

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

Division of Community Development Newsletter

June 2021

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## Did You Know...

The Navajo terms for some common everyday objects were borrowed from Spanish. For example: **gold**. In Spanish, it is **oro**. In Navajo, **oolaa**



## Events:

**June: Ya'iishyaashchili - "Planting of Early Crops"**

June 20: Father's Day

June 21: Summer Solstice

**July: Ya'iishjaashtsoh - "Planting of Late Crops"**

July 4: Independence Day

July 5: Independence Day (Observed)

## SIX NEW MEXICO CHAPTERS PRESENT TO THE NEW MEXICO TIF BOARD AND SECURE OVER \$ 7.6 MILLION IN TRIBAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUND (TIF) PROJECT FUNDING



June 18, 2021—The New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Fund board has awarded over \$26 million in funding across 9 tribal communities in New Mexico. The funds were approved by the Tribal Infrastructure Act of 2005, which recognizes that many of New Mexico's tribal communities lack basic infrastructure, resulting in poor health, social and economic conditions. The TIF board thoroughly evaluates and scores each project proposal from tribal communities to ensure that critical needs for the projects are established. The chapters submitted their proposal via the New Mexico TIF web portal in March 2021. Then, projects were reviewed and ranked by the TIF board. This year the TIF board selected top 17 project proposals to present their projects through a virtual Zoom TIF board meeting on June 18, 2021.

## June 2021

The presenters included the Mescalero Apache Tribe, Santa Ana Pueblo, Tse'ii'ahi' (Standing Rock) Chapter, Ohkay Owingeh, Newcomb Chapter, San Ildefonso Pueblo, Tooh Haltsooi (Sheep Springs) Chapter, Taos Pueblo, To'hajiilee Chapter, Santa Clara Pueblo, Rock Springs Chapter, Laguna Pueblo, Crownpoint Chapter and Santo Domingo Pueblo. After the presentations, the TIF board voted to approve the 2021 TIF projects and funding amounts. Fourteen of the projects were fully funded and the fifteenth project was partially funded with the remainder of the TIF funds available.

The following Navajo Navajo projects were funded this year: Tse'ii'ahi' (Standing Rock) Chapter will receive \$467,865 for the Tse'ii'ahi' Water Extensions. Mr. Johnny Johnson, Chapter President presented the proposed project for the community.

Newcomb Chapter will receive \$369,528 for Regional San Juan Lateral Water Project (NGWSP) Newcomb and Toadlena/Two Grey Hills Connection. Ms. Joni Laphie, Administrative Assistant presented the proposed project for the community.

Tooh Haltsooi (Sheep Springs) Chapter, will receive \$315,078 for the Sheep Springs Connection of the Regional San Juan Lateral Water Project (NGWSP). Mr. Kevin Begay, Community Service Coordinator presented the proposed project for the community.

Rock Springs Chapter will receive \$281,516 for the Rock Springs and Tsayatoh Chapters - Navajo Code Talkers Lateral (NGWSP). Mr. Jasper Long, Chapter Vice-President presented the proposed project for the community.

Crownpoint Chapter will receive \$2,613,482 for the Regional Beacon Bisti, N9 Lateral (NGWSP Reach 10.1/2/3). Ms. Rita Capitan, Chapter President presented the proposed project for the Crownpoint community.

To'hajiilee Chapter will receive \$3,568,180.35 for the construction of the Albuquerque Water Supply Line Project. Ms. Sherrilyn Apache, Community Service Coordinator presented the proposed project for the community.

All six Chapters worked with the Water Management Branch of the Department of Water Management, Souder, Miller and Associates on the preparation of presentations.

The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department Reported that "This investment builds on the historic infrastructure investments in tribal communities made under the Lujan Grisham Administration, with the administration having invested more than \$240 million for critical infrastructure projects to bring running water, electricity, and broadband to tribal communities throughout New Mexico, orders of magnitude more than any prior state administration.

This year's TIF awards is the highest amount of funding going out to tribal communities since the TIF program was established."

The Division of Community Development congratulates Tse'ii'ahi' (Standing Rock), Newcomb, Tooh Haltsooi (Sheep Springs), Rock Springs, To'hajiilee, and Crownpoint Chapters on TIF Funding.

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3A0bLg3>

# DCD Presents Proposed Plan of Operations Amendments to RDC



DCD met with the Resources and Development Committee at Twin Arrows on June 28 and 29 to present proposed amendments to the DCD plan of operations. The meeting was held with adherence to Navajo Nation policies on social distancing and masking. The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise sponsored the meeting and provided food and refreshments during the two-day session. The Casino allowed a partial opening for the meeting but the dark empty playing areas and dining areas were a reminder that the Navajo Nation is still under shutdown orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it was refreshing to see the Casino doors open again. With legislation 0104-21 going through the legislative process, its enactment could allow the Casino to re-open its doors to the public again soon.

On the first day, DCD Executive Director Pearl Yellowman provided an overview of DCD's efforts to update its plan of operation in order to better deal with the large amounts of projects that would be coming through the division with ARPA funding and also to better position itself for new challenges and action items, such as creation of the new Solid Waste Department and Addressing Authority Department. She also explained that the ASC office would be returning to the 5 agency model and that sometimes, conflict resolution activities at chapters can be very time consuming for the ASC staff.

Next up was CPMD Acting Department Manager, James Adakai, who explained that they are working to improve the flow of information in order to prepare for the surge of projects that will come with ARPA funding. Mr. Adakai explained that project management capacity is a major factor in how quickly projects get completed. With the large amount of ARPA projects that will be coming in, the department will need to greatly expand its project management capacity to keep up with the amount of projects and will need funding support. Senior Programs & Projects Specialist, Andy Thomas also provided an overview of the project development process from planning to funding to construction. He also discussed how CPMD works with the chapters to make sure all necessary documentation is in place and all requisite studies have been completed.



