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THOREAU RAILHEAD
Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly broke ground for the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead before finishing his term of office, page 7.



SALUTING A NAVAJO HERO
President Shelly honored Navajo Police Officer Alex K. Yazzie, who was killed in the line of duty so that the lives of others could be saved, page 11.

HÓZHOOJÍ NAHAT'ÁH BAA HANE'

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Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the 8th Annual Zoo Fest and noted it was the fifth time he has attended the event since taking office in 2011. Early on in his administration, he adopted a golden eagle and made the commitment to construct an aviary for the magnificent birds. The aviary will be constructed after President Shelly approved more than \$400,000 for the project. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

President Shelly attends Zoo Fest, approves eagle aviary funding

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Parents and children came out in droves.

On May 2, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the 8th annual Navajo Nation Zoo Fest. Guest speakers, entertainment, a play area for kids and animals were featured at the free event.

The tribal zoo features more than 50 different species of animals indigenous to the Navajo Nation. It is also the only zoo in the country owned and operated by a Native American tribe.

“A small but dedicated staff takes care of the animals in our zoo. If you see them, please take a moment to thank them for their service,” President Shelly said. “From the black bears to the golden eagles, these animals

can be found across the Navajo Nation.”

He noted that the zoo operates on donations from the general public and tribal departments and entities that adopt animals. Entities adopting an animal provide funding for food, repairs for their enclosures and other needs.

Upon taking office in 2011, President Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly adopted a golden eagle that could not fly because it was missing a wing. Shellie the golden eagle is one of the many animals on display at the zoo.

In 2011, President Shelly also made the commitment to fund an eagle aviary exhibit at the zoo. The project will give the birds more room to fly and provide the **SEE Eagle >> Page 11**

President Shelly celebrates groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson's Convenience Store in Church Rock

The junction of N.M. Highway 118 and Highway 566 was a hotbed of activity on the morning of May 9.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson's convenience store and gas station in Church Rock.

Navajo businessman Alvin Thompson, council delegate Edmund Yazzie, Division of Economic Development director Albert Damon, chapter president Johnny Henry, representatives from the city of Gallup and state of N.M were also on hand to break ground for the new business.

“Today we are here to break ground and celebrate the construction of a new \$4 million

convenience store,” President Shelly said. “The Navajo Nation, through the Business Improvement Development Fund, contributed \$1.5 million for this project.

“The new business will create 20-plus new jobs for the community,” he added.

Financial partners in the project include the DED, Navajo Division of Transportation, Great Western Bank and personal funds from Thompson.

The new store is a response to the community needs for food, gas and other supplies. Thompson has operated a store in the heart of Church Rock for many years.

In business since 1964, Thompson made the move for a

better location to stimulate his business. The perfect location for the proposed gas station will undoubtedly generate traffic, as his business is directly across from “Campaign Hill.”

Thanking the staff of DED, Business Improvement Development Fund and the Eastern Regional Business Development Office, President Shelly noted that breaking ground for a new business on the Nation is always cause for celebration.

“Thank you Mr. Thompson for not giving up during the lengthy process involved in establishing a new business. It's not easy, I know this reality firsthand,” President Shelly said.

Negotiating the bureaucracy



President Shelly praised the groundbreaking ceremony for Thompson's Convenience Store in Church Rock recently. Located at entrance of Church Rock, he said the business will be a success. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

of regulations from federal, tribal, state and county laws is not only tedious, but complicated as well, he said.

“The Navajo Nation continues to grow. We must enable our small business owners to be

successful,” President Shelly said.

Once the business is off the ground and fully operational, the Navajo Nation will receive revenue from leasing, rental space and taxes.



Yá'át'ééh!

Welcome to the final issue of *Hózhoojį Nahat'á Ba Hane'* for the Shelly-Jim administration.

On behalf of Vice President Rex Lee Jim and I, we want to thank you for the opportunity to serve as your leaders for the past four-plus years. It was a blessing to serve the Navajo people during this time in office.

The Navajo Nation is going through a paradigm shift and our tribal government is changing. Our young Navajos are returning home educated and determined to make the necessary changes for the future generations to come.

I always believed in giving our young and educated Navajos a chance to serve in this government. When we took office, I appointed a 29-year-old Navajo man to serve as our chief of staff. This was an unprecedented move.

During our administration I also enacted legislation that terminated the equivalency standard that was in place for employment with the tribal government.

Today, if you want a job with the Navajo Nation, you must have a college degree.

Our young and educated Navajos can now return home to participate in the tribal government. We worked with our tribal legislators to accomplish this shift in hiring practices.

In direct contrast to the previous administration, we have worked hard with our Navajo Nation Council and in doing so, we achieved many accomplishments on behalf of the Navajo people. We must work together, that is the key to getting things done.

Please respect your tribal leaders and your elders. We have gone the other direction from our traditional teachings and this is not good. The preservation of language and culture was a mainstay of our administration and we pray this continues for the future.

Diné bizaad is Navajo sovereignty. It is vital that we preserve our Navajo language and teach our children the importance of speaking it and ensuring its

survival for the generations ahead.

Take care of your elders and check up on them to ensure they have enough food, water and other necessities. They are living treasures and hold the rich history of our great Navajo Nation.

Take care of each other and bring our Nation back into harmony. We will move forward with peace and unity for our Navajo people.

Again, thank you for allowing us to serve the great Navajo Nation. It has been a privilege and an honor to be your leaders. May the Holy People bless the Navajo people and continue guiding us for the road ahead.

Ahe'hee!

