

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Division of Community Development Newsletter

January 2024

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Did You Know...

Prairie Dogs Can Be Pets

Prairie dogs (typically black-tailed prairie dogs) are becoming popular as pets. Like all rodents, they have teeth that continually grow throughout life.



They are active, playful, and sturdy rodents and can make fairly affectionate pets if purchased young, socialized properly, and given lots of attention. However, they do demand a lot of care and attention, so prairie dogs represent a significant commitment. They are not suitable pets for everyone and may not be considered the best family pet (especially with small children) as they can become difficult, nippy, and aggressive if not regularly handled or socialized.

<https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/prairie-dogs-owning>

Events:

January: Yasniit'ees - "Melting Snow"

January 1: New Year's Day

January 15: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February: Atsá Biyáázh - "Baby Eaglets"

February 2: Groundhog Day

February 11: Superbowl Sunday

February 14: Valentine's Day

February 19: Presidents' Day



Gadii'ahi/To'koi Chapter Proactive in Winter Safety, Tops State Road Maintenance



The Gadii'ahi/To'koi Chapter purchased a snowplow for the chapter, a 3500 Dodge Ram, in 2019 in preparation for the winter weather. The Chapter wanted to take preventative measures, due to our roads (N57 and N57-1) not getting any sort of maintenance during winter weather. Since 2019, the Gadii'ahi/To'koi Chapter has responded to every snow storm, providing same day road clearance on our two paved roads. Most recently, we even beat NNDOT and NMDOT out for road maintenance. It is the main goal of the Chapter Officials and Chapter Administration to keep the community safe, and this is a step in the right direction.

Lynda M. Hayes MAcc

Community Service Coordinator

Gadii'ahi/To'koi Chapter Government

505.635.0620

Snow plow Power



GadiiAhi/Tokoi Chapter Snow Warriors Unveiled!

GadiiAhi/Tokoi Chapter took the winter storm by the horns with their dedicated snow removal arsenal! The CSC Lynda Hayes swiftly cleared main roads after the recent snowfall, showcasing the power of their Chapter Truck equipped with a snow plow.

Behind the scenes, the chapter's impressive fleet includes 2 backhoes, 2 motor graders, and a 2-ton truck with a trailer, all poised for efficient snow removal. Proving innovation is key, chapters can now purchase the same snow plow attachment for their 3/4 ton or 1-ton trucks.

Kudos to GadiiAhi/Tokoi Chapter for their unwavering commitment to community safety and accessibility!

Stay warm and safe!



January 2024

Message from the Director:

Ya'at'eeh Abiní,

As we usher in the new year, I extend my greetings and well wishes to the dedicated team of the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development (DCD) and all our esteemed chapter staff. Your resilience and commitment to serving the Navajo people have been a source of inspiration for us all.

I want to take a moment to recognize and commend the exceptional efforts of our housing team within the DCD. Your hard work in putting together the housing recipient list for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is appreciated. This will ensure that our Navajo families receive the support they need, and your dedication reflects the strength of our mission.

Also, it is with great pride that I highlight the successful passage of the new chapter emergency funding legislation. The replenishment of the Navajo chapter emergency fund will play a critical role in providing emergency services during adverse winter weather. Clearing snow, grading damaged muddy roads, and ensuring vulnerable families have access to firewood are core components of our community's resilience.