Sonlatsa Jim-Martin, ASC Department Manager, did the next presentation and explained some of the issues the department faced and some action items that they were pursuing including moving back to a five agency model. Ms. Jim-Martin also discussed direct local supervision and some work sessions they have done with the Commission on Navajo Government Development in conjunction with the DOJ Chapter Unit to provide information on chapter governance structure and history. The meeting went into recess for the day after ASC's presentation.

On the second day, CHID Department Manager Patrick Dalgai went through the CHID presentation and spoke on changes to the plan of operation to update program information and clarify services they provide to the Navajo Nation government and the public.

Dr. Yellowman and Ms. Jim-Martin returned to speak on the need for a solid waste management plan and an office that would oversee those activities. The former Solid Waste Management Program was abolished in 2016 with no successor program identified to continue solid waste management activities. The new program would fill that role and continue to work with the Navajo Nation EPA and other entities to get a viable solid waste disposal and recycling system established.

MC Baldwin, GIS/Rural Addressing Coordinator, next did the presentation for the proposed Addressing Authority department. Mr. Baldwin explained that historically, the program has been underfunded and progress in addressing every structure on the Navajo Nation has been slow as a result. However, he explained that there are plans underway to secure some ARPA funding to complete the addressing process and set the Addressing Authority department up to do address maintenance activities to keep up with construction of new structures and keep the addressing continuously updated.

Dr. Yellowman provided closing remarks and reiterated the need for the proposed changes that were presented and thanked the RDC for the opportunity to present. Members of the RDC also provided insightful questions and comments and recommended a follow-up meeting to get updates on progress.

# Eight Powerline Projects Completed



**NAVAJO MOUNTAIN** - YEAR 2 @ \$1,041,666.66 Rainbow Plateau Project / Project Completed: June 03, 2021. The project served 17 homes. Construction was completed by NTUA.



**BIRDSPRINGS** - Year 1 @ \$84,105.00 / Year 2 @ \$649,228.00 Powerline Ext. Phase III / Project Completed: June 10, 2021. The project served 12 homes. Construction was completed by NTUA.



**NAGEEZI** - NM Capital Outlay Funds @ \$90,000.00 Beyale Camp Powerline Ext. / Project Completed: June 11, 2021. The project served 3 homes. Construction was completed by Jemez Mountain Electric COOP.

**TSELANI/ COTTONWOOD** - Year 2 @ \$265,000.00 Powerline Est. Phase I, II, & Scattered / Project Completed May 13, 2021.

The project completed the "ROW" for the powerline and served 3 homes.

The rest of the 18 homes will be served by a grant from CDBG.



**KAIBETO** - Year 1 @ \$219,187.50 / Year 2 @ \$460,812.50 Powerline / Project Completed: May 27, 2021. The project served 23 homes. The project final inspection was completed by Delvin Wauneka.

**KIN DAH LICHII** - Year 2 @ \$366,873.00 Upper Woodsprings Powerline Ext. / Project Completed: June 22, 2021. The project served 8 homes. Construction was completed by NTUA.

**HOUCK** - Year 1 @ \$80,000.00 / Year 2 @ \$273,278.00 Powerline Ext. / Project Completed: May 06, 2021. The project served 6 homes. Construction was completed by NTUA.

**KIN DAH LICHII** - Year 2 @ \$371,729.00 Single Powerline Ext. / Project Completed: May 04, 2021. The project served 9 homes. Construction was completed by NTUA.



June 2021

# Heavy Equipment Updates



## June Deliveries

June 10 - Cameron Chapter: Backhoe

June 10 - Coalmine Canyon Chapter: Skidsteer

June 15 - Whitehorse Lake Chapter: Backhoe

June 16 - Round Rock Chapter: Motor Grader

June 16 - Rough Rock Chapter: Motor Grader

June 21 - Manuelito Chapter: Motor Grader

June 22 - Iyanbito Chapter: Skid Steer

June 22 - Blue Gap Chapter: Skid Steer

June 22 - Coyote Canyon Chapter: Skid Steer

June 22 Rock Springs Chapter: Tractor

June 29 - Ojo Encino Chapter: Backhoe

June 29 Smith Lake: Heavy Duty Truck

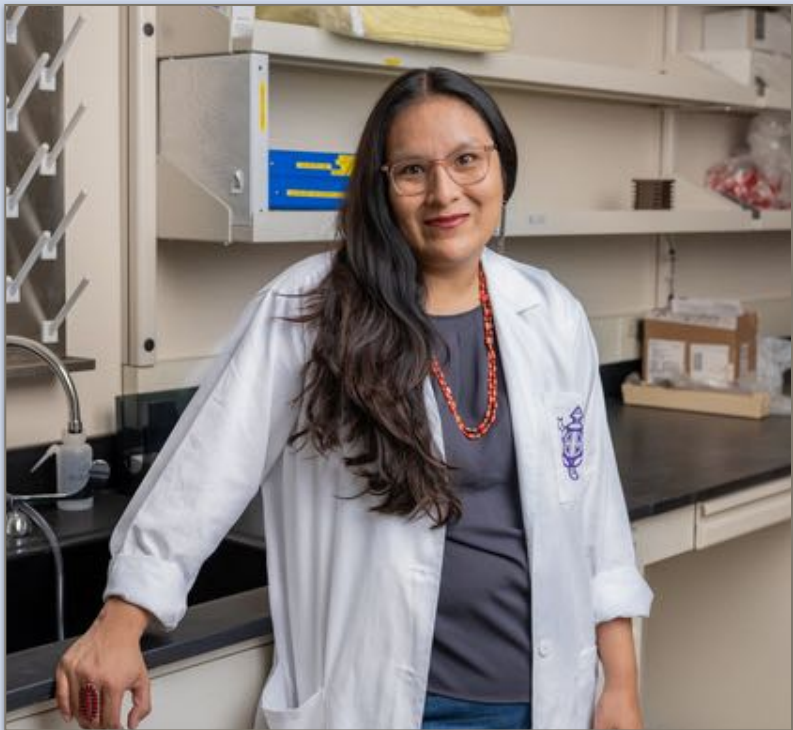
June 30 - Kin Dah Lichii Chapter: Backhoe

June 30 - Tolani Lake Chapter: Backhoe



June 2021

# Training the next generation of Indigenous data scientists



By Sabrina Imbler, NY Times

When Krystal Tsosie introduces her genomics students to the concept of biocommercialism — the extraction of biological resources from Indigenous communities without benefit — she always uses the same example: the Human Genome Diversity Project.