Honorable Ben Shelly
NAVAJO NATION
PRESIDENT



NAVAJO NATION GOLDEN RULE DAY



Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim is the Golden Rule Ambassador for the Navajo Nation. He hosted the 2nd Annual Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day in April 2015. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

The premise of the Golden Rule is simple: treat others as you would like to be treated. This basic teaching has been around since biblical times and maybe even longer.

It's human nature to disagree with others, but finding the proper way to resolve such conflicts in a positive manner was the premise of Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day, which was celebrated on April 4 at the Navajo Nation Museum for the second year.

On July 3, 2013, the Golden Rule International selected Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim Golden Rule Ambassador for the Navajo Nation. The GRI and Committee of the Interfaith Peace Building Initiative selected him as ambassador.

"We want to treat others the way that we want to be treated. You have to listen to them, talk to them, observe them," Vice President Jim said. "To understand someone, you

must walk in their shoes for a mile or two, or three.

"The whole idea is to promote peace," he added.

Golden Rule Day is observed globally on April 5, with 120 nations across the globe participating. Ambassadorship is awarded to leaders internationally who have exemplified the Golden Rule in their everyday lives.

For the 2015 Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day, festivities began with a fun run and walk hosted by the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Program. The fresh air and exercise prepared participants for a day of guest speakers and information.

Living a healthy life has been a mainstay in Vice President Jim's term of office, as he ran across the Navajo Nation for all four years of the administration. Not just a marathon, either. We're talking hundreds of miles ran in the name of healthy living.

Council delegate Amber Crotty provided the welcome address as a member of the Health,

Education and Human Services Committee. Vice President Jim provided the keynote address.

Milissa Tatum, research professor of law at the University of Arizona, also spoke and provided an hour-long presentation on "Culture Clash: Turning Confrontation into Cooperation."

With lunch provided by the Casey Foundation, participants spent the day at the museum to learn about conflict resolution, negotiations and difficult conversations from a faith-based perspective.

Ama Doo Alchini Bighan, Inc. also presented information on domestic violence and the need to protect Navajo children from unhealthy home environments.

Vice President Jim encouraged all to make the extra effort to treat others with respect and positivity, regardless of the situation. The Golden Rule is alive and well and living on the Navajo Nation.

Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.

Chinle Denny's groundbreaking ceremony

President Shelly supported Navajo businessman Romero Brown for new restaurant construction



Navajo Nation President Vice President Rex Lee Jim is the Golden Rule Ambassador for the Navajo Nation. He hosted the 2nd Annual Navajo Nation Golden Rule Day. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

CHINLE, Ariz.—On April 29, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly broke ground for a new Denny's restaurant in Chinle.

The site of the restaurant is located adjacent to the Program for Self Reliance office.

The celebration began with a traditional Navajo blessing. Participants blessed themselves with Tádídíín (corn pollen) and the site of the restaurant.

Navajo businessman Romero Brown joined President Shelly for groundbreaking ceremony.

Also participating in the shovel ceremony were President-Elect Russell Begaye and Vice

President-Elect Jonathan Nez. Chapter president Andy Ayze and chapter vice president Myron McLaughlin participated, along with tribal officials from Division of Economic Development and the Navajo Nation Council.

The group took photos at the site of the Denny's restaurant before convening at the Chinle Chapter House for the festivities.

President Shelly said, "I would like to thank Romero Brown for having the courage to step forward and start a new business here in Chinle. I want to also thank Albert Damon and the hardworking staff at the Division of

Economic Development."

Denny's will undoubtedly be a success, the president said, because Navajos love to eat. He said the Shelly-Jim administration pushed for innovative ideas for businesses during their term of office.

Projects like the Thoreau Rail Port, Narbona Growth Fund and federal

of the box" thinking to address the challenges of starting a business on the Navajo Nation, he said.

"We must work with our small businesses for the benefit of the Navajo Nation. These businesses create new jobs and stimulate the economy," President Shelly said. "It gives me great pleasure

Ahe'hee."

Romero Brown said work on the Denny's project began in 2008. He noted that President Shelly's involvement made the project a reality.

"We probably gave up three or four times. Native American Bank wanted to build this back in 2009, but after the economic crash they pulled back," Brown said. "It sure is hard to build a business on the Navajo Nation."

The Division of Economic Development and Regional Business Development Office stepped forward to help the Navajo entrepreneur. The Navajo Nation provided \$341,000 for the project. Native American Bank

provided \$2,150,000.

"When we build this Denny's, it's going to have 100 permanent employees. There will be 230 temporary construction jobs. We're going to pay about \$1 million per year in payroll. Then we're going to pay the Navajo Tax Commission about \$150,000 per year," Brown said.

Construction will take six months and the anticipated completion date is Oct. 17.

"In October, we'll have some Grand Slams," Brown said.

Brown noted that he wants to open a chain of Denny's restaurants across the Navajo Nation.

"I would like to thank Romero Brown for having the courage to step forward and start a new business here in Chinle."

EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program provided "out to break ground for a new Navajo-owned business.

President Shelly negotiates gaming compact



Top, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and other tribal leaders sat in the rostrum during the legislative sessions for the tribal gaming compact. Bottom, President Shelly and Speaker LoRenzo Bates listen in on the proceedings. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

SANTA FE—It came down to the wire.

With the 2015 N.M. Legislative Session expiring on March 21, Senate Joint Resolution 19 passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 61-5 on the evening of March 18.

The gaming compact now advances to Gov. Susana Martinez for approval before getting sent to the U.S. Department of Interior for final authorization.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly expressed appreciation for state lawmakers for approving the compact and not only saving thousands of jobs, but encouraging tribal economic independence.

