



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 25, 2021

Construction of hogan-style home prototype proceeds to help address housing challenges



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Saturday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. joined Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Executive Director James Zwierlein, volunteers of the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters from Arizona and New Mexico, Executive Branch division directors, and the Office of the President and Vice President staff to help with the construction of the first hogan-style home prototype in Tse Bonito, NM, which will serve as a model for potential Navajo homeowners.

Under the leadership of Navajo Veterans Administration Director James Zwierlein, the Nation has developed partnerships with organizations specializing in housing development. The goal is to establish housing manufacturing facilities in various regions of the Navajo Nation to build homes for the Navajo people, including veterans.

“We know the conditions that some of our Navajo elders, veterans, and others live in, and we need to come together to support and volunteer to construct homes for them. Developing

Navajo-owned housing manufacturing facilities would cut down on the expenses and costs to build hogan-style homes. We know that the cost of building materials and transportation is at an all-time high due to the pandemic and other factors. By having regionalized housing manufacturing facilities that use our resources and by employing our Navajo people in the construction process, we can lower those costs and build more homes,” said President Nez.

The hogan-style home prototype is approximately 1200 square ft and consists of two bedrooms, one bathroom, a laundry room, and an open floor plan for the kitchen and living room. Other floor plans also include three, four, and five bedrooms.

“The lack of suitable and safe housing on the Navajo Nation is a serious issue. We are hoping that the housing manufacturing facilities will help improve our ability to rapidly manufacture safe and affordable housing. The Nation has many talented carpenters and compassionate individuals who are capable of building these homes. If we support awarding not only housing manufacturing contracts but other construction contracts to union signatory, Priority 1 contractors, then our Navajo people who are employed by these contractors will earn living wages to bring home to their families, making it more affordable for them to Buy Navajo, Buy Local. These ARPA dollars need to be fully invested into our local communities, thereby keeping as much of the funding on the Navajo Nation as possible. Together, we can make this a successful program.”

Also in attendance to assist with the hogan construction was Navajo Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith, Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie, and Navajo Nation Veterans Advisory Council Chairperson George Tolth.

On Friday, the 24th Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved legislation sponsored by Delegate Smith, which would amend the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund to increase the Navajo Veterans Administration’s capacity to implement the housing program.

“We need to push this initiative forward, and we need support to allocate funds through the American Rescue Plan Act to develop these housing manufacturing facilities. We also call upon our Navajo citizens to help such an important cause that impacts each of our communities,” added President Nez.

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