The researchers who conceived of the project in the 1990s aimed to collect samples from human populations around the world, with particular emphasis on what they deemed “vanishing” Indigenous populations. “A lot of that information is now publicly available to advance the course of science,” said Tsosie, a genetics researcher at Vanderbilt University and a member of the Navajo Nation. “But who accesses these data sets?”

Tsosie, answering her own question, cited as examples Ancestry and 23andMe, two companies that commercialize and profit from Indigenous genomic data sourced without consent from people in Central and South America. In 2018, 23andMe sold access to its database of digital sequence information to GlaxoSmithKline for \$300 million. In 2020, 23andMe licensed a drug compound it developed from its trove of genetic information. Accordingly, Tsosie helped to organize IndigiData, a four-day remote workshop that took place for the first time in June. The workshop’s core goal was to introduce data science skills to undergraduates and graduates, and the definition of data was expansive, from the genetic sequences of soil microbiomes to traditional worldviews.

“If you can’t view oral history as data, as something that can be parsed and archived and used to predict things, then you’re missing out on a whole data set,” said Keolu Fox, a Native Hawaiian geneticist at the University of California, San Diego, who presented at the workshop.

The workshop centered on Indigenous data sovereignty, the idea that nations have the right to govern the collection, ownership and application of their own data. The movement pushes back on a long history of how researchers have taken Native data without permission, often stigmatizing the communities who participated or disregarding their customs surrounding the dead.

In one infamous example, an Arizona State University researcher studying the high rates of diabetes in the Havasupai Tribe, who live near the Grand Canyon, gave other researchers access to the samples without the tribe’s consent. When the Havasupai learned of this, they went to court, won their samples back and banished the university from their borders.

“Why are we over here spitting in tubes, giving our genomes away when we know that type of information can be used to make pharmaceutical drugs?” Fox asked. “Why not position ourselves so we’re in control of a treasure chest of data?”

## Organizing the conference

Tsosie, one of the leaders of the conference, started her career in cancer biology. But she realized early on that any success she might have developing a cancer therapy drug might never reach her own community. Tsosie’s father worked for the Phoenix Indian Medical Center in Arizona for 42 years, and she remembered how difficult it was for her tribal community to access specialty services.

“What am I doing in cancer biology?” Tsosie remembered thinking. She switched her academic focus and is now a graduate student in genomics and health disparities.

In 2012, Tsosie met Joseph M. Yracheta, who is of the P’urhepecha and Raramuri peoples, through the Summer Internship for Indigenous Peoples in Genomics, a workshop that trains researchers in genetic science. They started talking about data ethics, and a few years later Matt Anderson, a microbiologist at Ohio State University and a descendant of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, joined the conversation. The organizers recognized that there were limited resources to train Indigenous people how to think about and interpret their data.

In January, with funding from the Amgen Foundation and the National Science Foundation, the workshop began to take shape. The participants hail from Indigenous communities across the country and internationally, and have wide-ranging research interests, such as archaeology and pollinators. “What ties us together is colonialism,” Fox said, and laughed.

### **The environmental microbiome**

The theme of the inaugural conference was environmental microbiomes, which the organizers felt would resonate with participants. An individual’s microbiomes — the communities of microorganisms that live inside and on a person — is deeply intertwined with the surroundings. For instance, the composition of the gut microbiome can be altered by diet as well as air pollution.

In recent years, the “vanishing” rhetoric of the Human Genome Diversity Project has shifted to refer to the “vanishing” microbiome of traditional communities, Anderson said. “Except instead of people, they’re talking about the microbes associated with people,” he said. One 2018 article in the journal *Science* emphasized the need to collect samples from “traditional peoples in developing countries” in order “to capture and preserve the human microbiota while it still exists.”

Yracheta, who is the managing director of the Native BioData Consortium — the first biobank in the U.S. led by Indigenous scientists and tribal members — believes the microbiome will be one of the next targeted data sets that Western scientists may seek from Indigenous communities. In Tanzania, the Hadza people have been studied extensively for the “richness and biodiversity” of their gut microbiota.

“Native DNA is so sought after that people are looking for proxy data, and one of the big proxy data is the microbiome,” Yracheta said. “If you’re a Native person, you have to consider all these variables if you want to protect your people and your culture.” In a presentation at the conference, Joslynn Lee, a member of the Navajo, Laguna Pueblo and Acoma Pueblo nations and a biochemist at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, spoke about her experience tracking the changes in microbial communities in rivers that experienced a mine wastewater spill in Silverton, Colorado. Lee also offered practical tips on how to plan a microbiome analysis, from collecting a sample to processing it. In a data-science career panel, Rebecca Pollet, a biochemist and a member of the Cherokee Nation, noted how many mainstream pharmaceutical drugs were developed based on the traditional knowledge and plant medicine of Native people. The anti-malarial drug quinine, for example, was developed from the bark of a species of *Cinchona* trees, which the Quechua people historically used as medicine. Pollet, who studies the effects of pharmaceutical drugs and traditional food on the gut microbiome, asked: “How do we honor that traditional knowledge and make up for what’s been covered up?”

One participant, the Lakota elder Les Ducheneaux, added that he believed that medicine derived from traditional knowledge wrongly removed the prayers and rituals that would traditionally accompany the treatment, rendering the medicine less effective. “You constantly have to weigh the scientific part of medicine with the cultural and spiritual part of what you’re doing,” he said.

### **IndigiData in the future**

Over the course of the IndigiData conference, participants also discussed ways to take charge of their own data to serve their communities.

Mason Grimshaw, a data scientist and a board member of Indigenous in AI, talked about his research with language data on the International Wakashan AI Consortium. The consortium, led by an engineer, Michael Running Wolf, is developing an automatic speech recognition AI for Wakashan languages, a family of endangered languages spoken among several First Nations communities. The researchers believe automatic speech recognition models can preserve fluency in Wakashan languages and revitalize their use by future generations.