“I want to say thank you to members of both the House

and Senate for approval of this compact,” President Shelly said. “Gaming is independence and revenue for the tribes.

“Thanks are in order for the governor’s office as well, they worked hard on this compact alongside us,” he added.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T’iistoh Sikaad, Tse’ Daa’ Kaan, Upper Fruitland) and council delegates Amber Crotty (Beclabito, Gadiiahi-To’Koi, Red Valley, Sheep Springs, Toadlena-Two Grey Hills, Tse’alnozt’i’i’) and Tuchoney Slim, Jr. (Bodaway-Gap, Coppermine, K’aibi’to, LeChee, Tonalea-Red Lake) joined President Shelly in the rostrum.

Rep. Sharon Clahchischilliage (R-San Juan) introduced SJR 19

to the House floor.

She described the joint resolution as a good bill and said five tribes united over the past three years to craft the compact with Gov. Martinez’s office.

“The tribe’s casinos have created thousands of jobs for New Mexicans and brings in millions of dollars every year in revenue sharing to the state of New Mexico,” Clahchischilliage said.

Time was of the essence, she said, because current compacts expire on June 30 and non-approval of SJR 19 would cause severe economic setbacks for the tribes.

She reviewed the main provisions of the compact: increased revenue sharing, limits on the number of gaming facilities for tribes, the extended 22-year expiration date, new provisions for comps and participation in the state self-exclusion program.

Many members of the House rose and stood in support of the bill, including Speaker. Ken Martinez (D-Bernalillo, Cibola, McKinley).

He said the negotiations were a long and difficult process, especially after last year’s session that saw the Navajo compact stall in the Senate. The difference with the new compact is that the tribes worked together to create a compact in the interests of all.

“It affects everybody,” Martinez said. “I rise in strong support of this gaming compact.”

Rep. Debbie Rodella also rose in support of the compact on behalf of the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

She said in north central N.M., jobs are hard to come by.

“This compact will keep more than 200 people employed,” Rodella said. “It provides stability for the next 22 years.”

Gov. Susan Martinez and President Shelly signed the compact on April 13 and sent it to the Interior Department.

HUERFANO BRIDGE



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly announced that the most dangerous bridge in San Juan County has finally been replaced. The new Huerfano bridge opened to traffic on April 28, 2015. It was the first project constructed with Tribal Transportation Improvement Project funds since the Feb. 2013 direct funding agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

HUERFANO, N.M.—The new bridge is open.

In the eastern portion of the Navajo Nation, residents of the remote chapter of Huerfano have waited for more than two decades for the replacement of a bridge that carries residents across County Road 5150.

The bridge is located about five miles west of U.S. Highway 550, south of Bloomfield.

“The most dangerous bridge in San Juan County has been replaced,” President Shelly said. “This was the first major construction project funded by Navajo Division of Transportation since we entered into a direct funding agreement with the Federal Highway Administration in February of 2013.

“Now, school buses can safely transport children to school,” he added.

In 2013, the FHWA executed a direct funding agreement with NDOT, providing \$10 million to the tribal division annually.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is the other partner in the agreement. The BIA receives \$44 million annually from FHWA to service Navajo Nation roads.

Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT, said the new bridge is a major accomplishment for the

Navajo Nation, proving the tribe has the capacity to complete major road projects to meet the needs of Navajo communities.

“This is the first time NDOT took over the reins from the BIA to complete a project of this magnitude from start to finish. We are now partners with the BIA and the direct funding agreement with the FHWA is making a significant difference,” Chaco said.

He said the bridge replacement was an important project the Shelly-Jim administration focused on completing before leaving office.

The bridge opened to receive traffic on April 28. Previously, residents had to travel through a makeshift route down the Gallegos Wash to cross the roadway.

Bridge 8105 was completed at a cost of \$2.3 million. NDOT provided \$1.5 million to replace the bridge and the difference was paid by San Juan County and the N.M. gross receipts tax. For more than two decades, the greatest hurdle to constructing the 356-foot bridge was funding.

The old bridge was known as the most dangerous bridge in San Juan County because it had a rating of 13 on a scale of 1 to 100.

\$13.2 million for abandoned uranium mine cleanup plan

President Shelly praises U.S. DOJ announcement, pushes for more funding

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The U.S. Department of Justice announced a settlement agreement with the Navajo Nation to provide \$13.2 million for the cleanup evaluation of 16 abandoned uranium mines located across the Navajo Nation.

The first phase settlement agreement for the abandoned uranium mines will establish an environmental response trust to pay for the evaluations. The inspection of the 16 sites will initiate solutions for the final cleanup.

“The Navajo Nation is working with U.S. EPA for cleanup of uranium contamination that was abandoned upon tribal lands after the Cold War,” President Shelly said. “Countless Navajos have suffered from the health and environmental impacts from this contamination.

“It is our hope the U.S. will finally accept responsibility for the cleanup of this uranium contamination,” he added.

The U.S. DOJ is increasing their focus on environmental and health concerns across Indian Country. The commitment by the Obama administration to resolve these grievances from American Indian tribes is commendable, President Shelly said.

John Cruden, assistant attorney general for Justice Department Environmental and Natural Resources Division said the site evaluations are focused on mines that pose the most significant hazards.

“In partnership with our sister federal agencies, we will also continue our work to address the legacy of uranium mining on Navajo lands, including ongoing discussions with the Navajo Nation,” Cruden said.

Jared Blumenfeld, regional administrator for the U.S. EPA Pacific Southwest, said the EPA is proud to implement the historic settlement.

