remain in office is because having a member of the council hold two offices would be unfair and a perversion of the separation of powers between the branches.

The potential to rubberstamp approvals on pet projects would be too great, especially with the recent \$554 million settlement on the minds of many legislators.

Continuity of government must be maintained, which can only be achieved through consistency by allowing President Shelly and Vice President Jim to continue holding the government in place.

They have no other reason than protecting the tribal government for continuing in office. President Shelly will not run for election if the runoff election moves forward.

The tribal code explicitly states that speaker of the council would move up as president if the president perishes in office, is terminated or if he is recalled from office. None of these apply to our current state of affairs.

"My term as president is not over and if I leave office now, I will be in violation of my oath of office," President Shelly said. "It's like abandonment of your job."

Line item veto

On Dec. 10, President Shelly executed his line-item veto authority on Legislation No. CN-58-14, which was for more than \$1 million from the FY 2015 general funds budget.

According to the tribal council resolution, \$541,946 was for funding salaries of legislative district assistants and \$500,000 was for administrative service centers under the Navajo Division of Community Development.

On Sept. 15, President Shelly line-item vetoed the FY 2015 comprehensive budget because of Navajo Nation Council's concerns about salaries for politically appointed positions. The reasoning was that the money could best be used for direct services to the Navajo people.

At that time, almost \$2 million was earmarked for the legislative district assistants to cover salaries, travel expenses and communications costs in the FY 2015 budget. Because little has changed since that initial veto, the new legislation to fund those positions was vetoed again by the president.

The president's decision to veto \$500,000 for the administrative service centers was rooted in the fact that there was no budget attached to the legislation. The funding requested was in support of the decentralization initiative, which was a directive from the Budget and Finance Committee on July 5, 2013.

The decentralization was to transition from five Local Governance Support Centers at the agencies to 16 administrative support centers at the district level.

"No budget forms were attached. The legislation does not indicate whether council intends to use general funds, supplemental funds or indirect cost funding," he said. "For these reasons must execute my line item veto authority."

THANKS FROM THE NDOT CREW.

BY WORKING TOGETHER WITH FEDERAL, STATE AND TRIBAL RESOURCES, NAVAJO DOT HAS ASSISTED IN THE COMPLETION OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT PROJECTS FOR THE NAVAJO NATION. WE CONTINUE TO GROW THESE RELATIONSHIPS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO THE MORE THAN 14,000 MILES OF ROAD ACROSS THE NATION.

HERE'S SOME OF THE PROJECTS WE FINISHED BY PARTNERSHIPS WITH FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY:

- NAVAJO ROUTE 20
- FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
- DIRECT FUNDING AGREEMENT
- FUNDING TO COMPLETE U.S. ROUTE 491
- TORREON ROAD TIGER GRANT
- WINDOW ROCK BOULEVARD RESURFACING
- WINDOW ROCK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PAVING
- ARIZONA AVIATION ASSOCIATION GRANT AWARD
- HUERFANO BRIDGE REPLACEMENT

THERE'S A LONG ROAD AHEAD OF US. NAVAJO DOT WILL BE THERE EVERY FOR EVERY MILE TRAVELED.

NAVAJO DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION
P.O. BOX 4620
WINDOW ROCK, AZ 86515
PHONE: 505-371-8600
FAX: 505-371-8603
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NAVAJO D.O.T.

Resources and Development Committee approves FY 2015 Tribal Transportation Improvement Plan

WINDOW ROCK—The Resources and Development Committee of the 22nd Navajo Nation Council approved the Navajo Nation FY 2015 Tribal Transportation Improvement Program on Sept. 2, 2014.

Navajo Division of Transportation submitted a 60-page document to RDC for review and detailed the five-year project listing, which includes preliminary studies, construction administration and roadway improvements.

Roads are a major concern for many Navajo chapters.

NDOT is charged to perform critical functions related to transportation road improvements in collaboration with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, local, state and federal agencies for development of a tribal transportation priority listing.

The projects are mandated by 25 CFR Part 170, Subpart D

under the Tribal Transportation Program.

Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT, said the FY 2015 TTIP now moves forward to the Federal Highway Administration for final approval. If approved, the project listing for the Nation will be included in the national transportation improvement program.

He said progress has been swift during this administration, but additional road improvement needs arise during monsoon flooding and the winter season.

“Projects in the five-year TTIP include cultural and environmental impact studies, right-of-ways, centerline surveys and designs,” Chaco said.

Other program funds include safety projects, planning, operation and maintenance. Additionally, two percent of

planning funds are used to provide technical assistance to chapters for transportation planning, mapping, roadway data collection and long range transportation plans.

A total of \$277,500,000 has been programmed into the TTIP through FY 2019. The Navajo Nation receives \$55,500,000 annually in funding from the FHWA for transportation projects. NDOT receives \$10 million of that amount, after it entered into a direct funding agreement with the FHWA in 2013.

“The direct funding agreement changed the dynamics of transportation on the Navajo Nation,” Chaco said. “The BIA is now partners with Navajo DOT. They are no longer our oversight. This has strengthened our tribal sovereignty.”