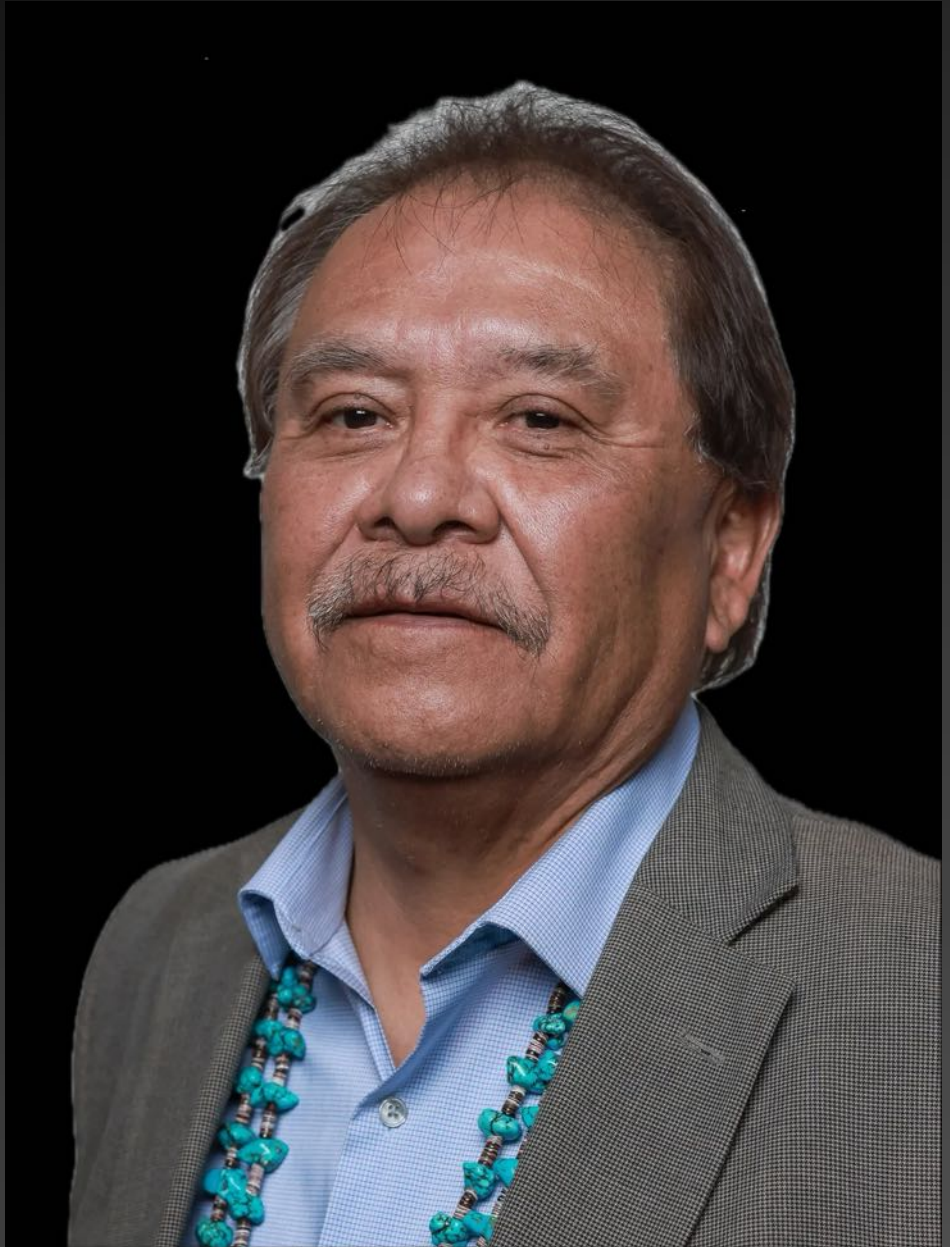
As we meet the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the entire DCD team and chapter staff. Your dedication to the improvement of the Navajo Nation is the driving force behind our progress.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude for your continued efforts and dedication to the Navajo people. May the new year bring you renewed energy and success in all your endeavors.

Ahe'hee' (Thank you) for your tireless commitment and service.

Sincerely,

Arbin Mitchell
Executive Director
Navajo Nation Division of Community Development



FRF ARPA Updates

DCD ARPA Office

To date, fifteen (15) sub recipient agreements (SRAs) have been signed by the President and contract numbers have been issued. Out of the 15, 8 have received their initial disbursement to the LGA Chapters.

DCD ARPA team consists of:

Paulene Thomas, Dept. Manager II

Edwin Begay, Admin Services Officer

Dawnelle Begay, Programs & Projects Specialist

Ryan Begay, Planner/Estimator

(pictured) Section 11 project: Nazlini



January 2024

Housing Improvement Program Update

The Housing Improvement Program will start issuing the FY25 BIA Housing Assistance application starting February 01, 2024 and intake will start on March 04, 2024 at the Agency Offices in Fort Defiance and Chinle, Arizona.

The Application can be picked up at the Agency Office or can be downloaded from the Division of Community Development website: nndcd.org. The Housing Improvement program staff are also available to do presentation and intake outreach at the Chapter if requested. The request for presentation and/or intake outreach can be sent through email to rbegay@nnchid.org to schedule date and time.

The Housing Improvement Program is in process of completing two (2) more homes in Pinon and Dilkon, Arizona, with the completion date set for February 23, 2024 and one (1) project started in Rock Point, Arizona with the potential completion day of April of 2024.

The Program is advertising for positions for Eligibility Technicians in Chinle and Fort Defiance plus Carpenter for Fort Defiance, which are being advertised through the DPM Website.

Questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Rita M. Begay, Program Manager I
Housing Improvement Program/CHID
Fort Defiance Agency
PO Box 527
Fort Defiance, AZ 86504
Phone# 928.729.4319
Fax# 928.729.4277
email: rbegay@nnchid.org
2nd email: rmbegay@navajo-nsn.gov



HIP Program Office Fort Defiance
[Google maps location](#)
PWPJ+2P
Fort Defiance, AZ, USA

COMMUNITY HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE DEPARTMENT **HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HIP)**

The Housing Improvement Program (HIP) is federally funded by P.L. 93-638 contracts. The program is to improve the living standards by providing decent, safe and sanitary homes within the territorial boundaries of the Navajo Nation. HIP provides housing assistance through home repairs, renovation, and replacement of existing house or new construction to assist **very-low income families and/or individual**.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE APPLICATION FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 **AVAILABLE: February 01, 2024**

Application can be picked up at the HIP Agency office (Fort Defiance and Chinle) or download from the Division of Community Development Website: nndcd.org

INTAKE STARTS **March 04, 2024 to September 30, 2024**

Eligibility Requirements

- Total annual household income does not exceed 150% of the federal poverty income guidelines. Applicants are not eligible, if total annual household income exceeds the 150% of FPIG. All household members over 18 years of age's income is considered household income.
- Is a enrolled member of the Navajo Tribe.
- Lives in an approved Navajo Tribal service area.
- Present housing is substandard.
- Has no other resource for housing assistance.
- Has not received assistance from HIP for repairs, renovation, replacement and new housing, or down payment assistance.
- Has not received any other type of federal government sponsored housing program assistance over the previous 20-year period. This would be entities such as Navajo Housing Authority, HUD, and NAHASDA.
- Down Payment Assistance available to eligible borrowers to participate in HIP. The applicant must still meet all the eligibility requirements. A letter from the funding institution that specifies the down payment amount and closing costs required to qualify for the loan must be provided.

Required Documents

- Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) and Social Security Card: for all permanent household members.
- Income Verification for 2023: Award letters from Social Security, VA, Retirement, Unemployment, etc.
- If claiming disability, provide a Doctor's statement or documents verifying disability.
- If claiming Veteran, provide DD214.
- Must have a finalized and approved home site lease in the applicant(s) name.
- **Legal Guardianship for Grandchildren, Niece, Nephews (Under the age of 18)**
Household members must reside in the home throughout the year (365 days)

Application must be fully complete, sign and must be submitted with all required documents and forms.

Chinle Housing Improvement Program office is located behind Chinle Chapter House: Blue Office Building No. 2492 Contact number: (928) 674-2260

Fort Defiance HIP Office is located on Field House Road, south of FD Workforce Office Building No. 8229 Contact number: (928) 729-4017



HIP Program Office Chinle
[Google maps location](#)
5C3Q+8W
Chinle, Arizona

January 2024

Pacific University Students Help Elders Once Again



After driving for over 25 hours in a van, students and faculty from Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon, arrived at Diné College in Tsaile, Arizona, along with a guide from the Navajo Nation. Staying on the college's campus for over two weeks, they are committed to providing service to the community, especially the elders.

This initiative is undertaken as a class that operated regularly until it stopped about ten years ago due to the overseer of the course retiring. Currently, professors Brent Johnson (creative writing/literature) and Mike Miller (global short-term studies) are leading a revival of this course, along with long-time guide Doug Uentillie. Doug, born and raised on the Navajo Nation, is a member of the Navajo

Nation currently residing in Portland, Oregon, and is an invaluable reason for the course continuing.

Following in the ten-year-old footsteps of the previous class, this group is working hard to serve the community through activities such as wood chopping, snow shoveling, and providing other services to those in need. Along with providing services, the class is gaining cultural knowledge and wisdom from the land and the community. When their hands are not busy wielding axes and snow shovels, the class busies their legs with hiking and visiting historical sites of cultural importance. They hope to attend ceremonies to further their cultural experience.



More than anything, the class is grateful to help a community in need of resources and assistance during a time of especially heavy snowfall this winter. They are proud to be of use showing their support and compassion to the Diné community. Both students and professors alike are eager to engage with the enlightening and deeply important stories and history of the Diné, furthering the fire of understanding and community. The students and staff of Pacific University want to thank the Navajo Nation, especially Diné College, for being wonderful hosts and teachers during their stay.

Authored by Pacific students:
Troy Pigman
Rylee Larson



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Pacific University Students Help Elders Once Again, cont.



