



The Navajo Nation
Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 22, 2022

**Mariano Lake community sees progress with new
telecommunications tower and N11 road pavement and bridge**

MARIANO LAKE, N.M. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie joined Mariano Lake Chapter officials to celebrate the completion of a new telecommunications tower that will provide much-needed cell phone and internet access for Navajo families, students, and first responders in the region. The celebration, hosted by Cellular One, also included a blessing for the new tower provided by local pastor Del Ray Yazzie.



Construction of the new tower was completed this past spring, which now provides Cellular One phone service and will soon provide additional mobile services through AT&T and FirstNet for local residents and first responders. In addition, Sacred Wind Communications will soon provide broadband services through the new tower. Smith Bagley, Inc., owner of Cellular One, Chief Operating Officer Guy Turley and Chief Communications Officer Nicole McDaniel provided an overview of the project and also expressed their appreciation to the Navajo Nation for partnering to develop and construct the new tower.

President Nez thanked the Mariano Chapter officials for laying the groundwork for many of the ongoing improvements that are happening in the community and for helping their community members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’ve gone through some very challenging times over the past two years. We’ve lost loved ones to COVID-19, but through our prayers and support for one another we continue to persevere and demonstrate our resilience as Diné people. The leadership of Mariano Chapter has done an outstanding job helping their community members throughout the pandemic and at the same

time, they continue to push these types of projects to help deliver the critical services that our people need. This is about nation building, so that more of our young people can return home once we have more basic utilities, housing, roads, and other improvements,” said President Nez.

Mariano Chapter President Jay R. DeGroat and Community Services Coordinator Leandra K. James were also in attendance to offer their support. Chapter President DeGroat credited late Chapter Vice President Henry Thompson Begay, who recently passed away, for having the vision that led to many improvements for the community. He also thanked President Nez for visiting Mariano Lake on several occasions and recalled when President Nez signed a resolution that approved summer youth employment funding to hire student workers.

“I remember when President Nez joined us at the chapter house here to sign legislation for summer youth employment. It was such a great experience for our students to see that in person,” said Chapter President DeGroat, who also spoke about the ongoing road improvements for the N11 route in Mariano Lake that will provide a much safer route for students that attend classes at Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, N.M.

Following the event, President Nez also took time to thank Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority workers who are paving N11 north of Mariano Lake and constructing a new bridge. On Jan. 22, President Nez signed off on the construction contract to allow NECA to begin the first phase of the road project, which includes new pavement. The project includes grading, subgrade treatment, drainage structures, one bridge, fencing, cattle guards, gates, and new signage. The roadway accommodates an average of 250 vehicles per day.



Additionally, in August of last year the Navajo Division of Transportation and CB Emulsion completed construction of road improvements for N-7113, located nearly three miles south of Mariano Lake Chapter, which included subgrade preparation, road reconditioning, a three-inch gravel base, double course seal, two culvert installations and signage along the route.

“This progress that we are seeing in Mariano Lake is the result of years of hard work and commitment from the chapter officials and residents working together to make our vision a reality. This is being done for the young students, parents, families, and elders – to improve their quality of life and build a stronger community for the generations to come,” said Delegate Yazzie.

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