Execution of the direct funding agreement was only

one of the directives made to Chaco by Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly when the administration took office in 2011. Early on in the administration, Navajo Nation Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Church Rock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) approached NDOT with the need to repair N7054, a dirt road located in Pinedale, N.M.

The N7054 project is on the five-year TTIP for grade, drain and gravel construction for 3.5 miles of road. This safety project is at a cost of \$3,125,000. Preliminary engineering will be from 2015 through 2017, at a cost of \$325,000. The following two years will be construction engineering and construction, at a cost of \$2,800,000.

However, immediate needs exist for local residents in Pinedale that travel on the road

to get to school, work, medical services and other basic needs.

Chaco said the Pinedale project is a two-fold initiative, with efforts to address the immediate need for safety of the traveling public and the other to provide a long-term solution to the roadway.

Yazzie was in attendance for the RDC meeting on Tuesday and stressed the importance of improving the road in Pinedale. In 2012, he requested that the project be placed on the priority listing and staunchly advocated for its improvement since.

Chaco said, “This road project, like many across the Navajo Nation, has been discussed for years, but actual progress rarely occurs due to many factors, including lack of funding.”

He said the immediate need was to improve the road, which was often impassable

because of mud during inclement weather. Because of this overwhelming need to provide residents with a usable road during adverse conditions, Chaco said NDOT has earmarked Fuel Excise Tax fund to purchase gravel for the road in the interim until the long-term project is completed.

A total of 1.4 miles of road will be graveled on N7054. This will require a purchase of 2,651 tons of gravel to complete the road.

We will utilize NDOT equipment and operators to place the gravel, Chaco said. He said the Pinedale project was just one of hundreds across the Nation that require immediate attention.

For now, NDOT continues to assist the Navajo people through FHWA and FET funding, combined with ingenuity and adaptability.

PRESIDENT SHELLY NEGOTIATES FOR LOST CODE TALKER UNIFORM



PROTECTING VETERANS Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly negotiated for the return of a lost uniform. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—The uniform of a Navajo hero returned home.

After more than 15 years of limbo, the uniform of George H. Kirk, Sr. was returned home and unveiled on August 14, during a ceremony at the Navajo Nation Museum in honor of Navajo Code Talkers Day.

Kirk was a Navajo Code Talker. Born on May 25, 1917, he passed on Oct. 28, 1999. He served in the 3rd Marine Division and saw combat in Bougainville, Eniwetok Atoll, Guadalcanal, Guam, Iwo Jima, Johnston Islands, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, New Guinea, and Solomon Islands.

Kirk's Navajo Code Talker uniform and associated items were lost since 1999, until they appeared on the open market for auction in late Jan. 2014. The uniform was previously in a storage unit that went up for auction after he passed and no longer made payments.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly immediately contacted Craig Gottlieb, a military historian that owned the online auction house that was prepared to sell the uniform. In his letter to Gottlieb, President Shelly stated the importance of its return to the Nation.

“We respectfully asked for the return of the uniform to the Navajo Nation and agreed that it be an exhibit at the Navajo

Nation Museum for display to our future generations,” President Shelly said. “Thankfully, Mr. Gottlieb was very gracious and cooperative in the matter.”

“Our Navajo Code Talkers not only put their lives on the line but they also preserved and showcased the strength of Dine’ bizaad, the Navajo language,” he added.

Craig Gottlieb Military Antiques, located in Solana Beach, Calif. was the business that had the uniform ready for auction. Major Gottlieb served in the U.S. Marine Corps and is a subject matter expert for History Channel’s television show, Pawn Stars.

“It’s been a long journey to get where we are and I’m excited,” Gottlieb said. “As a Marine officer who grew up with words like ‘ink stick’ and ‘go faster,’ making this donation has special meaning for me.”

President Shelly traveled to Reno, Nev. on Aug. 13 to pickup Gottlieb and the uniform for its return to the Navajo Nation.

The unveiling was on Aug. 14, at 8 a.m. at the Navajo Nation Museum, followed by the parade from the museum to Veterans Memorial Park at 9 a.m.

The Code Talkers are living legends and we must protect them at all costs, he said.

President Shelly approves Navajo Department of Health Act

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed the Navajo Department of Health Act into law on Nov. 6, 2014.

He said the legislation is an unprecedented step for a tribal nation in self-determination.

“This legislation affirms the Nation’s sovereignty by recognizing the Nation’s authority to determine what is in the best interest of our people’s health care in the future,” President Shelly said.

The legislation amends an outdated 20-year-old law that only saw changes in piecemeal efforts. By joining other tribes exercising self-determination through the compaction and contracting of specific health programs, the Navajo Nation established its own Epidemiology Center.

When the administration took office in Jan. 2011, Vice President Rex Lee Jim was tasked with responsibility over health and education. Over the course of the administration, he has worked on the tribal, state

and federal level to protect the interests of the Navajo Nation.

“We firmly believe we are a sovereign nation and as a sovereign nation, there are certain essential governmental functions that we cannot, should not, ever give away to other sovereigns, entities and organizations,” Vice President Jim said. “These are basic governmental functions.”