Full list of Pacific students:
Jacob Cardoso
Angelina Dominguez
Kailani Ibanez
Rylee Larson
Shelline Nerup
Marlo Olson
Troy Pigman
Diego Reyna
First Moon Venecia



TECH TIPS

10 Things to know about digital footprints

1

When you search and interact online, a **trail of info** is left behind

2

Elements of your digital footprints can be **searched or shared**

3

Digital footprints can **helpful or harmful** to your reputation both now and in the future

4

Once online, things can exist **forever** (even if deleted)

5

Always **think** before you post online.

6

Personal information or opinions sent to one person can be **shared** with a larger audience.

7

Googling yourself can be a worthwhile exercise.

8

Old or inactive accounts should be **disabled or deleted**.

9

Keep personal details private and control the **privacy settings** on your accounts.

10

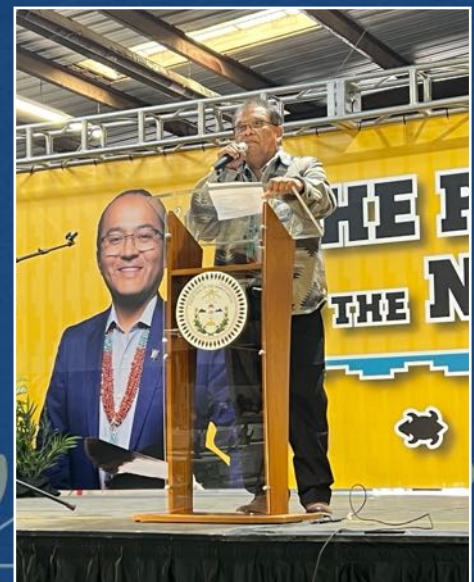
Be mindful of the digital footprints of **others** (e.g. Ask before tagging photos).

January 2024



Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren marked his first year in office with the inaugural People's State of the Nation address on Jan. 9 at Nakai Hall. Addressing a diverse audience, President Nygren shared achievements, challenges, and future plans. Mr. Arbin Mitchell, recognized the accomplishments of the Division of Community Development (DCD). In attendance at the event were Dwayne Wasetta, Pat Dalgai, Norbert Nez, Leslie Sandoval, Sylvia Jordan and Delilah Bill.

Community Housing Infrastructure Department and Housing Improvement Program was also in attendance. OPVP provided lunch and the event drew over 1,500 attendees and had over 500 online viewers.



January 2024

Pueblo Pintado Senior Center Dedication



Unveiled to the public on January 18, 2024, the newly built Pueblo Pintado Senior Center is a noteworthy achievement. This 4,000-square-foot facility became possible with the support of a \$2.8 million allocation from the New Mexico General Obligation Bond funds, administered by the Navajo Nation's Department of Health's Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support.

Playing a pivotal role in project oversight, Andy Thomas from the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development's Capital Project Management Department ensured the smooth progression of construction, steering the center towards a successful completion. Arviso Construction Co., a Navajo-owned business established in 1982 and based in Ft. Wingate, N.M., executed the construction with precision, showcasing their expertise in bringing the facility to fruition.

During the grand opening, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren expressed gratitude and underscored the ongoing collaboration with the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department and the Navajo Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support to enhance services across all New Mexico senior centers.



January 2024

The dedication ceremony drew a substantial crowd of elders from the region, filling the facility and spilling into the entrance area. Engaging in prayers, they joined the celebration alongside chapter administration officials, including notable figures such as Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya, Navajo Nation Council Delegate George Tolth, Miss Navajo Amy Begay and Navajo Dept. of Health Director Kim Russell.

This state-of-the-art facility signifies a significant upgrade, replacing the aging center constructed in 1981, comprising two connected mobile homes in a state of disrepair. Health Director Kim Russell stressed the importance of the new senior center, providing elders with a secure space for meals, education, and socializing. Russell also acknowledged the commitment to replicate such facilities for elders throughout the state with the assistance of New Mexico Capital Outlay funds.

Expressing gratitude, the senior center staff extended their thanks to the personnel of the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, the New Mexico Office of Indian Elder Affairs, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley, delegates Seth Damon, George Tolth, Vince James, and

former Delegate Daniel Tso. Additionally, they conveyed appreciation to N.M. Legislators, including Senator Benny Shendo, Senator Shannon Pinto and Senator George Munoz, as well as chapter community service coordinator Janice Arthur. Rena Murphy, the Senior Center Supervisor, will oversee the daily operations of the new center.