“It dovetails with our ongoing



From the \$1.2 billion Tronox settlement to the recently announced \$13.2 million funding for the evaluation of cleaning 16 abandoned uranium sites on the Navajo Nation, President Shelly was steadfast in his efforts to cleanup radioactive waste on tribal lands. He said there are still hundreds of sites in need of remediation for the safety of Navajo people and livestock. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

activities as we work together to make real progress on the environmental legacy of uranium mining on the Navajo Nation,” Blumenfeld said.

From 1944 to 1986, approximately four million tons of uranium ore was extracted from Navajo Nation lands. The U.S. DOJ said the federal government, through the Atomic Energy Commission, was the sole purchaser of uranium until

said the environmental response trust is officially named the “Navajo Nation Abandoned Uranium Mine Environmental Response Trust – First Phase.”

He said Sadie Hoskie was selected to serve as trustee for the Nation. Hoskie was the first executive director of Navajo EPA. Most recently, she has served at the U.S. EPA Region 8 in Denver.

“She brings a unique

Hoskie. The panel consisted of representatives from the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo EPA and the Dine’ Medicine Men’s Association.

Navajo DOJ demonstrated there were well qualified Navajos to fill these important positions, Tsosie said, adding that their goal of showcasing competency was achieved. He said the Navajo Nation was optimistic about receiving a comprehensive settlement to restore tribal lands and the environment back into harmony.

President Shelly said, “I welcome this preliminary settlement agreement that will address 16 abandoned uranium mine sites. We have always said the U.S. is responsible for the cleanup of uranium legacy sites.”

The 16 sites are orphaned mines because the companies that operated the sites are no longer in existence.

Stephen Etsitty, executive director of Navajo EPA, said there are hundreds more that

must be addressed.

“Sixteen abandoned uranium mines is a small number of the entire 521 sites on the current inventory,” Etsitty said. “However these 16 sites are high priority mines the Navajo Nation needs cleaned.

“They do not have a responsible party or viable company to provide the cleanup,” he added.

The Navajo Nation will continue to work with U.S. DOJ and the U.S. Department of Energy to provide cleanup of all abandoned uranium mines left on tribal lands.

The U.S. EPA website states, “Today the mines are closed, but a legacy of uranium contamination remains, including over 500 abandoned uranium mines as well as homes and drinking water sources with elevated levels of radiation.”

Potential health effects include lung cancer from inhalation of radioactive particles, as well as bone cancer and impaired kidney function from exposure to radionuclides in drinking water.

Although the legacy of uranium mining is widespread and will take many years to address completely, the collaborative effort of U.S. EPA, other federal agencies and the Navajo Nation will bring an unprecedented level of support and protection for the people at risk from these sites. Much work remains to be done, and US EPA is committed to working with the Navajo Nation to remove the most immediate contamination risks and to find permanent solutions to the remaining contamination on Navajo lands.



“The Navajo Nation is working with the U.S. EPA for cleanup of uranium contamination that was abandoned upon tribal lands after the Cold War.”

1966, when commercial sales of uranium began.

The AEC continued to purchase ore until 1970. The last uranium mine on the Navajo Nation shut down in 1986.

Harrison Tsosie, attorney general for the Navajo Nation,

combination of upper level administrative experience, technical environmental knowledge and a command of Navajo culture to this program,” Tsosie said.

A panel from the Navajo Nation made the selection of

President Shelly honors Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day, declares independence



President Ben Shelly has stood firm on acknowledging Navajo sovereignty and said leaders must not go against the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Navajo Nation Sovereignty is more than just another tribal holiday.

Tribal employees received eight hours off from work to mark the occasion, but its commemoration of independence must not be lost, said Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly.

On May 3, 1985, the tribal council established Navajo Nation Sovereignty Day after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld tribal rights to impose taxes without approval of the U.S. Secretary of Interior.

The case was *Kerr-McGee v. Navajo Tribe*. The Navajo Nation's authority to tax energy companies and others involved in utilizing natural resources found on tribal lands was reaffirmed by the high court.

Since then the Possessory Interest Tax, Business Activity Tax and other tribal tariffs have brought in hundreds of millions of dollars to the tribal economy.

"Please remember the importance of this day, that the Navajo Nation has the authority and inherent

right to impose taxes on companies doing business on the Nation," President Shelly said.

He said the Navajo Nation's strength and execution of tribal sovereignty is evident in many developments throughout the government.

"For decades, the Navajo Nation was not included in the negotiations of mineral leases for coal and other natural resources found on our tribal lands," President Shelly said. "We fought hard to earn a seat at the table for these negotiations.

"Now, we have our own coal mine," he added.

Today, funding from natural resources in the form of taxes, leases, employment and other forms of economic development fund a large part of the tribal budget. In turn, these funds provide important direct services to the Navajo people.

The recent tribal election for the tribal presidency is another example of exercising Navajo sovereignty the president said, especially given the fact the process was carried out in a democratic, peaceful manner.

The various factions exercising their right to protest was a demonstration of tribal sovereignty, he said, and the subsequent election of a president and vice president.

"We operate a young

tribal government and we are changing processes that were written in the Navajo Nation Code to operate our government. Recent developments require that we change the law in accordance with the needs of the Navajo people," President Shelly said.

Tribal sovereignty was also executed recently when the Navajo Nation sat down at the table with Pueblo and Apache Nations in N.M. to formulate the tribal gaming compact with the state.