“One is our ability to regulate and monitor programs within the Navajo Nation’s jurisdiction,” he added.

The Navajo Department of Health will ensure the public health service needs are met through assessment, policy development and assurance. The department will diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in Navajo communities.

President Shelly said, “(The department) will develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts. The department will enforce laws and regulations passed

to protect health and ensure safety.”

Vice President Jim said this effort wouldn’t happen overnight. Instead, it will take a number of years and a lot of hard work to make sure they are completed.

“This means we will have to build capacity. We will have to hire new people who are experts in policymaking, who are experienced in rulemaking,” he said.

The importance of consultations and public hearings cannot be stressed enough, he added, because the participation from stakeholders will be instrumental in crafting language that provides fair regulations.

In addition to working with health care providers on the tribal, state and federal levels, the department will also work toward another historic step, the creation of the first tribally administered Medicaid agency.

A recent study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that

it is feasible for the Navajo Nation to operate its own Medicaid agency to ensure the Navajo people receive uniform coverage, regardless of the state they reside in.

President Shelly said the legislation does not authorize the Department of Health to intercept or impede existing self-governance funding for contracted and compacted facilities on the Nation. The same holds true for the regulation of traditional practitioners and the use of traditional medicine.

Vice President Jim said the Navajo Department of Health will not only regulate health care facilities and 638 programs, but also health codes at restaurants and safety codes from swimming pools at hotels on the Navajo Nation. The legislation is all encompassing.

President Shelly approves \$8.3 million in supplemental appropriations



LOOSENING PURSE STRINGS Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has exercised his veto authority throughout his administration in an effort to be fiscally responsible and ensure the proper amount of funding was maintained for the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance. He recently loosened this to provide chapters with supplemental appropriations. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On Jan. 6, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with the Office of Management and Budget to discuss council resolutions requesting supplemental appropriations amounting to more than \$8.3 million.

“It’s important that we ensure funding for these projects are in line with the Navajo Nation Appropriations Act,” President Shelly said. “We have more than \$30 million in the UUFB right now, but we must be prudent with those funds.”

President Shelly signed CD-71-14, which provides \$500,000 from the Unreserved,

Undesignated Fund Balance for Oljato Chapter. The funds will be for professional technical services and architecture and design for the chapter’s new multipurpose building.

The same bill provides \$5 million to the Nahata Dzil Shopping Center project. The president had reservations about signing the legislation because the two projects are not listed in the five-year Capital Improvement Plan.

The Appropriations Act states, “All budget requests for capital improvements shall be in compliance with an adopted Capital Improvement Plan and shall not be approved unless in

compliance with the plan.”

The legislation was originally only for the Oljato Chapter, but the shopping center was added as an amendment.

“I compromised and signed this legislation because the shopping center project is shovel-ready and listed on the five-year Economic Development Plan,” President Shelly said.

Resolution No. CD-75-14 was also signed for approval of \$500,000 from the UUFB for Tonalea-Red Lake Chapter’s professional technical services and demolition project. President Shelly approved this project, but again, it is not listed on the five-year CIP. The project, however, is also listed on the five-year Economic Development Plan.

“I’ve worked with the council on approving these projects, but they need to ensure their legislation is in compliance with the law for any future legislation,” President Shelly said.

Legislation No. CD-69-14 was also approved by the president and allows Cameron Chapter to receive \$180,120 from the UUFB for their multipurpose facility. The project is on the five-year CIP and is in compliance with the Appropriations Act.

Resolution No. CD-72-14

was approved for \$600,00 from the UUFB for the purchase of a new bus for Navajo Transit System. The president had a small concern with the proposal summary because it does not mention the bus purchase, but OMB will apply an administrative fix.

President Shelly also approved Legislation No. CD-73-14 for \$1,559,250 from the UUFB for elected officials operating expenses, planning and regular chapter meetings. The funds will be distributed to the elected officials as follows:

The district grazing officials will receive \$877,500. The farm boards will receive \$483,750. The Eastern Navajo Land Board will receive \$198,000.

“During this administration, we have held tight to the Nation’s purse strings to ensure the UUFB was maintained above the minimum balance allowed,” President Shelly said. “Today, we have let go of the purse strings to approve these projects for the people.”



OPVP provides interns opportunity for government reform



GOVERNMENT REFORM President Shelly hired 14 student interns to work and research government reform for the tribe. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— From Dec. 2015 to Jan. 2015, 14 Navajo college students worked as interns at the Office of the President and Vice President.

They worked with OPVP staff assistant Moroni Benally to research government reform and prepare the administration for the transition and eventual transfer of power from the Shelly-Jim administration to the next president.

“I want to give these young Navajo students an opportunity to see the operation of the tribal government firsthand,” President Shelly said. “They are ready to take our tribal government to the next level.

“They will assist this administration with defining improvements for tribal management systems and essential government direct

services,” he added.

Benally said that a comprehensive study of the internal management culture and processes of the Navajo Nation government has yet to be conducted.

“This constitutes government

Development Services of Dine’ College and Navajo Technical University, provided the framework for the study.