Miss Navajo Nation was invited to participate in the Grand Opening ceremony, where she heard encouraging words from President Nygren, Vice-President Montoya, Delegate Tolth, and local officials. She also assisted in serving lunch with Pueblo Pintado staff and youth, delivering a brief message to the community about the new senior center and extending her warm sentiments to the community members. [More on Miss Navajo visit](#)



Administrative Services Centers



Department Events:

In January 2024, the Administrative Services Centers (ASC) were abuzz with activity as they conducted diverse worksessions to offer technical assistance to the 110 Navajo Nation chapters. Across our eight offices, dedicated teams worked tirelessly to extend crucial support to chapters, aiding them in the preparation of 941 forms and the generation of W-2s for their employees. The ASC department remained steadfast in its commitment to empowering chapters, providing valuable guidance on financial matters, Navajo Nation laws, and policies, thereby reinforcing our mission to foster effective communication and collaboration within the community.

Date:	ASC Office:	Location:	Office/Topic/Presenter:
1-29-24	Shiprock ASC	TseAlnaoztii Chapter	Title 26 Presentation by Department of Justice
1-29-24	Fort Defiance ASC	NTU - Crownpoint	Updates from chapters
1-24-24	Kayenta ASC	Kayenta ASC Office	941 W-2 2023 Work Session Completion
1-23-24	Kayenta ASC	Kayenta Chapter House	941 W-2 2023 Work Session
1-22-24	Kayenta ASC	Kayenta Chapter House	941 W-2 2023 Work Session
1-19-24	Gallup ASC	Iyanbito Chapter	2023 W-2 Workshop
1-17-24	Gallup ASC	Rock Springs Chapter	2023 W-2 Workshop
1-17-24	Shiprock ASC	Teleconference	Emergency Reporting and Carryover Budgets
1-17-24	Ft.Defiance/Crownpoint ASC	UNM Campus (Gallup, NM)	2023 W-2 Workshop
124	Ft.Defiance/Crownpoint ASC	UNM Campus (Gallup, NM)	2023 W-2 Workshop
1-16-24	Gallup ASC	Mariano Lake Chapter	2023 W-2 Workshop

Administrative Services Centers

Staff Updates:

Exciting News at ASC! We are thrilled to announce the newest addition to our team, Mr. Tyrone Begay, who has joined us as the Senior Programs & Projects Specialist at the ASC Crownpoint office.

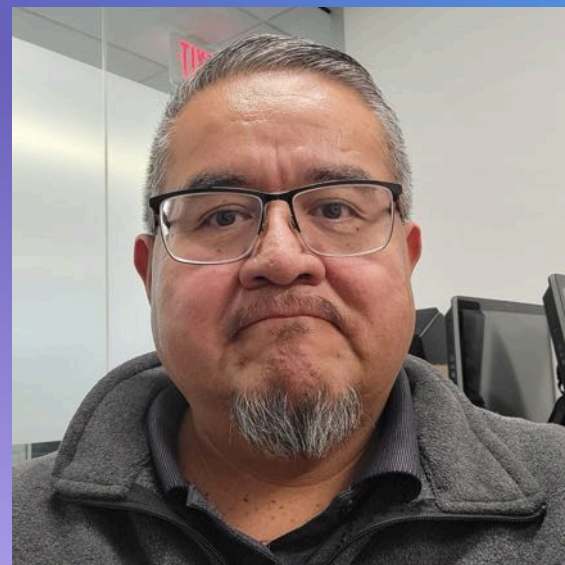
With a wealth of management expertise, Tyrone hails from a successful tenure at Dine College, where he served as a manager overseeing the planning and functions of the Dine College Crownpoint Center.

His experience also extends to the chapter setting, having worked as a Planner and AmeriCorps Program Administrator at the Chinle Chapter, where he collaborated with the Division of Community Development departments, gaining valuable insights into chapter operations.

The ASC eagerly anticipates the positive impact Tyrone's leadership and management skills will bring to our department. Join us in welcoming Tyrone Begay to the ASC Team!

Welcome New Employees!

In an exciting development this month, the Administrative Services Centers (ASC) welcomed new team members at the chapters. Among them are 2 Community Services Coordinators and 5 Accounts Maintenance Specialists, filling a total of seven (7) previously vacant chapter positions. These crucial roles play an essential part in delivering vital services to communities across the Navajo Nation. The ASC department and chapters are delighted to have these valuable additions to the team and eagerly anticipate their future contributions under the Division of Community Development.