The N.M. Senate and House passed the bill, with many legislators lauding the Navajo Nation's decision to sit down with other tribes to hammer out an agreement that benefitted all. Because of this, Gov. Susana Martinez did not hesitate to sign off and approve the compact before forwarding it to the U.S. Department of Interior.

"We exercised Navajo sovereignty to pass a new gaming compact with the state of New Mexico," President Shelly said. "Now, we have an agreement in place for the next 22 years.

"Those gaming funds not only stimulate the economy, but they also provide direct services to the Navajo people. That's Navajo sovereignty," he added.

\$1.2 million in Navajo FET funds to be returned to Nation

The Navajo Nation Fuel Excise Tax continues to make a difference in improving the quality of life for tribal members.

Since taking office in 2011, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has pushed for the return of FET dollars that's earmarked for the state of Ariz.

For every gallon of gasoline purchased, 18 cents is taxed and deposited into the Navajo Nation Road Fund. For every gallon of diesel, 25 cents is taxed and deposited into the fund. The state receives 6 cents from every gallon of gas sold on the Nation.

FET funding is used for road improvement projects such as school bus routes, drainage crossings, access roads, maintenance, grading and many other enhancements.

After their inauguration, the Shelly-Jim administration faced 78 unfinished FET projects left behind by the previous administration.

On March 28, 2013, the Naa'bi'iyati' Committee placed a moratorium on new FET projects until the outstanding work was completed.

More than 60 of the projects have been completed since that time, allowing Navajo Division of Transportation to begin soliciting for new proposals.

"Completing the Fuel Excise Tax projects that were left in limbo was a priority for our administration," President Shelly said. "I'm happy to report that we've done our job and completed most of



SENATOR CARLYLE BEGAY

this work.

"Beyond that, we have been successful for the return of tribal FET dollars from the state of Arizona," he added.

President Shelly said servicing school bus routes has been the priority and that the new Huerfano bridge was testament to the work of his administration.

Over the past decade, FET dollars have averaged more than \$13 million annually on the Navajo Nation. From that amount, \$4 million goes to the state of Arizona, \$2 million is deposited into the Permanent Trust Fund, \$3 million is for the tribal road fund and \$3 million is utilized for road maintenance.

NDOT has followed the directives of President Shelly.

"President Shelly's directive was very clear: finish the outstanding FET projects," said Paulson Chaco, director of NDOT.

Chaco said his other priority was working with tribal legislators in the state legislature to begin recouping FET funds going into the state coffers.

"We are excited with the news that \$1.2 million will be returned to the Nation from Arizona for transportation infrastructure. This would not have been possible

without the help of Sen. Carlyle Begay," he said.

Sen. Begay said infrastructure development, especially transportation, has been a priority for him throughout his service in the Arizona Senate.

"Transportation is what binds our Nation together. It's what allows our kids to go to school, to go to work, to go to the hospital," Begay said.

The \$1.2 million in FET dollars returning to the Navajo Nation will equate to about \$750 per mile for unpaved school bus route maintenance, according to NDOT.

Begay said the \$9.1 billion budget packet that was passed by the Arizona Legislature this past session allowed for the return of \$1.2 million for the Navajo Nation.

"We'll continue to pursue policies that will enable us to become more self-determined and really look at avenues to retain greater economies of scale," Begay said. "Bringing more jobs, improving education, improving infrastructure.

"Much of that doesn't occur overnight. We'll continue making the small changes to move toward a more positive direction," he said.

NAÁTS'ÍILID

Nááts'íilid is the rainbow, or Navajo sovereignty in *Dine' bizaad*. The rainbow symbolizes the sovereignty that protects the Navajo Nation. It can be found on both the Great Seal of the Navajo Nation and the Navajo Nation Flag.

Beyond that, Navajo sovereignty is a way of life for the Navajo people and it must be protected at all costs. Many have tried to step over our tribal sovereignty, but we must ensure it is respected and maintained for the future of the Navajo Nation.

Dine' bizaad is Navajo sovereignty.

Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead

President Shelly breaks ground to officially start Phase I for economic development



President Ben Shelly broke ground for the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead before ending his term of service as the leader of the Navajo Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

THOREAU, N.M.—Phase I of the Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead is officially underway.

On the afternoon of May 8, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly broke ground in Thoreau for the proposed rail port that will import goods to the Four Corners and export agriculture, coal and oil throughout the country via the Intercontinental Railway.

The grand design of the three-phase project is to have a rail spur connecting Thoreau to Farmington. Thoreau's 380-acre industrial park will accommodate up to 20 companies through a transcontinental loading center.

"We have talked to New Mexico DOT and

they really like this idea," President Shelly said. "The New Mexico House and Senate are also supportive"

He said the storage area of one railcar is equivalent to four semi trailers.

Phase II of the project will involve construction of a four-lane highway on Highway 371. The middle of the roadway will be reserved for the railway, which will connect Farmington with Thoreau and then on to the Transcontinental Railway.

"The right of way will have to be widened from the 160-foot width it currently is today. The feasibility study has been done and we have an investor for the \$14 million cost on Phase I," President Shelly said.

New businesses will follow, he added, for

the benefit of Thoreau residents.

Elroy Drake of Blue Horse Energy, LLC, said it's been a long journey to get to the groundbreaking ceremony for the project. Blue Horse Energy was selected to develop, operate, finance and manage the operation of the railhead.

"Sovereignty. Indian tribes are sovereign. It's important to understand that," Drake said.

Sovereign authorities, such as taxation, played a significant role in providing the Navajo Nation self-determination for their future economic efforts, he said.