Benally explained that the internal processes are human and technical systems and that they create bottlenecks for

The internship was a three-week program. Random divisions, departments and programs of the tribal government were selected for evaluation. The group analyzed the data that was collected for a final report that hasn’t been released yet.

The report will identify legislative action, if necessary, and support the Shelly-Jim administration’s transition for the transfer of power. Beyond that, it also establishes a data sharing agreement with the tribal colleges and sets a new standard on policy development, research, data sharing and government reform.

Lane Franklin, a student at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo. participated in the internship and had a pessimistic view on the project. A decade from now, Franklin sees a stagnant government.

“I see the tribal government being at a stand still like we are currently if the same leadership and mentality continues,” he said. “Effective leadership and communications causes progress.

“I believe the 2014 election highlighted the inefficiency and injustice of the Judicial Branch,” he added.

The 23-year-old Navajo voted for Chris Deschene in the election and said young voters determine their future with their choice of candidate.

Upon obtaining his undergraduate degree he plans on becoming a physical therapist in the military or private sector.

Honesty about his experiences, beliefs and values is what is needed within OPVP, he said.

The 14 interns that participated in the project were not paid and strictly worked in a voluntary capacity during the three-weeks at OPVP.

Benally will be releasing the groups work through a report very soon. Plans to implement the government reform ideas would be at the discretion of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council and the president, upon their election and installation in office.

President Shelly said the project would be his legacy and allow the Navajo people to see the roadblocks and inefficiencies in the tribal process that has far too long prevented the Nation from true progress.

Sec. Sally Jewell joins President Shelly for historic \$554 million settlement signing ceremony



HISTORIC SETTLEMENT Top, President Shelly signs the settlement agreement. Center, Sec. Jewell joins President Shelly for an early morning prayer. Bottom, the signed agreement. (Photos and story by Jared King)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed a historic multimillion-dollar trust settlement, the largest in United States history, at a commemorative signing ceremony with Navajo leaders and federal officials.

“Today, we gather as a Nation to celebrate the historic trust settlement agreement between the Navajo Nation and the U.S. government. The settlement of this claim is symbolic of the evolving relationship that the Navajo Nation has had with the federal government. For decades Native Nations have had an adversarial relationship with the U.S. Department of the Interior,” said President Shelly.

Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Sam Hirsch, acting attorney general for the U.S. Department of Justice, Environmental and Natural Resource Division, Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, other federal officials, Navajo Council Delegates, and the Navajo Trust Litigation Task force joined President Shelly at the ceremony.

The president and the secretary acknowledged that the settlement demonstrated resolving differences and working together for Navajos.

“This settlement reflects our continuing commitment to upholding the federal trust responsibility to Indian Country and to building strong, prosperous and resilient tribal communities,” said Secretary Jewell.

The president called on the Navajo people to provide input at town hall meetings

scheduled to begin Oct. 6 in Chinle, Ariz. The purpose of the town hall meetings is to gain guidance from the Navajo people on how to best utilize and wisely spend or invest the funds.

The president said the money from this settlement will provide the Navajo government with a wide range of choices on investment, but infrastructure and development will be a priority.

“This means that we are taking one small step towards self-sufficiency and away from dependence,” the president added.

He also underscored the need for the Navajo Nation to stand on its own and rely less on the federal government to provide for the people.

“It is important to note that a lot of work went into reaching this landmark agreement. The Navajo Nation worked for many years in long and tough negotiations to come to a resolution on this issue.”

President Shelly thanked President Obama and his administration for settling this long standing wrong to the Navajo Nation and for the president’s commitment to working with Indian Country.

He also thanked the Trust Litigation Task Force for their guidance and leadership to resolving this issue.

“The next step following today’s signing ceremony is to hear from the Navajo people on how the settlement can be used. We urge the Navajo people to provide their input on this important issue that will effect generations to come,” said the president.

PRESIDENT SHELLY HONORS NAVAJO VETERANS DURING FESTIVITIES FOR 2014 VETERANS DAY IN WINDOW ROCK



PATRIOTIC DUTY Members of the Twin Warriors Society re-fold the Betsoi family flag. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



VETERANS DAY Left, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly unveiled the 11 new names that were added to the KIA Wall at Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock. Center, the Twin Warriors Society Color Guard opened flags and re-folded them for families that lost loved ones in battle. Top right, The Ft. Defiance Twin Warriors Color Guard. Bottom right, the Window Rock Veterans Memorial Park externally salutes the Navajo veterans that served the U.S. and the countless Navajos that died in battle since time immemorial. The day-long Veterans Day activity included lunch provided by the Navajo Department of Veterans Affairs. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

President Shelly enacts Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014



HEALTHY LIVES Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly compromised with lawmakers and signed the Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014 into law on Nov. 20, 2014. He said his administration has long advocated for healthy living. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly, with a stroke of his pen, signed the Healthy Dine' Nation Act of 2014 into law on Nov. 20, 2014 and changed the dynamics for the war on diabetes.

His decision to enact Legislation No. CN-54-14 and amend Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code came after negotiations with council delegates and food advocacy groups to ensure the proper monitoring provisions were included.

