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\$7 million Beacon Bisti Water Project breaks ground, will bring clean water to 6,800 Diné residents in 8 communities

COYOTE CANYON, N.M. – With the ground-breaking of the \$7 million Beacon Bisti Water Project, Rita Capitan envisions a brighter future for her community.

Reclamation with the Navajo Nation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the City of Gallup.

“We have been meeting on this for several years now,” said Capitan, president of the Crownpoint Chapter. “I remember calling and deciding on our organization’s name, and that’s where we came up with Beacon Bisti.”

Communities from Coyote Canyon to Crownpoint and Lake Valley gathered here Oct. 25 for the 46-mile water pipeline’s groundbreaking.

When completed by Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, the water project, known as BBN9, will bring clean water to about 6,800 Diné residents who live in Coyote Canyon, Tse’ii’ah, Nahodishgish, Crownpoint, Little Water, Becenti, White Rock and Lake Valley.

The Beacon Bisti Lateral is part of the larger Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, said Division of Natural Resources Director Mike Halona. The project is a collaboration led by the Bureau of



The the \$7 million Beacon Bisti Water Project broke ground on Oct. 25. The project will deliver water to 6,800 Navajo residents in eight communities in the Eastern Navajo Agency.

“The goal was to bring about 37,000-acre-feet of water in,” Halona said.

In a letter from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren read by Office of the President Eastern Agency Representative Shar Soce, he said it is an exciting time for chapters to receive these new water infrastructure projects.

“These communities now have the potential to grow and develop in line with sustainable models,” he wrote. “I encourage all of our people to participate in the chapters’ planning efforts to maximize access to water.”

The President was unable to attend the groundbreaking because he was at the Gila River Indian Community. He attended President Joe Biden’s visit for his announcement of his apology for the treatment of Native children in federally run Indian boarding schools.

Navajo Nation Controller Sean McCabe said the Navajo Nation should turn money into a resource like water, “and that’s what we’re here to do.”

“When you think about the water that we’re bringing, the land that we’re using, these are all resources that we manage and care for, and are there for the use of the people,” McCabe said. “Money’s no different. It’s just another resource the people should use and have to continue to push forward.”

The President said the project would not have been possible without the dedication of past leadership. Thanks to support from community consent and contractors Souder Miller, NECA, NTUA and IHS,

the \$7 million pipeline project will soon be a reality.

“The Navajo Department of Water Resources’ work to secure our water rights and bring water to our communities is already transforming lives,” the President said.

Bart Deming, construction engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation’s Interior Region 7 – Upper Colorado Basin, acknowledged the significance of the project.

“Water is life,” Deming said. “It is vital to everything that we do. It is long overdue for the Navajo people to have clean, reliable, sustainable drinking water.”

The groundbreaking included a traditional blessing ceremony led by cultural healer Richard Anderson, Sr. He said community voices are important in leadership.

The new pipeline had been ceremonially honored with leadership songs, white cornmeal and corn pollen.

“This bundle is attached to the water line,” he said.

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Crownpoint Chapter President Rita Capitan says communities have waited years for the project to break ground.