In 1985, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Navajo Nation's right to tax

companies doing business on the Nation paved the way for the Permanent Trust Fund and the Narbona Growth Fund, he added.

"I wrote the concept paper for the Permanent Trust Fund," Drake said. "It was capital resource creation through compounded rate of return. Now we have \$2.6 billion."

In 2013, the Navajo Nation established the Narbona Growth Fund, a for-profit company under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act, to execute business with states and foreign countries.

"The Narbona Growth Fund will be a holding company, so we can have subsidiaries under it. If a company wants to joint

venture with us, it can be done," Drake said.

He noted that the Nation would not be subject to federal, state or corporate taxes.

"The Farmington power plants are closing units. Oil prices are dropping. The Navajo Nation must look into other opportunities like partnering with BNSF," Drake said.

Pete Deswood, senior economic specialist with DED, said the Narbona Growth Fund is structured to allow the Navajo Nation to work with entities like BNSF.

"We have an investor waiting in the wings to help us with a bridge loan," Deswood said.

The Thoreau Industrial Park Railhead will not only establish the Navajo

Nation's master lease agreement, but it will also be a business multiplier and create new shops for repairs, mechanics and other businesses associated with the industry.

The transcontinental loading center will reduce shipping costs, spur investment opportunities in new and existing markets and reduce the carbon footprint left behind by the trucking industry.

"That's what this is all about. The opportunity is there," Deswood said.



Navajo Land Summit II focuses on land, tribal paradigm shift for progress



President Shelly encouraged the audience comprised of tribal employees, chapter officials, CLUP committee members and concerned citizens to take advantage of the knowledge shared during the 2nd Annual Navajo Land Summit. He said new innovations like the Navajo Land Title Data System will not only automate antiquated tribal processes, but also work in tandem with the Navajo Nation General Leasing Act, which was approved by the Interior Department in May 2014. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

TWIN ARROWS, Ariz.—Pay attention. Listen. Take notes.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly's advice to the more than 800 registered attendees of the 2nd Annual Navajo Nation Land Summit was straightforward.

"Please be sure you attend the sessions and take good notes to take back with you to your offices," President Shelly said. "There's a lot of good information that will be shared with you over the next few days.

For a second year, the Navajo Land Department provided information on the rigors of tribal land management and the numerous layers of data that will be available to Navajos and non-Navajos alike. Once again, the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort played host.

The Navajo Nation Land Title Data System, a new database with exceptional firewall protection and countless tiers of information providing real time data on everything from roads, infrastructure, forested areas, water wells and right-of-way areas, is the crown jewel of the Land Department.

President Shelly said, "This new database will automate services for chapter members, tribal officials, and the general public. People no longer have to travel to Window Rock to find information."

Data is literally at the fingertips of the general public, as the NLTDS will be accessible on desktops, iPads and even smart phones. The database works in tandem with the Navajo Nation General Leasing Act of

2013, which was enacted by the U.S. Department of the Interior in the summer of 2014.

"The Navajo Nation now has authority over all leases on the Navajo Nation, with the exception of minerals and right-of-ways. Those two are still under the jurisdiction of the BIA," President Shelly said.

The Navajo Nation is vastly different from the tribal government of 15 years past, he said, noting that technology savvy chapters are finding self-determination and transparency through online tools like the Woven Integrated Navajo Data System.

"Chapter officials attending the land summit will learn about creating the most effective Community Land Based Plans that serve

as blueprints to their communities," President Shelly said. "Gone are the days of building anywhere on the land.

"Everything is now recorded, monitored and protected to ensure we are getting the most of our tribal lands," he added.

Paradigm Shift

"The Beginning of a Paradigm Shift that Promotes Independence" was the theme of the summit. Attendees included chapter officials, council delegates, tribal enterprises, community land use planning committees, grazing officials and land boards.

Moroni Benally, executive director of the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, provided the welcome address and encouraged the audience to realize that

"land is life."

"This is an incredibly important summit, not just for what's happening now, but for the future of the Navajo Nation," Benally said. "The information you leave with becomes power."

He said it's the power to change existing laws and policies, the power to change the way communities are organized, the power to change the way people use land.

Dissecting the theme of the summit, Benally explained that a paradigm is a set of rules or guidelines, whether it's federal or tribal policies, school board directives or the Red Book that governs the Eastern Land Board.

Presently, a paradigm shift is occurring at DNR, he said, ever since he took over the reins to the division earlier this year.

"I began reviewing programmatic agreements with the federal government and realized that a lot of times, the Navajo Nation is in the back seat," Benally said.

Updating outdated policies can be done with a little hard work and persistence, he said, because federal regulations are not carved in stone.

"There's always creative ways around existing law. That's what I kept telling the federal officials and now, we are changing the criteria for selecting contractors that are working on the Navajo Nation," Benally said. "This did not require Navajo Nation Council or Congressional approval."

Benally challenged the attendees to take control of the land so cities, towns, schools, factories and

hospitals could be created, all which create a tax base to draw money from for services to the people.

"Listen carefully. This is the beginning. It all starts with land," he said.

Navajo Nation Strategic Plan

Arbin Mitchell, chief of staff for the Office of the Speaker, said the land is our Mother.

"As Navajo people, we have simple idea, a simple plan," Mitchell said. "There are four items in our strategic plan: *Nitsáhákees*, *Nahat'á*, *Iiná*, and *Sihasin*.

"(The plan) goes around and around. You plant it out, you think it out," he said.

The four concepts of thinking, planning, life and hope are the foundation for the Navajo Nation.

Mitchell said his decades of experience serving at the highest levels of the Navajo Nation Executive Branch has taught him that progress begins at the local level.