TYRONE BEGAY
SENIOR PROGRAMS & PROJECTS SPECIALIST
CROWNPOINT ASC

New Staff	Chapter:	Position:
Danise Augustine	Huerfano Chapter	AMS
Brenda Chicharello	Tsayatoh Chapter	AMS
Minnette Roundstone	Coppermine Chapter	CSC
Samantha Billie	Thoreau Chapter	AMS
Carmen Martin	Pinedale Chapter	AMS
Onaiwa Begay	Whitecone Chapter	AMS
Marlene Palmer	Red Valley Chapter	CSC

Bulletin Board

Native tribes are getting a slice of their land back – under the condition that they preserve it

By David Condos
Published December 18, 2023

BLUFF, Utah – In February 2020, Dave Herrero drove into the canyon country here in southeast Utah to visit a slice of land that was up for sale – a 320-acre ranch that stretched deep into the red-rock canyon near the small town of Bluff.

"Just hop the fence and walk down the drive," a local rock climber had told him. "You'll see some stuff."

Herrero and his girlfriend did just that, pushing through salt brush to make their way into a rocky alcove. Amid freezing rain, it took a few seconds for his eyes to adjust.

"Oh my god," he exclaimed.

High off the ground, set into the wall, was a huge structure, with large brick walls, built into the canyon like castle turret. As the two looked around, they realized there were cliff dwellings and other structures throughout the canyon. On a canyon wall, they found rock art: a huge panel of horses and other designs still used by the Hopi, Navajo and Ute tribes whose reservations were nearby.

"I cannot believe something like this is, first of all owned by somebody," Herrero, 43, recalled thinking. "And second of all, that it's also for sale."

This past July, his California-based employer, the nonprofit Wildlands Conservancy, purchased the ranch for \$2.5 million from the family that owned it and began writing a deed that it hopes will become a model for working with tribes to protect wilderness in the American West from real estate developers, mining companies and oil drillers.

In what would be a novel arrangement, the deed is expected to include a coalition of five tribes as co-owners and managers with Wildlands – an effort to acknowledge the history of the land, which the conservation group named Cottonwood Wash.

"There are once tribes that lived in these areas that were forcibly removed," said Davina Smith, a member of the Diné, or Navajo, who has worked with different organizations to protect land in the Four Corners region. "We have to recognize that."

In speeches and in fundraising emails, it's become common for conservation groups to perform "land acknowledgments" to name and honor the tribes that once controlled the land the groups are seek to protect.

"We want to raise the bar on land acknowledgment," said Frazier Haney, the executive director of Wildlands. "We don't just want to acknowledge the tribes in speeches – we want to acknowledge them on the actual land deed."

But Wildlands will need to prove that co-ownership goes beyond feel-good symbolism.

The primary mission of Wildlands is to "protect beauty," and one of its tenets is to "Imparadise the Earth by healing human impacts." Tribes here have a conflicting philosophy: What imperils the land is not human impact, but rather the lack of Native impact.



Can non-Native conservationists actually move beyond acknowledgment? Can the co-ownership model bring meaningful change?

The traditional model of conservation in the West has long followed the lead of environmentalists such as John Muir – the so-called "father of the National Parks" – who saw untracked wilderness as a sort of Eden that would fall to corruption under man's influence. His model of conservation was simple: Keep people out.

That school of thoughts feels foreign to Natives such as Smith, 49.

"You have all these prominent writers writing about the West, but they focus on the landscape," she said. "They don't think about the Native tribes who have always actually been living in this landscape."

That's why, a decade ago, tribal leaders here began discussing how they might have more influence over how the federal government manages tribal homelands.

In 2015, a coalition of five tribes – Hopi, Navajo, Uintah and Ouray Ute, Ute Mountain Ute and Zuni – sent a letter to then-President Obama proposing the creation of the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah on land known as the Colorado Plateau.

Under a novel co-management scheme, the tribes would have direct say in ecological stewardship and how to regulate economic activity and recreation.

Less than a year after Obama issued a presidential proclamation creating the monument on Dec. 28, 2016, then-President Trump undid it at the urging of the Utah state government, which wanted to leave the land open to uranium mining, oil drilling and cattle grazing. When President Biden took office in 2021, one of his first acts

was reestablishing Bears Ears.

The Cottonwood Wash lays within the barriers of the Bears Ears Monument, but because it's private property, it wasn't included as part of the monument.

That gave Wildlands a playbook. In 2022, its leaders approached the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, the official alliance of the five tribes, to say they were considering buying the Cottonwood Wash and were interested in joint ownership and management.

As part of their push, Herrero and Haney drove to four reservations to meet with tribal leaders.

