



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

Timothy Benally, Public Information Officer
(928) 871-7000

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 11, 2022

**President Nez and Coconino County officials finalize a
five-year MOU for transportation priorities and partnerships**



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Coconino County Board of Supervisors Chair Matt Ryan following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding in Flagstaff, Ariz. on Feb. 11, 2022.

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Coconino County Board of Supervisors Chair Matt Ryan signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Flagstaff, Ariz. on Friday, establishing the framework for the Navajo Nation Division of Transportation and Coconino County to collaborate on road maintenance, repairs, and other transportation initiatives that are mutually beneficial. The MOU was signed with members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council and Coconino County Board of Supervisors in attendance.

“This MOU lays the foundation for future partnerships and for the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Law passed by Congress and signed by President Biden. This partnership is crucial to leverage funding and resources to improve and maintain roadways on the Navajo Nation, within Coconino County.

We have to work hard to make this MOU effective in the long-term. I appreciate the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, Navajo Nation Division of Transportation Director Garret Silversmith, the 24th Navajo Nation Council, and all of the road work crews,” said President Nez.

There are over 1,700 miles of dirt and paved roadways within Coconino County and the Navajo Nation. The MOU also establishes a work group composed of representatives to carry out the objectives, which includes planning, repairing, and improving existing school bus routes.

NDOT Director Garret Silversmith stated, "Navajo Division of Transportation appreciates the re-establishment and continuation of this MOU with Coconino County for another five years. This renewed MOU is the result of a continued partnership and coordination of President Nez, 24th Navajo Nation Council, and the leadership of the County and the Board of Supervisors. The previous MOU produced successful results that included the completion of transportation improvement projects, and the incorporation of safety aspects into each of these ventures. Thank you, Navajo Nation, County officials, and community members."

“Coconino County values its important partnership with the Navajo Nation. On behalf of the Coconino County Board of Supervisors, I want to thank President Nez and the Navajo Nation Council for their continued commitment to partnerships with the County, especially when it comes to maintenance and improvement of our roads. Roads get our children to school, our families together with their elders, and connects to the market and jobs. This MOU will allow Coconino County to continue advancing important transportation projects with the Navajo Nation and promote continued collaboration between our governments. We thank and congratulate President Nez on signing and renewing this important agreement,” said Coconino County Board of Supervisors Chair Matt Ryan.

Council Delegate Paul Begay, who serves as a member of the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee and represents chapters within Coconino County, recalled several school buses getting stuck along N21 after heavy rain or snowfall in the western portion of the Navajo Nation, which led to costly bus repairs for school districts. Council Delegates Thomas Walker, Jr. and Amber Kanazbah Crotty were also in attendance to show their support for the partnership.

“This successful partnership with the Navajo Nation remains a vital priority. I am so thankful for the extension of the MOU with the Navajo Nation for another five years. The signing of this agreement allows the county to continue to improve 286 miles of school bus routes, which are the main roads on Western Navajo. Thank you to Navajo Nation President Nez, the Navajo Nation Council, and the Nation for their important partnership on this MOU,” stated Coconino County Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Lena Fowler.

President Nez joined the county officials in recognizing and honoring the Coconino County Navajo Roads Team that maintains and improves roadways on a daily basis. The team members include Carlos Paddock, Ernest Graymountain, Jeremiah Sangster, Jimmie Honanie, and Juan Williams.

###

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.