Citing Title 26 of the Navajo Nation Code, the Local Governance Act, he said certified chapters have an opportunity to issue their own business site or home site leases.

"Any plan that starts in Window Rock is hard to finish. If it starts from the community, it's not that hard to complete. Local empowerment is about doing for yourself," Mitchell said.

The Navajo Land Department is currently uploading documents to the Navajo Land Title Data System and they anticipate the automation process to be completed in the next year or two.

President Shelly funds more than \$12.5 million in supplemental appropriations for projects

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly has executed his line item veto authority on Legislation No. 0089-15, which was requesting more than \$19.7 million in supplemental funding from the Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance.

The legislation had many projects listed, from power line extensions, chapter house construction, capital improvement projects, summer youth employment, public employment program, zoo aviary, water line

extension, veterans and Navajo Transitional Energy Company.

President Shelly said, “When my administration first took office, the Unreserved, Undesignated Fund Balance was in a deficit of more than \$22 million.”

He said the administration worked diligently to replenish the UUFB and maintained the tribal policy of keeping the balance above the 10 percent threshold.

“Therefore, my administration will not leave office with a deficit

in the UUFB,” President Shelly said. “After careful consideration, I will exercise my line item veto authority.”

The Teesto Chapter request for \$2,922,425 to rebuild their chapter house has been vetoed. The \$1,500,000 request for summer youth employment has been vetoed. The \$1,500,000 for the public employment program has been vetoed. The request for \$1,000,000 for veterans has been vetoed.

The president noted that the Teesto Chapter

has an existing claim pending with Navajo Risk Management and said they need to proceed with the claim to resolve their funding needs.

“On behalf of Vice President Jim and I, we would like to express our appreciation to the Navajo Nation Council,” President Shelly said. “As we end our duties, the fact that our administration was fiscally responsible leaves us with great pride.”

A total of \$12,859,429.21 of projects were approved and funded by President Shelly.

President Shelly cuts ribbon for Shiprock Youth Center

SHIPROCK, N.M.—It’s for the kids.

This morning, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly attended the grand opening of the Shiprock Youth Center and snipped the ribbon to officially open the spacious facility to the general public.

On March 6, 2013, President Shelly broke ground for the new youth center. The grand opening comes almost two years to the day.

“Our Navajo kids need opportunities to do something constructive with their time. This new facility will give them the opportunity to play sports and have a safe and sanitary place to meet,” President Shelly said.

The \$6.6 million facility was funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Measuring 22,000 square feet, the center features rooms for art, games, learning, technology, media and the open ceiling gym.

The new facility is a welcome distraction for Navajo kids seeking recreational activities that don’t involve drug or alcohol abuse.

President Shelly said the war against drugs and alcohol on the Navajo Nation is a daily challenge.

“We need to teach our children about the dangers of these addictive lifestyles,” he said.

The new multipurpose building goes a long way toward addressing those dangers, in addition to replacing the dilapidated old facility, which is more than 50 years old.

Our kids are the future leaders of tomorrow, the president said, adding that more youth centers like the one in Shiprock need to be constructed at chapters across the Navajo Nation.

“First Lady and I have dedicated our lives to protecting Navajo children,” President Shelly said. “It started at our home with our kids and grandkids.

“Our homes are the first learning centers for our kids,” he added.

Thanking the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development, Navajo Housing Authority, Division of Dine’ Education and the Office of Dine Youth, President Shelly said it was a collaborative effort that made the project a reality.

Design and Engineering Services worked with Dyron Murphy for the architecture and design. Oakland-Arviso provided the construction.

President Shelly said the 2014 presidential election taught the Navajo people the most important lesson of all – the preservation of self-identity.

“(The election) taught us the importance of preserving our Navajo language and culture. I have great hope that this new facility will help us preserve those elements in our lives,” he said.

PRESIDENT SHELLY HONORS ALEX K. YAZZIE

FARMINGTON, N.M.—Thousands of people gathered.

The funeral services for fallen Navajo Police officer Alex K. Yazzie was emotional.

Police officers, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel and other first responders answered the call to pay final respect to one of their comrades.

They came from different states, different counties and different tribes. But the common thread was that they all worked to serve the public and the greater good.

Members from the U.S. Armed Forces were also in attendance, with many wearing the dress uniforms in honor of the departed.

A large American flag draped between two cranes fully extended marked the entrance to the Pinon Hill Community Church, which was filled to capacity. Police officers stood along the walls of church interior

in a protective circle.

For those unable to be seated, they stood in the back and watched the proceedings, while hundreds of other stood outside the church and waited.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly provided remarks.

He said the Nation is grieving and saddened by the loss of a tribal officer that gave his life to protect others.

“I would like to thank all the law enforcement officers that are here from the different agencies. Thank you for being with us and with the family,” President Shelly said.

Police officers face many challenges: stress and emotional toll, he said, adding that interaction with the public is usually met with a sharp eye and equally cutting words.

“The people you stop, they never have a nice word to say to (officers.) They chew on you, they

give you a hard time,” President Shelly said. “Domestic violence calls are the most dangerous.”

In spite of this, brave men and women don the uniform and protect their communities, he noted, with the understanding that they have only three to six seconds to react in dangerous situations.

Beyond those daily challenges, Navajo Police have to work with less. Whether it’s funding to purchase equipment, pay salaries or simple manpower, there’s not enough to cover the tremendous land base of the Navajo Nation, he added.

The times are changing.