When the legislation was first presented, President Shelly's concerns with definitions of junk food and the monitoring processes of tax collections resulted in a veto. At the time, he called the Healthy Dine' Nation Act progressive and asked for further clarification.

"This administration has advocated for healthy living since we took office. Vice President Jim has run across this great Nation all four years of our administration," President Shelly said. "Today,

I am signing this legislation into law to continue our commitment to healthy lifestyles for our people.

"Diabetes is an enemy that we will conquer by fighting this war together," he added.

The amendments to Title 24 of the Navajo Nation Code will be imposed upon gross receipts at a rate of two percent upon minimal-to-no-nutritional value food items sold.

The revenues generated from the sales tax may be utilized for community wellness projects such as farming, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, farmers markets, clean water, exercise equipment, health classes and more.

Legislation sponsor Danny Simpson (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Standing Rock, White Rock) and co-sponsor Jonathan Nez (Navajo Mountain, Oljato, Shonto, Tsah Bii Kin) joined supporters of the legislation at the Office of the President and Vice President for the

signing.

Simpson said, "From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Mr. President. I think we compromised on (the legislation)."

Denisa Livingston, a member of the Dine' Community Advocacy Alliance, said food is not only a material pleasure, but nourishment for our bodies, minds and spirit.

"Eating well is what will sustain and empower us for the generations to come. From this day forward, we will move from being a food desert and return to being a food oasis," she said.

Livingston called the signing a "historical event" and praised the president for his decision to enact the legislation.

"Again, you are leading the way, Mr. President, across the world and across Indian Country. We thank you for your commitment, your leadership and your dedication to a healthy Dine' Nation. Ahe'hee," Livingston said.

Nez echoed Livingston's

sentiments and called members of the Alliance "champions" that never gave up.

"Many of our young people out there don't have the tools to make the healthy and wise decisions on living more healthy and active lifestyles," Nez said. "Again, you're leading the way, Mr. President, across the world and across Indian Country."

Deborah Cayedito, another member of the Alliance, said she was raised as a farm worker and understood the purpose of food.

"We are making historical movements," she said, adding, "and from the gathering of data that we've done, we can take it back home and start youth planters and teach them how to plant."

The seed has been planted and the war against diabetes on the Navajo Nation continues.

President Shelly enacts criminal code amendments

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— President Shelly enacted legislation on Dec. 1 to amend the Navajo Nation Criminal Code, provide Navajo language and culture assistance to residents in Phoenix, and execute the purchase of more than 67 acres of land in Farmington, N.M.

CN-52-14, a bill amending the sentencing provisions of Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code, was signed into law. Efforts to amend this portion of the code have been ongoing since Jan. 2000, when the Navajo Nation Council eliminated imprisonment and fines for a number of criminal offenses.

The new amendments restore some of those changes made in response to the lack of detention facilities.

"This is a good law," President Shelly said.

Law and Order Committee members Alton Shepherd (Cornfields, Ganado, Jeddito, Kinlichee, Steamboat) and Edmund Yazzie (Church Rock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake Thoreau) joined President Shelly for the signing and expressed gratitude.

"I just want to say thank you. First and foremost, it was a team effort and I appreciate the task force," Shepherd said. "Now that the jails are adequate, we need to update the criminal code to where it is, including giving the judges a little bit more flexibility."

"President, thank you," Yazzie said.

The new construction of additional detention facilities has provided the Nation an opportunity to address violent and serious crimes committed within tribal jurisdiction. These are offenses not prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office.

On July 23, 2012, the Law and Order Committee established a task force to review the sentencing provisions for the criminal code. The task force hosted public hearings and a radio forum for their outreach efforts. Public sentiment was for stronger sentencing provisions.

The amendments were made for enforcement, general provisions, sentencing, offenses, and penalties. The 132-page bill also includes amendments correlating to

changes in the Navajo Nation Council standing committees resulting from the 88-to-24-member reduction.

President Shelly also signed into law CN-53-14, which provides \$148,325 from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance for the Phoenix Indian Center to provide Navajo language and culture classes, information seminars and social services for tribal members residing in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

A non-profit entity, the Indian Center relies on funding from the Arizona Inter-Tribal Trust Fund, especially the Navajo Trust Funds to provide services to more than 4,000 Navajos living in the city that utilize their services.

The UUFB funds will cover the salary of two Navajo staff working for the Indian Center to continue providing Navajo language and culture opportunities for urban Navajos.

BN-57-14 was also signed into law by President Shelly to provide \$980,000 in closing costs for the purchase of 67.39 acres of land in accordance with the tribal Land Acquisition Policy.

