



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Navajo Route 12 road improvements set to begin in Tsaile/Wheatfields with contract signing by the Nez-Lizer

TSAILE/WHEATFIELDS, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer had the honor of joining Tsaile Wheatfields Chapter President Zane James, Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr., and community members on Sunday at the Tsaile/Wheatfields Chapter, as they finalized a contract to allow the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority in coordination with the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation, to begin construction for the expansion of Navajo Route 12 in the community of Tsaile/Wheatfields.



PHOTO: President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer sign the final contract to begin the expansion of Navajo Route 12 in Tsaile/Wheatfields, Ariz. on Aug. 11, 2019.

The \$31 million project will expand the current narrow roadway to create shoulder lanes and graveling on both sides of a 10-mile stretch of N12 beginning north of Wheatfields Lake to the Tsaile intersection. This will allow commuters more room to maneuver in case of emergencies or to avoid collisions with livestock and other wildlife that are common on N12.

President Nez said the start of the project symbolizes a revival for the community, and to serve as an example for local empowerment for other communities.

“This project will be completed by our very own Navajo professionals through the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority,” said President Nez. “The community is exemplifying T’áá hwó’ ajít’éego through the practice of self-reliance and self-determination.”

Vice President Lizer spoke about the role that the improved road will play in the quality of life for the residents, and to help build the foundation for economic development for years to come.

“Buy Navajo, Buy Local is what we’ve been pushing since we took office. With this new project, the tax revenues will support our economy and jobs for our people,” stated Vice President Lizer.

The scope of work will also include the clearing of trees to be used as firewood for local resident in the upcoming winter season, replacement of two bridges, subgrade preparation, installation of drainage culverts, new asphalt pavement, striping, traffic signage and new right-of-way fencing.

Former Council Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye, who resigned as a member of the Navajo Nation Council in July, delivered a heartfelt message to give thanks to the community members, local officials, and the Nez-Lizer Administration for working together to get the project moving forward.

“This is your day. We have a vision for our community and this is part of fulfilling that long-term vision,” stated Nelson S. BeGaye, who represented the Tsaile/Wheatfields community on the Navajo Nation Council for over 16 years. “I had the privilege of knowing President Nez working with him on the Navajo Nation Council. We were both on the Budget and Finance Committee and we did a lot by working together.”

According to Navajo Nation Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith, the construction is anticipated to begin in late September or early October and last for over one year. The division will provide all construction management and monitoring activities.

Silversmith said the majority of funding for the project is from the Federal Highway Administration. Under the Nez-Lizer Administration, the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation and Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco worked to allocate funds from additional sources for the remaining cost, with the concurrence of the Navajo Nation Council’s Resources and Development Committee.

Tsaile/Wheatfields Chapter President Zane James praised past leadership and local residents for their years of persistence and determination in making this road improvement a top priority for the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation.

“This road project is a grassroots driven project, a testimony to the concept that if chapters are persistent enough, they can accomplish a task of this magnitude. This really started gaining momentum through a Road Safety Assessment that was led by Navajo DOT planner Marco Sells, in coordination with the Tsaile Wheatfields Chapter and many local, state and national transportation stakeholders in May 2012. Many times, we were told even by local leaders that it wasn’t possible, but we never gave up! This is only the beginning of greater things to come for our community,” Tsaile/Wheatfields Chapter President Zane James.

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