Some were suspicious at first. Anthony Sanchez, the head councilman for the Pueblo of Zuni, explained that non-Native groups will sometimes use supposed ties to tribes to boost their own PR.

"In the past, groups have used our name to raise funding, and then the Pueblo is left with nothing," said Sanchez, 41.

For Wildlands, one point was non-negotiable: The Cottonwood Wash would never be developed or used for any economic activity.

This sort of mitigated sovereignty – you can own the land, but you can't use it or make money from it – might have been a deal-breaker for other tribes. But it lined up with the Inter-Tribal Coalition's own mission.

"Our main goal is to continue protecting our cultural significant ties to this area – that's our biggest concern," said Sanchez, now the Zuni representative on the coalition. "We're not there to make money. We're not there to do anything but protect it."

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3S42qaF>

Bulletin Board

In Navajo Nation, where firewood is in short supply, national forests fill the bill

A nonprofit group collects wood left over from fire prevention efforts and distributes it to tribal members who don't have heat.



A member of the Navajo community loads wood for delivery to homes on a reservation in Cameron, Ariz., in 2021. The wood was accessed through the National Forest Foundation's Wood for Life initiative. Spencer Platt / Getty Images

Jan. 3, 2024

By Alex Rhoades

WIDE RUINS, Ariz. – Driving up a dirt road in this part of Navajo Nation, all that can be seen for miles is sagebrush until reaching Harry Joe Ashley's house.

The Navajo elder lives in a hogan, a traditional home, built for him by neighbors in Wide Ruins, a remote town of 175 people in northeastern Arizona, about 250 miles from Phoenix. The dwelling has no electricity, running water or heat.

He can get by without the water and power, but he uses his handmade wood stove every day to heat his home on the Navajo reservation, where temperatures can reach 15 degrees F in the winter, and his water, which he receives from neighbors and a veterans nonprofit group or has shipped in and stores on his property.

He doesn't have a way to collect wood himself, and a truck bed of firewood would cost him \$300 to be delivered by others on the reservation.

"I only get a small pension from the military," said the twice-enlisted Marine Corps veteran. "That's just not enough."

It's a situation the Navajo, Hopi and other tribes in the Four Corners region face every winter. Many drive hours to the nearest forests for permits to cut down wood for themselves and to sell at reduced prices to people who cannot afford commercial deliveries or are unable to leave the reservation.

The pandemic and the 2019 closure of a coal-powered plant on the Navajo reservation

that generated electricity for the Navajo and Hopi nations created a "home-heating crisis," said Sasha Stortz, Southwest region director of the National Forest Foundation, a nonprofit group that works to preserve U.S. wildlands.

The growing demand for firewood sent expenses soaring for tribal members and prompted Stortz in 2020 to start Wood for Life, a program that takes salvaged wood from fire prevention efforts in national forests and gives it to Native communities that do not have local sources of firewood.

"We try to bring everybody together and kind of help make matches between the needs that are out there and the wood supplies that forests have," Stortz said. "When we have too much wood, and our neighbors are looking for firewood, it's just a perfect connection."

The program now serves five tribes in four states – Arizona, Colorado, Idaho and New Mexico – and handed out 10,000 cords of wood in 2023.

"It's really about using all the different parts of the tree and connecting them to, you know, the way we live and the way folks rely on the forest," Stortz said.

The undertaking also allowed her to provide jobs to 19 people who live on the Navajo reservation, where the unemployment rate is above 45%, according to the Navajo Nation Department of Agriculture.

"So I wanted to also just inject this money back into the community by supporting jobs," she said.

Miranda Mullett, who grew up in Wide Ruins in a hogan built by her grandfather, initially embarked on her own effort to provide firewood to tribal members after visiting her ancestral home in December and learning of their plight.

"I find that Navajo people are very resilient so they're not just going to sit around and be like, 'Oh, I'm cold,'" Mullett said. "Our elders will go out and try to take care of themselves, and sometimes the result is not what we want."

She raised money through her botanics line of skin care products, making a TikTok video that went viral and adding a link on her website where customers could donate. Her goal was to raise enough money to provide firewood for 20 families, but she raised enough for 41. She soon learned of Wood for Life, which helped her find some of the wood she gave away.

"Elders in our community are the keepers of our traditions and our knowledge. So it's just important for us to get back to make them comfortable," she said.

Ashley, who in December received a supply of firewood salvaged from the nearby Coconino Forest by Wood for Life, said he appreciated the gift.