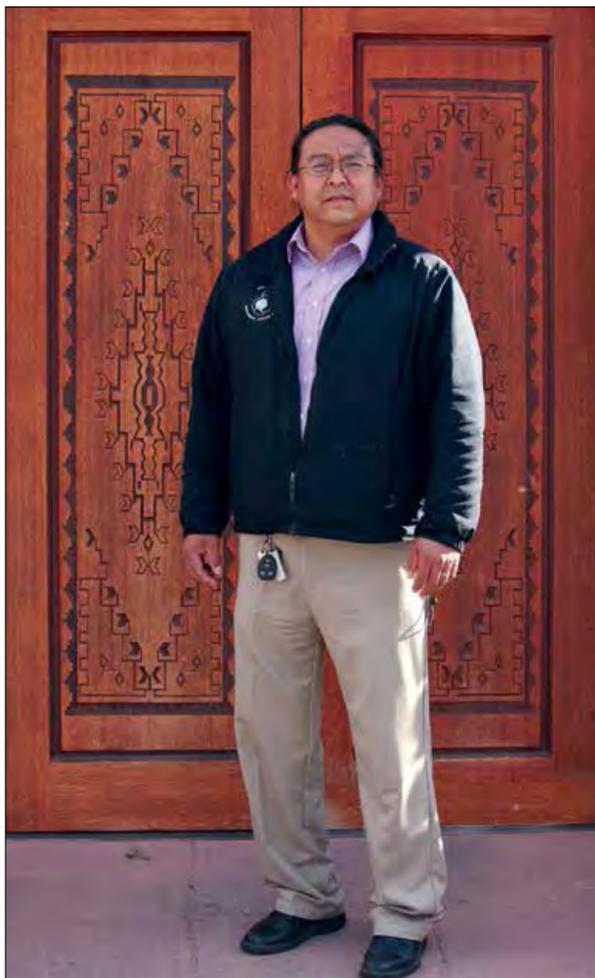
The land, previously owned by Rolling Mesa, LLC, is located at the southwest junction of Highway 371 and N376 in Farmington. The owner agreed upon the fair market value purchase price of \$980,000 on Jan. 13, 2014. Funds to purchase the land will come from the FY 2014 Land Acquisition Trust Fund.

The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, Upper Fruitland Chapter and Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development will utilize the land for commercial development. The next step is to put the land into trust status.

President Shelly vetoed Legislation No. CN-56-14. The legislation would have amended Title 5 of the Navajo Nation Code to authorize the formation of a low-profit LLC. However, the president said the uncertainty and confusion of the business structure played a factor in his decision to veto the legislation.

He had particular concerns with the lack of amendments to the internal revenue code to reflect the LLC structure.

\$1 billion settlement funding drawdown begins



BILLION DOLLAR MAN Stephen Etsitty, executive director of Navajo EPA, said the \$1 billion settlement was the result of work between Navajo EPA and DOJ. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—The Navajo Nation is finally receiving funds from the \$1 billion Anadarko v. Tronox settlement. According to terms of the settlement, the Navajo Nation will receive \$1.2 billion for cleanup of 50 sites.

More than \$985 million will be paid to the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Environmental Protection Agency is also receiving funding from the settlement, a total of \$43 million. The initial drawdown from the settlement will be 60 percent, or \$26.4 million, which will be deposited in the next 10 days.

The remaining 40 percent will be paid after three months.

"These funds will go toward the cleanup of 50 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation. On Dec. 12, 2013, we announced that we prevailed in the bankruptcy case involving Anadarko Petroleum and Kerr-McGee Corporation," said Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly.

Although we are receiving more than a billion dollars,

much more is needed to address the 520 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation, he added.

"Any funds resulting from this lawsuit are welcomed and long overdue," President Shelly said.

The claims against Anadarko and Kerr-McGee involved cleanup for a number of former uranium mines and uranium processing site located in Cove, Ariz. and Shiprock, N.M. The Navajo Nation Department of Justice and Navajo EPA worked together to bring the settlement to a conclusion.

President Shelly became involved with the bankruptcy case when he was previously serving as vice president. During the previous administration, he met with Allison McFarlane, chairman of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission about prioritizing cleanups on the Nation.

On Jan. 23, 2015, Stephen Etsitty announced that since an appeal was not filed with the presiding judges, the Navajo Nation would begin receiving settlement funds in

the next several days. Etsitty is the executive director of Navajo EPA.

"I understand the initial amount we will receive is \$26.4 million. This is 60 percent of the total amount we are set to receive," Etsitty said. "The remaining 40 percent will come in a few more months to the Nation and U.S. EPA."

Other claimants, including U.S. EPA, will also begin receiving funds from the settlement. U.S. EPA is set to receive approximately \$600 million to cleanup 50 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation. In addition to the U.S. EPA, other claimants in the case included 22 states, four environmental response trusts, and a trust for a number of environmental and tort plaintiffs.

According to Etsitty, the \$26.4 million will be wired to the Navajo EPA Hazardous Substances Fund. The fund is authorized by a fund management plan that

was approved by the Budget and Finance Committee and the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act, he added.

On Jan. 23, the U.S. EPA issued a news release from Region 9 in San Francisco that stated the Anadarko and Kerr-McGee settlement was finalized and that funds are to be disbursed for cleanups around the country.

Jared Blumenfeld, U.S. EPA Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest, said communities from the Navajo Nation to Henderson, Nev. are finally getting funding needed to take critical steps toward cleaning up toxic legacies that pollute their environment.

