



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:

Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 7, 2020

**Navajo Agricultural Products Industry continues to give
back to Navajo communities and strengthen tribal sovereignty**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez speaks to NAPI board members and employees at NAPI headquarters on Oct. 6, 2020.

FARMINGTON N.M. – On Tuesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Council Delegate Rickie Nez commended the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry Board members, CEO Dave Zeller, and all NAPI employees for their dedication and hard work to build the “Navajo Pride” brand through the production of agricultural products, which

ultimately strengthens the tribal sovereignty by providing food products, revenue, jobs, and many other resources and benefits for the Navajo Nation.

NAPI Board Chairman Peter Deswood, III presented a dividend payment of \$1 million to the Navajo Nation at the NAPI headquarters on Tuesday, which will be directed to the Nation's General Fund to help provide direct services and fund daily operations. Since the creation of the Navajo Nation's enterprise in 1970, NAPI has expanded its operations and production of agricultural products including beans, flour, corn, fruits, wheat, alfalfa, and many other products that are distributed and sold in many regions of the country.

"By practicing the teaching of our Navajo elders known as T'áá hwó'ajít'éego, or self-reliance and self-determination, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry is practicing true sovereignty. Through the work of all of NAPI's employees and their board members, we now have the ability to grow our own healthy foods and to feed our own people, and to bless others with these products as well — that's true sovereignty. We have the land, the resources, and the people to revitalize farming and food production on the Navajo Nation and NAPI is leading the way," said President Nez.

In March, NAPI also contributed \$1 million to help the Nation with COVID-19 response efforts to help communities and first responders. The enterprise has also contributed food, hay, and other resources to help communities across the Navajo Nation during the pandemic as well.

Vice President Lizer also thanked the NAPI board and employees for their hard work to expand and market the Navajo Pride brand on the local and national levels. He spoke about the economic potential that a proposed new railway system would create for NAPI and other businesses on the Navajo Nation, referring to an MOU that was signed in February to assess the feasibility and potential of constructing a railroad system to promote and strengthen community and economic development projects in the Four Corners region, including the Navajo Nation.

"The progress that NAPI has made over the years is remarkable and we are ready to continue supporting their efforts that will ultimately increase the number of jobs, revenue, and production using our own resources. Can you imagine the opportunities that a railway system would create for NAPI? The opportunities are endless. We are proud of the work that NAPI is doing for the Nation and especially for our communities and Navajo people," Vice President stated.

Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish also spoke and recognized the NAPI employees for their dedication and hard work on the ground, helping to make NAPI a success and a vital part of the Nation's communities.

NAPI CEO Dave Zeller said, "It was a great honor to have the Navajo Nation President, Vice President, and Honorable Rickie Nez, Chairperson of RDC come to NAPI and receive the \$1 million contribution, on behalf of the Navajo Nation. NAPI employees were able to hear the remarks and comments from Navajo Nation leadership, through the farm's two-way radio made it most meaningful. It is our employees who continue to work, delivering water, ensuring center pivots

are operating, and most important getting the seeds into the ground to strive for an abundant crop. NAPI's employees are what makes the company succeed."

###

For the latest news from the Office of the President and Vice President, please visit <http://www.opvp.navajo-nsn.gov/> or find us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.