



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

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**Manuelito residents and leaders celebrate
the completion of new bridge and road repairs**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish with U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján, Manuelito Chapter and McKinley County officials, Navajo Area BIA Regional Director Gregory Mehojah, New Mexico State Reps. Patricia Lundstrom and D. Wonda Johnson at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Manuelito Canyon Bridge in Manuelito, N.M. on Sept. 3, 2021.

MANUELITO, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish joined U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), Manuelito Chapter President Milton Davis, McKinley County Commission Chairman Billy Moore, New Mexico State Reps. Patricia Lundstrom and D. Wonda Johnson, Navajo Area Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Director Gregory Mehojah, and local residents on Friday, to celebrate the completion of the repair and replacement of the Manuelito Canyon Bridge that serves many Navajo residents.

The event was hosted by McKinley County, in coordination with Manuelito Chapter, to offer their appreciation to the Navajo Division of Transportation, Sen. Luján, New Mexico legislators, New Mexico Department of Transportation, and others who helped to secure the right-of-way approval and funding for the project, which was completed last month. The previous bridge was washed out due to heavy rainfall in 2010, requiring many residents to use alternative routes.

“We are very happy for the community of Manuelito, for their local leaders and most of all, the families who reside here. It took the efforts and hard work of Sen. Luján, New Mexico state leaders and agencies, McKinley County, and the strong advocacy of Manuelito Chapter leaders to get the approvals, funding, and support to construct the new bridge. The roadway is now accessible for families, students, first responders, and many others who rely on the bridge to commute on a daily basis. Congratulations to the Manuelito community!” said President Nez.

Sen. Luján spoke about the challenges associated with gaining approval for the easements and other requirements to move the project forward and thanked all of the leaders for their support. Following the washout in 2021, Sen. Luján hosted several meetings with representatives from McKinley County, FEMA, the Navajo Nation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Department of Transportation to discuss repairing the Manuelito Bridge.

“Since the Manuelito Canyon Bridge was washed out, my office worked with state, tribal, and federal leaders to work together to reconstruct this bridge — a project a decade in the making. Today, the bridge is now open!” stated Sen. Luján.

Construction of the project began in December 2019 with an overall cost of \$3.2 million from various funding sources including funds secured by McKinley County and state leaders and from the Navajo Nation’s roads funds. Navajo Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith was also in attendance to offer his support and to congratulate the Manuelito community and residents.

Vice President Lizer stated, “We thank everyone who laid their hands to this great work. It’s wonderful to see so many entities working together to bring this project to fruition. We are seeing progress with many road and infrastructure projects across the Navajo Nation. Thank you to everyone who was involved in this successful effort to make our transportation system stronger and more beneficial for everyone.”

This week, the Navajo Nation also celebrated the completion of a newly-constructed two-lane concrete bridge along N9402 in the community of Tsé Si áni, Ariz. located approximately 22-miles south of Window Rock, Ariz. The Navajo Division of Transportation continues to make progress on road and bridge projects in many other communities on the Navajo Nation.

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