"After decades of trying to avoid their environmental responsibilities, Anadarko is today paying billions of dollars to immediately fund these and other critical environmental cleanups," Blumenfeld said.

Administration Building No. 1 opens for service once again



LEGACY ISSUES Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly spent a large part of his term dealing with legacy issues left by past administrations. One such example was the lack of proper maintenance on tribal buildings that led to black mold infestations affecting the health of workers. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On Jan. 12, a crowd of tribal employees and officials gathered on a dreary morning to celebrate the renovations of Administration Building No. 1. The cold weather did not deter them from participating in the celebration held in a white tent outside the building, however.

Thanks to Oakland-Arviso Construction Co., the renovated building is finally after 28 months of renovation activities.

Housed inside the newly improved building are Division of General Services, Finance, Office of Management and Budget, Department of Personnel Management, and Design and Engineering Services.

President Shelly said the building's completion was the product of cooperation between the Executive and Legislative Branches of tribal government.

"Whoever is taking office next, I hope you took notes because this is how you get things done: by working together, not against each other," President Shelly said.

He said Operation Breathe Safe began on Sept. 15, 2011 and closed the administration building due to black mold contamination. Employees were complaining of headaches and other medical issues.

Personal protective gear was required for employees to retrieve documents and equipment that needed to be decontaminated. The mold infestation was the result of non-maintenance.

"Water began to leak into the building and the walls," the president explained.

The mildew eventually resulted in a strong odor that gave employees headaches. Something had to be done. Closing the building meant employees had to find available workspace from other tribal divisions and departments.

"More than \$5 million was spent to remediate the building. Thank you Speaker Pro Tem Bates and Delegate Hale for securing the funding that made these renovations possible," President Shelly said.

Vice President Rex Lee Jim spoke next and provided his remarks entirely in Navajo.

He said the renovated building was like your own home; it is the center of learning and thinking for family and the Navajo people.

"Take good care of (the building). Be responsible for it. If you see trash, don't just walk over it, pick it up and dispose of it," Vice President Jim said. "Talk to each other and work with each other in a good way. Incorporate K'é into your office."

He also encouraged employees to quickly process the requests from the public.

"You were all in crowded workspaces. You know what it's like to be waiting. For this reason, quickly process your work for the people," Vice President Jim said.

Chief of Staff Arbin Mitchell also gave words of thanks and encouragement.

"We worked very hard on this building. I would like to thank Design and Engineering Services. Also Facilities Maintenance and NIOSH," Mitchell said. "Those are a few departments that assisted with making this happen."

"It took a lot of money, just like president said," he added.

Funds were pooled together from the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance and indirect cost monies. Carryover funds were also leveraged to cover the costs of construction.

"We're working on Administration Building No. 2 right now. When you add these two buildings, it probably runs close to \$10 million," he said.

Jonathan Hale, chairman of the Health, Education and Human Services Committee, said Navajo elders would use this building renovation as a lesson to learn from.

"We're at a time when our buildings are aging and in need of repairs. Our elders have always said to us, don't you see the needs of your home? Are you going to fix it? I'm thankful for your work here," Hale said.

He said employees had to endure cramped conditions for the past two years and that many complained about illness being spread and other issues.

"Thank you. Take care of it. When this building was first constructed, it wasn't done right. Now it's up to code and has blueprints for the work that was done. Take care of it in case something like this happens again 10 years from now," Hale said.

Virgil Brown, director for the Division of General Services, took a lead role on the project and directed his crew from Facilities Maintenance to work with DES to complete the work.

"It was a team effort. That's the only way that things get going fast. Administration Building No. 2 is being built right now and it will probably be finished a lot faster than this one," Brown said.

State of the Nation

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23rd NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL President Shelly's report to Council was met with a positive response. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

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to black mold infestation. The president said construction was expected to begin by the spring of 2015.

President Shelly said he approved \$8.3 million in supplemental funding for chapters on Jan. 6. The approval came after discussions with his legal counsel and the Office of Management and Budget.

"Some of these projects were not in compliance with the Appropriations Act, but we worked around that to approve the projects because of their importance to their respective chapters," he said.

The president also mentioned that the Appropriations Act states that project funding will be approved only if they are listed on the five-year CIP plan, which was recently approved in the summer of 2014 after 14 years of limbo.

He said fiscal conservatism resulted in a \$30 million surplus in the UUFB, which was in the red by \$22 million when the Shelly-Jim administration took office.

"I loosened the purse strings," President Shelly said.

President Shelly spoke of the repatriation mission to Paris, which was undertaken by Vice President Rex Lee Jim on Dec. 11, 2014. The purpose of the trip was for the return of sacred Yei Bi Chei masks that went up for auction by a private collector.

Members of the Navajo Human Rights Commission and the Navajo Nation Washington Office joined the vice president.

Seven masks were purchased at a cost of \$9,000 by the Navajo delegation before they went on auction. The president said the action sent a message to the world that sacred cultural resources should not be sold and that they violate the human rights of indigenous people around the globe.

President Shelly said, "We are grateful for the efforts of the U.S. State Department, U.S. Embassy-Paris and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for their assistance in returning these traditional masks back to the Navajo Nation."

