



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Nez and Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie celebrate the opening of St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School gymnasium and learning center



PHOTO: President Jonathan Nez speaking at the opening ceremony for the new St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School gymnasium and learning center in Thoreau, N.M. on Aug. 15, 2019.

THOREAU, N.M. – On Thursday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie had the honor of joining students, teachers, and school administrators in Thoreau, as the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School celebrated the opening of a new 18,000 square-foot gymnasium and learning center that will serve nearly 200 students.

“What was once a dream is now reality,” said St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School Executive Director Christopher Halter, who previously announced that the new facility would be dedicated to the Navajo Code Talkers in honor of their service and sacrifice.

Halter also thanked and recognized President Nez and Delegate Yazzie for their years of support for the project. During his term as Vice President of the Navajo Nation, President Nez joined the school officials and students for the groundbreaking ceremony last August.

“This new facility represents opportunity and hope for the students and for the entire community of Thoreau,” said President Nez, who also spoke about the importance of using the facility to inspire hope and resilience in Navajo youth through the use of a learning center that is also housed in the gymnasium.

Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, who represents the community of Thoreau as a member of the Navajo Nation Council, congratulated administrators and local officials that devoted years of hard work to withdraw land and secure monetary contributions for the project.

“I’m proud of our school officials, our students, the parents, and everyone who contributed to making this a success for the people of Thoreau,” Delegate Yazzie said. “Through our prayers and hard work, we are here today to celebrate this wonderful occasion for the students and parents of Thoreau.”

In July 2017, Navajo Land Department Executive Director Mike Halona notified the school that the Navajo Nation had approved the withdrawal of approximately five acres of land next to the school for the new gymnasium. Delegate Yazzie successfully advocated for a 25-year lease for the school gymnasium, which was approved by the Resources and Development Committee through resolution RDCD-125-17.



PHOTO: St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School gymnasium and learning center in Thoreau, N.M.

Four-star retired U.S. Army General Wesley K. Clark was a guest speaker at the opening ceremony, and gave special recognition and praise to the Navajo Code Talkers for their service in World War II.

Throughout the event, Principal Tracie Lee and other school officials paid special thanks and tribute to the late Ken Edmund, who was the driving force behind the development of the gymnasium for years. Unfortunately, Ken Edmund passed away in July prior to the official opening of the new gymnasium and learning center.

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School is located in Thoreau, N.M., located approximately 32-miles east of Gallup, N.M., and serves students from preschool through eighth grade. Approximately 95-percent of the students are members of the Navajo Nation.

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