Typical language models, such as Apple’s voice-controlled Siri, often try to predict the next word, or set of words, based on the start of a sentence or a prompt. But such models might falter under the cultural nuances of many Indigenous languages, Grimshaw noted. “The Wakashan folks have certain stories you would only tell in certain kinds of weather or at certain times of day,” he said, by way of example. Additionally, many Indigenous languages are polysynthetic; they do not have fixed vocabularies but rely instead on the recombinations of small building blocks of words. A polysynthetic language like Lakota technically allows there to be infinite words, Grimshaw said. Indigenous languages often have much less recorded language data to analyze, such as audio files of speakers in conversation, than more common languages do.

Mr. Grimshaw sees these complications not as a problem but as a puzzle to be unscrambled. When asked about his wildest data dreams by a participant at the conference, Mr. Grimshaw smiled. “I want a Lakota version of Siri,” he said.

IndigiData has funding for the next four years, and the organizers hope that the conference next year will be held in person at the Native BioData Consortium on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. That location, Dr. Anderson noted, is a one-day drive from 13 tribal colleges.

Dr. Fox hopes the conference will train the next generation of Indigenous data scientists not just to protect their data but to be empowered by its possibilities. “I’m not saying that I like capitalism,” he said. “But data is power, and that’s the way for us to revitalize our communities.”

Grimshaw sees these complications not as a problem but as a puzzle to be unscrambled. When asked about his wildest data dreams by a participant at the conference, Grimshaw smiled. “I want a Lakota version of Siri,” he said. READ MORE AT: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/29/science/indigenous-data-microbiome-science.html>



# Bulletin Board

## President Nez and Vice President Lizer congratulate 325 Navajo Nation retirees for their dedication and service



WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, First Lady Phefelia Nez, and Vice President Myron Lizer were joined by 24th Navajo Nation Council Delegate Jamie Henio, Navajo Nation Division of Human Resources Executive Director Dr. Perphelia Fowler, Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish, and Retirement Plan Administrator Andrea Holmes to recognize and congratulate retirees during a virtual celebration that was live-streamed by the Navajo Nation TV & Film Office on the Nez-Lizer Facebook page and YouTube channel on Friday.

The event, hosted by the Navajo Nation Department of Retirement Services, recognized a total of 325 retirees for the years 2019 and 2020. In 2019, 187 employees retired, and in 2020, 138 employees retired from the Navajo Nation or other affiliated entities. The Navajo Nation also honored the 16 retirees who passed away from 2019 and

2020 and offered condolences to their families.

“Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to celebrate their accomplishments in-person. However, we are here today virtually to celebrate and recognize their many years of service and their immeasurable dedication to the Navajo Nation. Thank you, Ahe’hee’, for your dedication, compassion, and commitment. Each of you did not give up and demonstrated strength and resilience for the younger generations. Each of you helped many Navajo elders and families through critical thinking, comfort, and productivity. We pray for your new journey, and congratulations to you and your families. We also honor and remember those who have passed on – we thank their families, friends, and colleagues and offer our thoughts and prayers,” said President Nez.

“On behalf of the Office of the First Lady and Second Lady, we congratulate the retirees.

Retirement marks the start of a new phase of life when you no longer need to show up at the office every day. Now, they will have more time for their children, grandchildren, livestock, gardening, volunteering, and to continue to make positive changes. So many of you are role models within your families and communities, and we hope you will continue to pass along your teachings,” said First Lady Nez.

Retirees were recognized based on their years of service that included 10 – 19 years of service, 20 – 29 years of service, 30 – 34 years of service, and 35 years or more. Arnold Chee served as the emcee, the invocation was conducted by Division of Human Resources Administrative Services Officer Lorraine Tabaha, and Navajo OSHA Program Supervisor Walter Hudson provided the benediction.

“For some, retirement can mean finding a new purpose in life or renewing past hobbies or activities. Many retirees will find new work, tasks, and responsibilities at home with family and friends. Work will continue at home with family, livestock, and gardening, and we wish you the best with your new journey. Thank you, and may God bless you and your loved ones and continue to provide new opportunities in life,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Nation Virtual Retiree Celebration can be found online at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaVvBu3N9P0O70X7S58yQ8Q/featured>.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3zlaboN>

## Local Navajo leaders prioritize infrastructure projects to create long-term benefits using American Rescue Plan Act funds



WINDOW ROCK, N.M. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Division Directors under the Nez-Lizer Administration continue to meet with leaders and officials from Navajo Nation chapters to hear the needs and priorities of their communities regarding the COVID-19 recovery efforts under the American Rescue Plan Act. On May 28, the Navajo Nation received its initial funding allocation from the American Rescue Plan Act totaling over \$1.8 billion.

In April, the Nez-Lizer Administration also hosted virtual meetings with each of the five Navajo agencies to layout the process of submitting feasible/construction ready project listings to the Division of Community Development to be considered for funding through the

American Rescue Plan Act. All 110 chapters are required to submit their proposals through the Division of Community Development’s online portal by this week.

“This is the Navajo people’s money and that’s why we, along with Division Directors and Navajo Police Chief Phillip Francisco, are going out to the communities to listen to the recovery needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our administration has also developed a comprehensive project listing that includes over 9,000 projects at a cost of over \$20 billion, so it’s clear that \$1.8 billion will not meet all of the Nation’s priorities, but we have to do our best to leverage the funds to implement changes and improvements. The Navajo Nation has never received this amount of funding from the federal level at one time – this is possibly a once in a lifetime opportunity for our Nation to create changes and benefits for future generations. The common priorities that we are hearing from the community level include bathroom additions, rural addressing needs, water and power lines, warehouses to store supplies, broadband coverage, public safety, housing needs, waste management, road improvements, drought mitigation,” said President Nez.

During the meetings, President Nez also recommended that some of the funds from the American Rescue Plan Act be used to complete projects that were previously funded through the Navajo Nation’s Sihasin Fund in order to save for future needs.

