



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 2019

Nez-Lizer seek partnerships to build homes and provide carpentry training on the Navajo Nation



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Acting Director James D. Zwierlein, Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie, and the United Brotherhood of Carpenters officials at the International Training Center in Las Vegas, Nevada on Aug. 22, 2019.

LAS VEGAS, Nev. – On Thursday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were joined by Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Acting Director James D. Zwierlein, and Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie, as they met with officials with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and visited the group’s International Training Center in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters is one of the country’s largest building trades union with over a half-million members, including many members of the Navajo Nation. The union offers training and education through the Carpenters International Training Fund that is dedicated to job

training and certification programs to increase the number of construction professionals with over 200 training facilities throughout the country.

“We had a good discussion about partnering with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters to further explore opportunities to bring exceptional carpentry training to the Navajo Nation, which would lead to greater construction productivity and home building,” said President Nez.

“Thousands of our tribal members move off the Nation for training, education, and jobs, and they contribute to the success of non-Navajo companies and communities. We are trying to reverse that trend by creating training opportunities on the Navajo Nation and harnessing that potential for our own peoples’ benefit.”

President Nez also noted that there is currently legislation pending before the Standing Committees of the Navajo Nation Council, requesting to set aside \$50 million to create more scholarship opportunities, which should include funds for trade schools and vocational training as well.

“The primary purpose is to build our Nation through the Navajo principle and teaching of T’áá hwó’ ajít’éego, or self-reliance and self-determination, and to motivate the young Navajo population to help our communities prosper,” he added.

The group visited the 1.2 million square-foot “world-class” International Training Center that sits on approximately 27-acres of land and consists of over 15,000 members, 600 guest rooms, fitness center, dining facilities, 70 classrooms, and conference areas.

In reference to the veterans housing program under the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration, President Nez and Vice President Lizer have tasked Acting Director Zwierlein to develop a plan to establish a housing manufacturing facility on the Navajo Nation, to provide high-quality homes that are built to last, in accordance with international building codes. A partnership with the union would allow the administration to address the inadequate number of homes on the Nation for veterans and families, Zwierlein added.

“The Nez-Lizer Administration is taking a proactive approach to address the need for housing and at the same time, developing plans to provide industrial training for Navajo citizens, so they could have the skills and knowledge to develop and build the Navajo Nation,” said Vice President Lizer.

In May, the Office of the President and Vice President also hosted the 2019 Navajo Nation Housing Summit to bring together Navajo-owned residential contractors, sub-contractors, service providers, material suppliers, and other housing stakeholders to discuss issues such as the need for building codes, funding sources, and other matters to help build stronger communities across the Navajo Nation.

Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie said the partnership would allow the Nation to develop a new sector of business in the home building industry. The output of the products would allow the Navajo Nation to expand this modern workforce and enable the Nation to increase its Gross/Regional Domestic Product.

At the end of the meeting, the Nez-Lizer Administration, United Brotherhood of Carpenters General President Douglas J. McCarron, and Carpenters International Training Fund Executive Director Bill Irwin, agreed to move forward to construct the first traditional Navajo hogan prototype as a first step and to begin discussions to create a training center within the Navajo Nation.

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation, we extend our appreciation to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Carpenters International Training Fund for meeting with us to address housing and carpentry training on the Navajo Nation. We look forward to working together,” added President Nez.

The Office of the President and Vice President extended an invitation to the entities to visit the Navajo Nation in September to discuss the initiative further.

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