



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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**Navajo Nation enters into MOU with San Juan
County to assess feasibility of a new railroad system**



PHOTO: (left to right) San Juan County, N.M. Commission Chairman Jack Fortner, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, and Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer signing the Memorandum of Understanding at San Juan College in Farmington, N.M. on Feb. 20, 2020.

FARMINGTON N.M. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer and San Juan County Commission Chairman Jack Fortner signed a Memorandum of Understanding during a ceremony held at the San Juan College School of Energy in Farmington, N.M. on Thursday, to

establish a framework of cooperation to assess the possible construction of a railroad system to promote and strengthen community and economic development projects in the Four Corners region, which includes the Navajo Nation. The event was hosted by Four Corners Economic Development, Inc.

“The Navajo Nation has great economic potential that can help build our Nation and contribute to the region as well. Through partnerships we can be an even bigger force. We are optimistic that this MOU will set us on a course to collaborate with San Juan County to develop a railroad project that creates many economic opportunities for the people of the Navajo Nation and San Juan County,” said President Nez.

Among other economic opportunities, President Nez noted that Navajo Agricultural Products Industry currently has over 70,000 acres of agricultural farmland near the Four Corners area, which may expand the enterprise’s opportunities to sell more products using the proposed railway system. He also said the Nation could potentially produce more foods using traditional seeds that are healthier for individuals and to strengthen the Nation’s food sovereignty.

“If we become a Nation that is able to grow our own food and feed our own people, that’s true sovereignty at the highest level,” said President Nez.

Vice President Lizer stated that with the closure of several power plants in the region and nearby states, the Navajo Nation needs to pursue new economic opportunities that provide jobs and revenue for Navajo families and the entire Nation. He said the Nation has many resources including the workforce, land, and other resources that could create many diverse businesses using the proposed railroad system.

While the MOU does not commit any funding, it does set the stage for the Navajo Nation and San Juan County to strategize and plan for the potential construction of the railroad that could expand as far as Interstate-40 through several Navajo communities.

“This partnership between the Navajo Nation and San Juan County is going to create an important milestone in the region’s efforts to develop a viable, diverse economy and go a long way in helping to strengthen our regional community and economic outlook moving forward.” said Four Corners Economic Development, Inc. CEO Arvin Trujillo.

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