As of Friday, the Nez-Lizer Administration has met with officials from Kayenta, Chilchinbeto, Tuba

City, Chinle, Dilkon, Crownpoint, Tohatchi, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Bahastl’a’a, Coyote Canyon, Thoreau, St. Michaels, Shiprock, and Aneth and plans to meet with more. The Division of Community Development has also invited members of the 24th Navajo Nation Council to the meetings as well.

“We appreciate all of the local leaders who put forth the voice of the people as well as our Division Directors, Police Chief Francisco, and all of the employees who are committed to hearing from the communities. Generations from now, our people are going to look back on this opportunity and ask what we accomplished. We are striving to provide long-term improvements and benefits that will help to empower our people and communities for generations down the road. We also thank the 24th Navajo Nation Council for all of the work they are doing and for taking the time to meet with us as well,” said Vice President Lizer.

The American Rescue Plan Act provides \$20 billion for tribes to help recover from the devastating impacts of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The Nez-Lizer Administration will continue to meet with community leaders. Chapters are encouraged to visit the Division of Community Development website for more information about submitting proposals: <https://www.nndcd.org>.

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3q7UdKj>

# Bulletin Board

## Oljato-Monument Valley Trading Post named an endangered historic site

The National Trust names Oljato Trading Post as one of 11 most endangered places in America.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation named a San Juan County trading post as one of the 11 most endangered historic sites in America in 2021.

According to the trust, which is a nonprofit that works to preserve American history, the Oljato Trading Post is one of the few remaining historic trading posts for Navajo communities that haven't been bulldozed or replaced by gas stations.

The Oljato Chapter of Navajo Nation are hoping the designation will bring greater support to raising the \$1.3 million project needed to rehabilitate the 1921 structure and give it "new life as a community center and cultural tourist destination."

"The Oljato Trading Post, a focal point of the Navajo community, celebrates its 100th birthday this year," said Katherine Malone France, the Chief Preservation Officer for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in a press release.

"What better way to honor this place, which helps tell Utah's multi-layered history, than by preserving and re-activating it under Oljato and Navajo leadership."

Navajo trading posts were areas of commerce and community hubs that started as early as 1868 at Fort Defiance in Arizona, said Bob McPherson, a retired Utah State University history professor and member of the San Juan County Historical Commission. As more Navajos returned home after the four-year "Long Walk" and internment, they built places to trade their goods. Their resettlement led to the 'golden age' of trading posts between 1900-1930.

The traditional Navajo trading post structure was large, with an area for trading, an elevated area to oversee trading, a pawn room for customers to

receive extended credit before the seasonal tradings of wool and lambs, and loading areas for wagons to store goods.

"The thing that makes [Oljato] unique is that it was not unique," said McPherson, who lives in Blanding and is involved with the restoration project. "Of those 260 posts that existed ... you probably have maybe half-a-dozen on and off the reservation that are still in the same form that they were during the heyday of trading."

During the 2021 legislative session, Utah Rep. Phil Lyman, R-Blanding, requested funding for infrastructure improvements for the trading post and the Oljato community. He plans to make the same request in 2022. In his proposal, he stated that the community of Oljato, San Juan County and the state of Utah would see a "return on investment" in visitation and tourism taxes as the project developed, with the bigger impact being the "cultural capital" it would bring to "one of the most underserved areas of the state."

Although the project did not get funded, Lyman brought a few legislators to see exactly what he was hoping to restore. The restoration could be funded by the state's allotment under the American Recovery Act, said Lyman, and he says he will find out if it falls under one of the act's special designations by the legislature's June 16 interim committee meetings.

"With the [historic trust's] designation, it raises the profile significantly — at least people understand that I'm not just talking about a pet project, it really is a special artifact that needs to be preserved," Lyman said. "When you go to the community of Oljato, it's hard to see that there's been much investment from the legislature or the state or really anybody else... This is a nice thing



to do for a community that has a really apparent, obvious need."

McPherson said the trading post has received \$15,000 from a Washington, D.C., nonprofit organization, and \$10,000 from the federal government in Certified Local Government grants, which help preserve historic places.

"We're operating on a shoestring. There's no water in the building, there's no electricity in the building, there's nothing ... We're worried about just getting a roof on the building. And there's one corner, the southeast corner, that is falling down," McPherson said. "That would be the end goal, to get [the \$1.3 million], but right now we're just desperate to get things [stabilized]."

The trading post restoration project is also working with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, the Utah Division of State History, the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department, and Preservation Utah, according to a press release. For now, McPherson said there is an organization called Friends of Oljato for individuals who would like to donate, which is run by the San Juan Foundation.

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3zB04fv>

## Navajo Transit System receive 39 new hybrid buses to provide more transportation services and reduce emissions

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer were joined by Navajo Nation Division of General Services Executive Director Tom Platero, Navajo Transit System Manager Marcus Tulley and transit staff members at Navajo Veterans Memorial Park in Window Rock, Ariz. on Thursday, to mark the arrival of 39 new hybrid buses to the Navajo Nation. In 2020, the Navajo Transit System was awarded a \$6 million grant to acquire the new hybrid buses through the Federal Transit Administration and in partnership with the New Mexico Department of Transportation.

"This is symbolic of the resilience and will of the Navajo people during the COVID-19 pandemic to overcome the challenges we have faced and move forward together. It serves to not only benefit our communities, but to instill more hope and pride in our people. The additional hybrid buses will allow Navajo Transit System to continue providing safe and reliable public transportation for Navajo elders, students, employees, and families. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their services were paused for the safety of staff members and the general public. The Navajo Transit team will soon resume their services and incorporate the new buses in their daily routes to help with the overflow of commuters due to lower



capacity levels on the buses to promote social distancing. Increasing the accessibility to services provides the need for health care, education, employment, recreation, entertainment, and essential shopping and family errands," said President Nez.

Navajo Transit System will begin transit services on the Navajo Nation on Monday, June 7. Bus fare will be waived during the COVID-19 pandemic and seats will be limited due to the COVID-19 protocols.

