



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Construction of new bridge provides safe route for Tsé Si áni community

TSÉ SI ÁNI, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, 24th Navajo Nation Council members, Navajo Area Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Director Gregory Mehojah, and Tsé Si áni Chapter officials and residents gathered on Wednesday, to celebrate the completion of the construction of a new two-lane concrete bridge along N9402 in the community of Tsé Si áni, located approximately 22-miles south of Window Rock, Ariz. The new bridge replaces a deteriorated wooden bridge that was constructed over 40 years ago and often created transportation challenges for local residents, school buses, first responders, and others.



PHOTO: The newly constructed two-lane concrete bridge along N9402 in the community of Tsé Si áni, Ariz.

In January 2020, the Navajo Division of Transportation successfully secured over \$5 million from the Federal Highway Administration for Tribal Transportation Program Bridge Program for the bridge project. However, the complete funding was not immediately available. Tsé Si áni Chapter officials and Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. worked with Fort Defiance Chapter and Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr. to reach an agreement to borrow a portion of funding that was allocated for a separate road project in Fort Defiance, to allow the construction of the new bridge in Tsé Si áni to proceed immediately.

The Resources and Development Committee approved the reallocation of the funds with the support of both communities. The road project for Fort Defiance will be fully funded with FY2022 funding from the Federal Highway Administration. In late 2020, President Nez finalized a contract with FNF Construction to complete the long-awaited project. Construction crews worked through the winter and completed the new bridge eight months ahead of schedule.

“With this project, the leaders of Tsé Si áni and Fort Defiance exemplify what can be accomplished when leaders and communities work together for the greater good of our people. They met and compromised when it came to the funding, and now there is a new bridge that will make

transportation safer for school buses, first responders, and all residents. I also thank the Navajo Department of Transportation for all of the great work they are doing in many communities to improve roads, bridges, and other transportation infrastructure. Congratulations to the Tsé Si áni community,” said President Nez.

Tsé Si áni Chapter President Yvonne S. Murphy also spoke about the history and challenges that community members have dealt with for many years and presented a certificate of appreciation to the Fort Defiance Chapter for their support and collaboration. Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. also thanked the Fort Defiance Chapter, Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr., and the Resources and Development Committee for support and approval of the reallocation of funds.

The construction work included the removal of the old bridge, grading, placement of aggregate base course with stabilization, installation of drainage structures, 5-span concrete bridge, wire-enclosed riprap protection for abutments and channel, and other miscellaneous construction.

“I extend my appreciation to President Nez, Vice President Lizer, Council Delegates, Tsé Si áni and Fort Defiance Chapters, FCF Construction, and our team at Navajo Division of Transportation for driving this project to completion. It was a team effort and everyone contributed to the successful outcome,” said Navajo Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith.

Council Delegate Rickie Nez, Council Delegate Mark Freeland, Council Delegate Pernell Halona, former Council Delegate Tim Goodluck, and former Navajo Area BIA Regional Director Sharon Pinto, were also in attendance. Lupton Valley Church Pastor Ronnie Yazzie offered a blessing for the new bridge prior to the ribbon cutting.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks the Navajo Division of Transportation, Tsé Si áni Chapter, Council Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr., Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr., FCF Construction, Federal Highway Administration Federal Lands Highway Office of Tribal Transportation, Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Region Branch of Transportation, Wilson and Company, Inc., and all of the subcontractors and suppliers who made the project a success for the community of Tsé Si áni.



PHOTO: Navajo Nation leaders and community members hold a ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly constructed two-lane concrete bridge along N9402 in the community of Tsé Si áni, Ariz. on Sept. 1, 2021.

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