“When I was growing up, I remember a non-Navajo, hungry or thirsty, another Navajo would pick him up, feed him and give him water,” President Shelly said. “What’s today’s world? Right now, if you’re in that situation, you get beat up or you get

killed.

“These are Navajos I’m talking about. Society is changing,” he added.

With the increase population and changing social values, President Shelly said more funding is needed from the federal, state and tribal governments to properly equip officers for changing times.

“We are shorthanded. Believe it or not, the Navajo Police officers that are here, one officer has to cover 1,282 persons. Farmington has more officers as whole, than the Navajo Police as a force,” President Shelly said.

Upon concluding his address, President Shelly presented the family of Alex K. Yazzie the Navajo Nation Flag and saluted his brave service and tragic sacrifice.



President Shelly praises Navajo Beef initiative, supports hard work of Navajo ranchers



President Shelly praised the Navajo Beef program with Labatt Food Service and said the superior grade beef is something Navajos all over the world can be proud of. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

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.

EAGLE AVIARY FUNDING



President Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly adopted Shellie, a golden eagle with an injured wing, upon taking office in 2011. Deeply moved by the plight of these majestic birds of prey, President Shelly resolved to fund an eagle aviary for the protection of the eagles. He said Navajo people, especially young ones, must learn about the conservation efforts for the golden eagles on the Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Continued from Page 1
public with an exhibit dedicated to conservation of the birds of prey.

“This week, I will sign off and approve legislation to fund more than \$400,000 for the construction of the eagle aviary. I have been very passionate about this project,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly will approve \$401,514 in supplemental funding to cover the remaining construction costs for the project.

In 2011, the Navajo Nation became the fourth Native American tribe in the U.S. to be permitted for an eagle aviary. The aviary measures 4,133 square feet and will be located in the center of the zoo.

Drinking ponds, storage, examination rooms, office space, an observation area and gallery are included in the conceptual design of the aviary. The eagle aviary area will have 2,533

square feet and will house up to 30 injured, non-releasable golden eagles.

President Shelly said, “The new aviary will provide live eagle feathers to the Navajo people through a program established by the Navajo Nation Zoo and Navajo Fish and Wildlife Department.”

David Mikesic, curator of the Navajo Nation Zoo, said naturally shed feathers from the golden eagles are going to be distributed in a legal manner pursuant to federal regulations for traditional purposes.

Not only will this expedite the process for eagle feathers, but it will also reduce illegal actions on eagles in the wild, he said.

The aviary will also

have a security system to monitor the eagles.

A federal grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided \$200,000 for initial design and engineering of the aviary in 2014. The total project cost is estimated at \$757,935.

President Shelly said the new aviary is a chance to teach Navajo people about eagle conservation, especially young children.

“The Navajo Nation will become known as an aviary tribe and we will continue to push for the protection of these magnificent birds. It is our hope that the new aviary will attract more visitors and hopefully, more funding.

“This is your zoo, take pride in it,” he added.

“I will approve legislation to fund more than \$400,000 for the construction of the aviary.”

Vice President Rex Lee Jim visits rural advanced education center



ZAPATA, Tex.— Advancing education and technology, Navajo Nation Vice President Rex Lee Jim met with Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, and officials from the Harvard Medical School Global Health Delivery

Program and the U.S. Economic Development Administration in Austin and Zapata County in Texas as he toured the Zapata County Technical and Advanced Education Center (ZTAC).

“The Navajo Nation is encouraged by the success of this facility. We envision a similar facility in the Navajo Nation focused on education, training, career development for Navajo people in healthcare education,” said Vice President Jim.

ZTAC opened its doors in 2011 and provides educational and training opportunities

for approximately 90 students who take college courses in English, history and math from Laredo Community College through videoconferencing and in-person with adjunct professors.

The vice president said a facility like this in the Navajo Nation would serve as a model for public, private and academic partnerships in community health and education and will result in job creation for Navajo citizens and better health outcomes for our most vulnerable citizens living off road on Navajo lands.

HONORING NAVAJO POLICE HERO ALEX K. YAZZIE



On March 26, 2015, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly honored Navajo Police Officer Alex K. Yazzie during funeral services at Pinon Hills Community Church in Farmington. Having served as a N.M. State Police officer for a period of four years, President Shelly said he had firsthand knowledge of the dangers law enforcement officers face on a daily basis. Officer Yazzie was lost in the line of duty on March 19, while protecting others from an armed gun man. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

Diné Binaat'áanii Bił Da'ínííshjí T'áá Náás Diné Yá Deílníísh

At the Navajo Nation Executive Branch, we continue to work on behalf of the Navajo Nation. It is our responsibility to carry out the administrative functions of the tribal government.

Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and Vice President Rex Lee Jim extend thanks and gratitude to our divisions, departments and programs for your loyal service on behalf of the Navajo people.

Our employees are the greatest natural resource for the Navajo Nation. By providing direct services to the Navajo people, you are at the seat of power for our tribal government.

We continue to work together with our partners at the Legislative and Judicial Branches. Together, we can achieve great things for our Navajo Nation. Ahe'hee!

Navajo Nation Divisions and Offices

Division of Community Development
Division of Dine' Education
Division of Economic Development
Division of Finance
Division of Public Safety
Division of General Services
Division of Health
Division of Human Resources
Division of Natural Resources
Division of Social Services
Division of Transportation

Navajo Environmental Protection Agency
Navajo Nation Gaming Regulatory Office
Navajo Nation Washington Office

Office of Miss Navajo Nation
Office of Management and Budget
Office of the President and Vice President
Office of the Navajo Tax Commission
Office of Telecommunication Regulatory Commission

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