The hybrid buses save fuel and reduce emissions through regenerative braking. Electric motors make it easier for the bus operators to control the buses. Each bus is also handicap accessible.

"It's wonderful to see our Nation taking gradual steps to reopen our Nation while encouraging our people to continue taking precautions to stay safe

and healthy. The staff is excited to begin transporting passengers once again. Many of our people rely on the Navajo Transit System for work, school, essential services and items, and much more so this will certainly be very beneficial for all of our communities," said Vice President Lizer.

According to Navajo Transit System Manager Marcus Tulley, transit services will have soft reopening routes beginning June 7. All passengers must adhere to all COVID-19 preventative guidelines, such as wearing a face mask and practicing social distancing. Additional routes will be available after July 6.

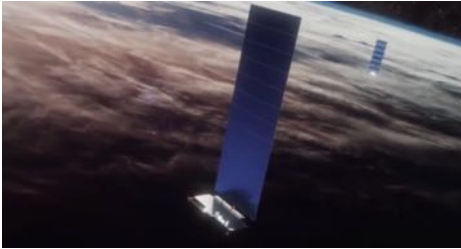
For more information regarding available bus routes or questions regarding the new COVID-19 safety protocols, contact (928) 729 – 4002 or visit [navajotransit.navajo-nsn.gov](http://navajotransit.navajo-nsn.gov).

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/2U2iJAL>

# Bulletin Board

## First “LEO Libraries”

Three rural libraries to test community and market impact



SAN FRANCISCO — The Gigabit Libraries Network (GLN) today announced an agreement with SpaceX’s Starlink to outfit three small rural public libraries as “beta enterprise” users of its low earth orbit(LEO) satellite broadband system. These are the first libraries to have such a connection.

The beta sites will be the initial phase of a wider study on capabilities and potential benefits of this innovative and potentially revolutionary communications capability that promises to reach almost anywhere.

Starlink is now delivering initial beta service both domestically and internationally. Implementation of this LEO technology appears to be yielding faster connection speeds with lower latency than traditional geostationary satellite based services.

“There are many things to learn about how these new systems may serve towards closing the persistent rural divide and integrate into the wider telecom ecosystem,” says Don Means, GLN Director. “Who better than public libraries to explore this unique new communications resource for community benefit.”

The first “LEO Library” is the Torreón Community (Navajo) Tribal Library in New Mexico. “The speed is just amazing in our area! I am excited for my community and especially for the students that need this access for school work!,” says Torreón Library Director, Richelle Montoya. Two more libraries in Montana are due to come online within the next two weeks.

The participating libraries were selected in collaboration with the Montana and New Mexico state libraries with support from San Jose State University’s iSchool, a leader in exploratory library wireless projects. “Montana ranks near the bottom of every state ranking for broadband access. We look forward to the opportunity to test this new service model to better understand how it can address the connectivity needs of Montana libraries and our patrons,” adds Jennie Stapp, State Librarian of Montana.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, IMLS Grant LG-95-18-0153-18 as part of the Community SecondNets Initiative in a partnership with the Califa group.

READ MORE AT: <http://giglibraries.net/LEOLibraries>

## Navajo Nation leery of Delta variant



On Monday, the Navajo Nation Department of Health reported just five new cases, the lowest daily total since March 2020. President Jonathan Nez said that with about 70 percent of the eligible population vaccinated, the Nation’s main concern now is visitors

Alyssa Marks  
Cronkite News

WASHINGTON – The Navajo Nation has yet to record a single case of the Delta variant of COVID-19, but now is not the time for tribe members to let down their guard, Navajo President Jonathan Nez said this week.

Nez spent much of the time during a Washington Post program on public health talking about the Navajos’ success in fighting the pandemic, falling from a national COVID-19 hotspot at one point last year to negligible case numbers today.

But while the tribe has “been very cautious ... I think we need to continue to be cautious,” Nez said, in part because of the arrival of the highly contagious Delta variant.

“We have heard updates that the city of Tucson has identified a Delta variant ... so we are concerned,” Nez said.

An Arizona Department of Health official said Wednesday that the Delta variant has been found in northern, central and southern Arizona.

“The Alpha variant currently is the predominant strain in Arizona, but we anticipate that there will be an increase in the Delta variant since it appears to be more transmissible than the Alpha variant,” said Steve Elliott, a health department spokesperson.

Arizona Public Health Association Executive Director Will Humble said experts “expect that the Delta variant will be dominant by mid-to-late summer in Arizona.”

“It’s going to take over,” he said. “It’s just outcompeting the other strains. The question is how long it’s going to take.”

But Humble said that despite the high transmission rates health experts have seen for the Delta variant, it will likely not spread as fast as previous variants because of the availability now of COVID-19 vaccines.

“Alpha took over at a time when only select people qualified to get vaccinated,” Humble said. “There was a huge pool of susceptible people at

the time. Now, we’ve cut that in about half, maybe even more than half.”

As of Wednesday, more than 3.5 million Arizonans had received one dose of vaccine, or 48.9 percent of the state’s population, according to AZDHS. Just over 3 million state residents had been fully vaccinated.

Vaccination rates are even higher on the Navajo Nation, which should mean it will not suffer greatly when the Delta variant shows up, Humble said.

“I don’t see that Indian Country and, in particular, Navajo country is at any particular enhanced risk for Delta compared to the rest of the state; they’re probably in a better position,” Humble said.

In the early days of the pandemic, COVID-19 spread rapidly through the Navajo Nation, which experienced some of the highest infection rates in the country. But the tribal government took aggressive action to close businesses and public gatherings, and later to distribute vaccines to tribe members, making the Navajo a model for how to respond, Nez said.

He quoted National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci as saying the tribe’s response “could be a case study, Navajo could be a model to bring down COVID cases in a region.”

On Monday, the most recent day for which data is available, the Navajo Nation Department of Health reported just five new cases, the lowest daily total since March 2020. Nez said that with about 70 percent of the eligible population vaccinated, the Nation’s main concern now is visitors.

