



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Nez-Lizer Administration finalizes lease for Navajo-owned company to offer quality lumber supplies on the Navajo Nation



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez signs a 25-year business site lease for NavaMill Lumber and Logging Company in Window Rock, Ariz. on May 27, 2021.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez was joined by Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr., Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie, and former Council Delegate Benjamin Bennett on Thursday, as he signed a business site lease to allow NavaMill Lumber and Logging Company, a Navajo-owned company, to use 18 acres of land and an existing warehouse facility located east of Sawmill Chapter to process and offer high-quality lumber for building materials to Navajo Nation residents and businesses.

NavaMill Lumber and Logging Company was established and founded by Aaron Sam, a member of the Navajo Nation, in 2018. According to the owner, the company will work with local chapters

and others to make lumber available for sale to Navajo customers including Navajo-owned businesses, farmers, chapters, and others to promote the “Buy Navajo, Buy Local” concept.

“This initiative was first presented to our office when I was the Vice President of the Navajo Nation, so to see it move forward to this point is a testament to the determination of everyone involved. I view this lease as an opportunity to support a Navajo entrepreneur that is striving to build a business that will create job opportunities for other Navajo people and provide much needed building materials while promoting Buy Navajo, Buy Local within our communities. We have a long list of projects across the Navajo Nation that require construction materials, but the constant rising costs of lumber and other materials make it very challenging. We are optimistic that NavaMill Lumber and Logging Company can also provide lower cost materials and keep those products here on the Navajo Nation for the benefit of Navajo people,” said President Nez.

Aaron Sam, who was joined by family members for the signing of the business site lease, also stated that the company will provide competitive prices to make materials affordable for Navajo families for housing improvements and new developments such as hogans, log cabins, and other structures. He added that the company will invest in their employees, in the forestry processing plant, and use environmentally friendly methods for operation.

Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr., who is a member of the Resources and Development Committee, also played an instrumental role in supporting the company as it worked to obtain the business site lease through the Division of Economic Development. He spoke about the benefits that the company will provide and the need to continue supporting Navajo businesses and entrepreneurs.

The development of the company and business site lease took several years to reach Thursday’s milestone. In June 2015, Aaron Sam worked with former Council Delegate Benjamin Bennett to gain the support of the Sawmill Chapter for the business through a resolution. The community of Sawmill only has one small grocery store that support a small number of jobs and revenue.

“I commend Aaron Sam and the community of Sawmill for their persistence. I understand that the process began years ago, but their determination and will have carried them to this point. As a business owner myself, I understand the red tape and challenges that it takes to establish and support a business. There are certainly more challenges ahead, but our administration is here to offer our support for Navajo entrepreneurs. Through Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie and his team, we are looking to step up those efforts as we turn more of our attention from the COVID-19 pandemic back to the Buy Navajo, Buy Local initiatives,” said Vice President Lizer.

On Tuesday, Vice President Lizer and Council Delegate Wilson Stewart Jr., also conducted a site visit to the former Navajo Forest Products Industry in Navajo, N.M. where they met with Red Lake Chapter officials and the Navajo Nation EPA to discuss clean-up efforts for the site.

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