The president also spoke about a Dec. 8, 2014 town hall meeting in Gallup regarding the Gallup Detoxification Center. He said more funding was needed to address the alcoholism epidemic in the city.

In June 2013, the former Na'nizhoozhi Center Inc. closed its doors after providing more than 20 years of service when funding dried up. Realizing the importance of the facility, the Navajo Nation invested funding and reopened it as Gallup Detox Center.

"To date, we have spent more than \$1.6 million providing services," President Shelly said. "Despite our partnership with the city, it is not enough to operate the facility and provide needed services."

"We are looking at more than \$2 million annually that is needed," he added.

The president also mentioned a House bill on Indian Energy that was introduced during the 113th Congress by Congressman Don Young, chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee.

"The bill proposed to streamline the federal bureaucratic process in energy development for large land base tribes," President Shelly said.

After passing the House, the bill is now at the Senate for deliberation. The Navajo Nation Washington Office reported that the bill would be reintroduced in the 114th Congress. Another bill being monitored by the D.C. office is the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act, which proposes authorization of an eight-year trust asset demonstration project that would enable tribes to develop plans.

President Shelly also praised the enactment of the Navajo Department of Health and said it was a major step toward tribal self-determination because it allows the Navajo Nation to regulate healthcare on tribal lands.

"Our newly formed Navajo Department of Health will ensure the public health service needs are met through assessments, policy development and quality assurance," he said.

While changes won't happen overnight, the president said creation of the first tribally administered Medicaid agency was a possibility, after a recent feasibility study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The president also mentioned a recent visit by members of the U.S. Congress to follow up with the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe on report by the Office of the Inspector General. The report was on the status of the federal relocation program administered by the Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation Program.

President Shelly said the federal government's failed relocation program that was imposed on tribal members has resulted in dismal living conditions.

"We have many families without running water, electricity and unfinished homes. Others are still awaiting relocation," he said.

The Navajo Nation encouraged the federal delegation to continue funding ONHIR and provide for adequate benefits to all families forced off their ancestral homelands more than 41 years ago.

President Shelly concluded that it is his responsibility to ensure continuity of government and direct services to the Navajo people, regardless of the political climate that exists.

"Vice President Jim and I stand prepared to continue providing stability for these government functions until a new president has been elected and installed into office," President Shelly said.

Congressional delegation visits Navajo Nation for ONHIR



RELOCATION TRAGEDY Top, center, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met with a Congressional delegation recently to discuss issues with the Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation in Flagstaff. He said that Navajo families that were relocated are having trouble adjusting. Bottom, Joining the delegation was Ariz. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick who said she knows the plight of natives personally after growing up on an Indian reservation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On Jan. 24 and 25, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly met a Congressional delegation in Window Rock to discuss the Office of Navajo Hopi Indian Relocation.

Congressional members of the U.S. House of Representatives representing the House Appropriations Committee and Subcommittees on the Interior and Environment traveled to Ariz. to meet with the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe.

Rep. Ken Calvert (R-Calif.), Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-Minn.) and Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Ariz.) met with President Shelly and members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council to discuss the Office of the Inspector General report on the federal relocation program administered by ONHIR.

Jodi Gillete, Senior Policy Advisor for Native American Affairs for the White House Domestic Policy Council joined the delegation. The federal delegation toured the Nahata Dzil community and families in Jeddito to see the firsthand results of relocation.

President Shelly explained the countless socio-economic disparities that resulted from lack of infrastructure and economic development. Before being relocated, many of the Navajo families were self-reliant and maintained a healthy lifestyle through livestock and farming.

However, relocation has disrupted that lifestyle and many entered into a modern world that they had no experience in.

"Our history is tied up in the land that you see," President Shelly said. "The relocation of Navajos from land they lived on created traumatic ripples that continue to disrupt and destroy lives 41 years later."

"These people lost their homes, their heritage and their livelihood," he added.

Still today, many families have not received compensation. Others, mostly elderly, are forced to go before ONHIR in Flagstaff and are often subject to interrogation to establish benefits. Far too often, these individuals are denied benefits and have to endure a review process to overturn the decision.

"This costly and unjust process puts added stress on our people and only increases the cost of relocation," said the president.

For families that have not been relocated, the tremendous needs for infrastructure development and roads continue to dominate. Other considerations include the deteriorating school facilities, in spite of 2004 commitments by the federal government to replace 14 schools.

"The Little Singer Community School which you will see later today, is one of the last schools on the 2004 replacement school construction priority listing," President Shelly said.

He noted that Navajo children learn better when traditional culture and language are supplanted in their curriculum.

Although the two-day meeting and tour of the Navajo Nation was brief, President Shelly strongly advocated for the continued funding of ONHIR and recommended addressing the pitfalls of the accommodation agreement entered into by the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe.

He also shared issues impacting families in the former Bennett Freeze area, where time has stood still for more than four decades. Families in the impacted area continue to live without running water, roads and substandard housing.

"Some families are forced to live in camper shells. I hope the subcommittee has listened to our concerns and will provide us with a favorable outcome," President Shelly said.