“We are concerned because we don’t know where our visitors are coming from,” Nez said. “If we continue to wear masks, we can reopen gradually, maybe even at 50 percent for our visitors, but we also have to protect our citizens and protect our visitors from COVID-19.”

“I’m sure one day we will reopen and embrace our visitors back to the Navajo Nation,” he said.

READ MORE AT: <https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/navajo-nation-leery-of-delta-variant>



## Initial Impact of COVID-19 on Travel, Tourism, Outdoor Recreation Varied Widely Across States

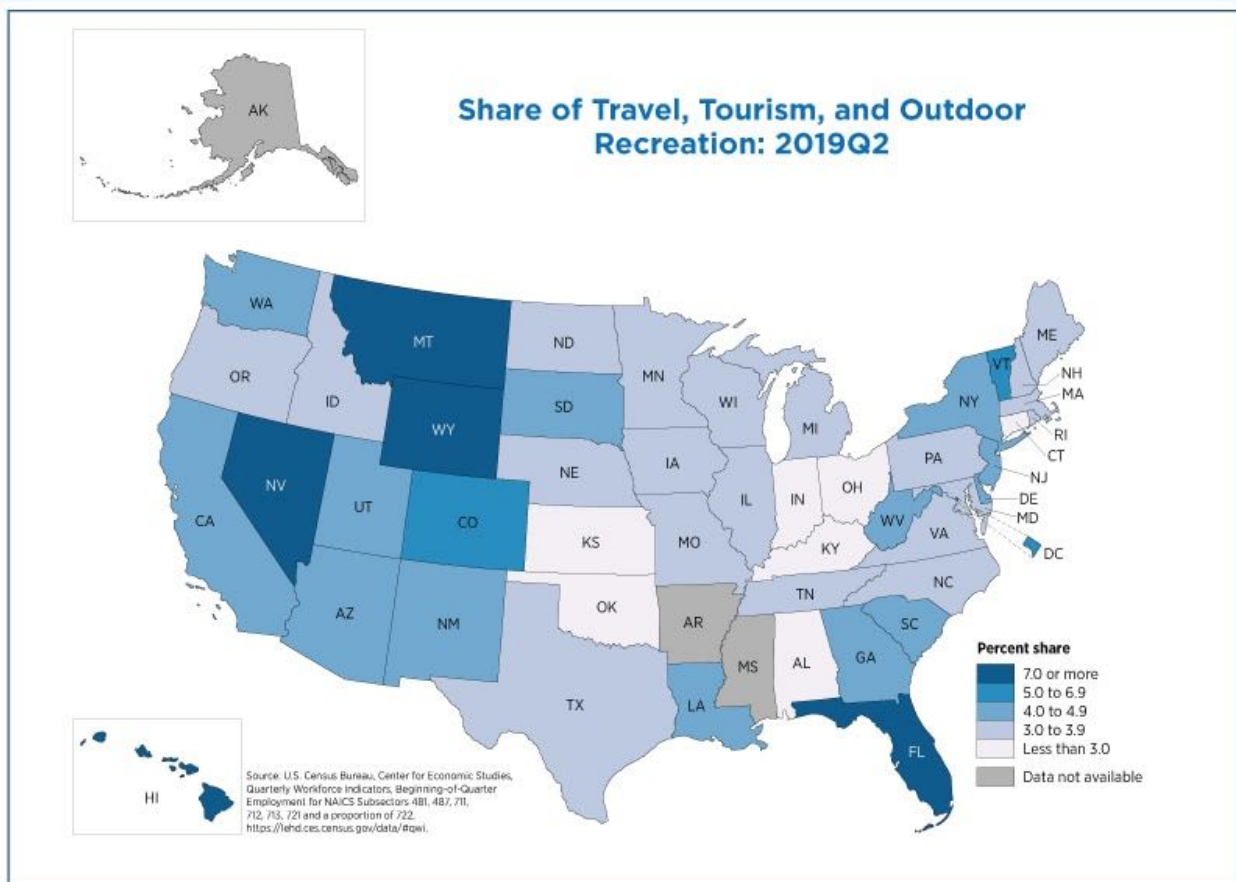
### Tourism and Related Industries Declined Sharply in Northeastern States in Spring 2020, Women and Young Workers More Affected Nationwide

MATTHEW GRAHAM, HEATH HAYWARD, HUBERT JANICKI, ERIKA MCENTARFER AND LEE TUCKER | JUNE 23, 2021

Early outbreaks of COVID-19 affected large populations in New York and New Jersey in the spring of 2020, leading the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue a domestic travel advisory for those states.

In the rest of the country, the economy was already beginning to feel the economic impacts of the pandemic, especially on tourism and related industries that rely on people traveling.

Not surprisingly, regions with the most severe COVID-19 outbreaks and largest share of tourism jobs were disproportionately affected at the start of the pandemic and the Census Bureau's Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) show the extent of the employment and earnings impacts from state to state.



Travel, tourism and outdoor recreation jobs make up approximately 4%-5% of total private employment in most states. However, Hawaii and Nevada are outliers with much larger shares of 14.4% and 21.0% in the second quarter of 2019, respectively.

In addition to Nevada and Hawaii, Wyoming (7.3%), Montana (7.2%), and Florida (7.1%) make up the five states with the largest employment share in travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation.

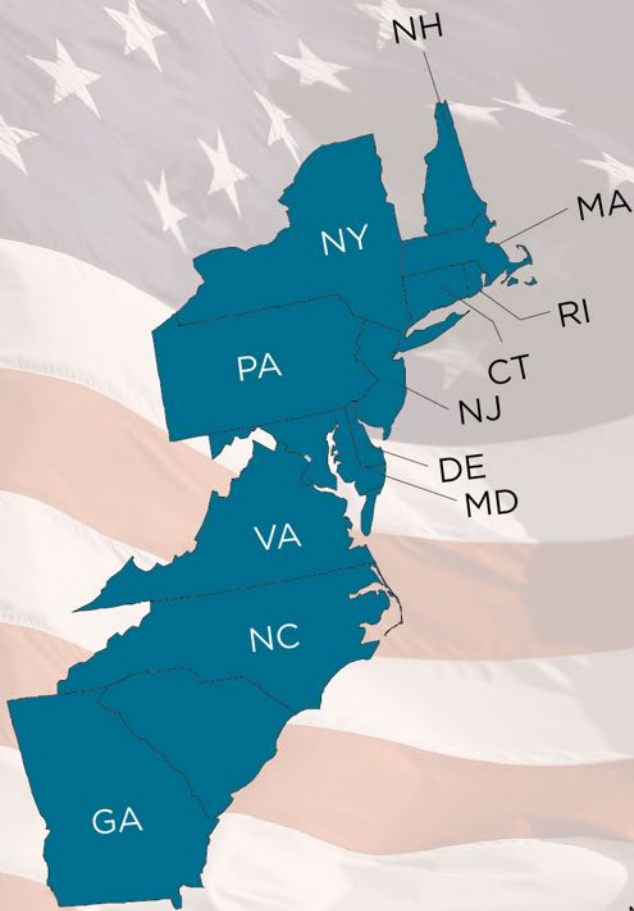
### Drop in Tourism at Onset of Pandemic

QWI data can be used to show year-over-year changes in travel, tourism and outdoor recreation employment. Note that we calculate year-over-year changes rather than quarterly changes due to the seasonality of these industries.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/06/initial-impact-of-covid-19-on-travel-tourism-outdoor-recreation-varied-widely-across-states.html>

# Happy 245th Birthday, America!

## State Population of the Original 13 Colonies



	<b>1790 Census</b> America's first census	<b>2020 Census</b> America's most recent census
Connecticut	237,946	3,605,944
Delaware	59,096	989,948
Georgia	82,548	10,711,908
Maryland	319,728	6,177,224
Massachusetts	378,787	7,029,917
New Hampshire	141,885	1,377,529
New Jersey	184,139	9,288,994
New York	340,120	20,201,249
North Carolina	393,751	10,439,388
Pennsylvania	434,373	13,002,700
Rhode Island	68,825	1,097,379
South Carolina	249,073	5,118,425
Virginia	691,737	8,631,393

Note: Some state population values for the 1790 Census vary across different pieces of historical documentation due to corrections or other factors.

# COVID-19 SAFE PRACTICES: REOPENING GUIDELINES FOR IN PERSON TRAINING AND MEETINGS



In person training and meetings must adhere to the Navajo Nation In-Person Training and Meetings Guidelines pursuant to the most recent Public Health Emergency Order issued by the Navajo Department of Health. All entities are responsible for understanding and implementing the guidelines to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Hosts and individuals attending in-person training or meetings shall follow the guidance in this document. Clearly communicate to attendees the steps to be taken before, during, and after the training/ meeting to ensure that the participants are aware of the safety protocols.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Only hybrid meetings are allowed:
  - The number of in person attendees must not exceed gathering requirements per current PHEO.
  - All other attendees must attend virtually.
- In person meeting timeframe limited to 6 hours or less.

## GETTING VACCINATED

- Eligible attendees are highly encouraged to get vaccinated.
- Being fully vaccinated against COVID-19 is the most important step people can take to make training/work-sessions safer.
- If you would like information on making a vaccination appointment, contact the nearest federal (IHS) or Tribal health organization at <https://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccine>

## HOST WILL BE FOLLOWING BASIC COVID-19 SAFE PRACTICES

- Practice the three W's:
  - WEAR A MASK: Mask wearing is mandatory.
- All participants must wear face masks prior to entering any venue, for the duration of the training/meeting, and while receiving training/meeting packets.
- Disposable masks will be made available for attendees.
- Mask may be removed when drinking.

- o **WASH HANDS:** Hand sanitizer will be provided, convenient, and accessible. Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently, and do not touch your face, eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- o **WATCH YOUR DISTANCE:** Keep 6 feet away from others.

## SCREENING PRIOR TO THE START OF THE TRAINING/WORK-SESSION

- All in-person attendees must be self-screened for COVID-19 symptoms using the Center for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.
- Onsite registration is allowable for those individuals attending in person if the host does not have the capability to set up pre-registration options.
- All attendees of an in-person training/meeting may pre-register to avoid onsite registration. Only those who pre-register will be allowed to attend.
- All attendees of an in-person training/meeting may utilize text/SMS or QR codes during training/work-session to avoid onsite sign-in. Links will be provided prior to event.

## FOOD OR DRINKS

- No food will be allowed during the event. Bottled water and drinks in a cup with a lid will be allowed during the event.
- If lunch is provided, food must be prepackaged (to-go).

## HYGIENE AND SAFETY

- The host must clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and any areas before and after they are touched or used, such as seats, doorknobs, etc. Disposable disinfectant wipes must be made available for participants to utilize for cleaning and disinfection.
- Attendees are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer but will be provided hand wipes and hand sanitizer onsite.
- Doors and windows may be propped open for increased air circulation, in the event an HVAC system is not available.
- The host will maintain a record of all in-person attendees for at least 30 days to assist with contact tracing. Information collected must include name, date, phone number and email (if available). If a potential case of COVID-19 associated with the training/work-session occurs, this information must be provided within 24 hours, if requested, to contact tracers from federal (Indian Health Service) or Tribal health organizations.
- The host will limit the sharing or exchange of materials, e.g., awards, certificates, door prizes, work-session/training packets. When possible, packets may be provided to attendees beforehand via mail or email.
  - o Note: Door prizes must be in original packaging or in sanitized bags or containers.
  - o If feasible, certificates will be electronically mailed to personal emails.
- The host will clean and disinfect microphones after each use.

## ENCOURAGE 6 FEET OF PHYSICAL DISTANCING BY OPTIMIZING LOGISTICS

- The host will model physical distancing with appropriate main stage.
  - o Presenters and speakers may remove masks if they are 10 feet away from others.
- Attendees will be stationed appropriately to ensure compliance with all requirements and to limit congregation and crowding.



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