"That's going to help for hopefully, hopefully, two months," he said with a laugh. "This weather is just unpredictable."

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/3vmVB2G>

Navajo council approves nearly \$6 million in emergency funds to mitigate winter weather impacts

KNAU News Talk - Arizona Public Radio | By KNAU STAFF

Published January 25, 2024

The Navajo Nation Council unanimously approved the allocation of nearly \$6 million to help communities recover from the impacts of recent heavy snow and mud.

The resolution would give approximately \$2.1 million to the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management and more than \$3.8 million to tribal chapters. Each of the 110 chapters will receive \$35,000 to help mitigate the impacts of the winter weather conditions.

Delegate George Tolth told the council the funds are vital to helping communities throughout the Navajo Nation, especially those in rural areas.

A state of emergency was declared on the Navajo Nation in January 2023 after heavy snowfall repeatedly hit the region. It was extended earlier this year.

The resolution will now go to President Buu Nygren for consideration. If he approves, the funds will be expedited to arrive within 10 days.

READ MORE AT: <https://bit.ly/47YmNIZ>



Bulletin Board

Navajo Technical University participates in Solar Decathlon Competition

GOLDEN, Colo. – Navajo Technical University's Navajo Builders team participated in an exhibition team in the New Housing Division for the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2023 Design Challenge at the Solar Decathlon Competition Event in Golden, Colorado.

The NTU team presented their Keyah (Land) House design to provide renewable energy and sustainability to the Navajo Nation area.

The Keyah House was created to meet the primary sources of life – electricity and water – that are not readily available in the Navajo Nation. The team wanted to create a home that would benefit renewable energy and the Navajo people. The team's design goals were to make the Keyah House easy to maintain, have renewable energy, and ensure clean air sustainability.

Edwina Leslie, a B.S. (EE) student, represented the student team, and Dr. Sundaram Arumugam represented the faculty team at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for the event. The Solar Decathlon aims to provide participating students with unique training that prepares them for the clean energy workforce. The competition also educates students and the public about the latest technologies and materials in zero energy design and technologies, smart home solutions, and high-performance buildings. The competition included 55 finalist teams from 43 collegiate institutions worldwide, including Canada, China, and India.

"We want to create a home that would benefit renewable energy and our people. It would help them feel comfortable and at home, even though it would be a big step to understand how to conserve energy to help save our planet. As Navajo Technical University (NTU) students, we tried to create a home like the one you would see around the Navajo Nation area," Edwina Leslie, a B.S. (EE) student, stated.

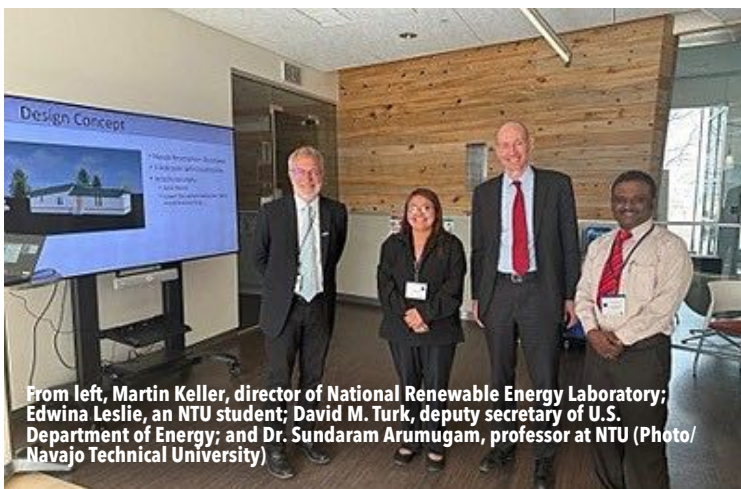
The teams competed in one of six divisions: New Housing, Retrofit Housing, Attached Housing, Multifamily Building, Office Building, or Education Building. The Navajo Builders team was thrilled to meet other groups nationwide and learn about their design and building processes.

The group aims to become a resource that can connect to others, such as construction, manufacturing, renewable contractors, clean air, and communication with updates on how things are handled. For today's society, the team also wants to add a Starlink to

provide internet in rural areas where companies can only install or have their connections within the range they have on the initial point from space. This will also include water that can be provided from solar since it's a long distance to get water for livestock and health and wellbeing.

"We've met some teams from across the country, like Canada, China, and India, to name a few. They had an amazing design and building that they were working on, and we also managed to do student networking and ask about their background and their stories about how they started with the design they were creating. This is the only beginning of clean energy," said Dr. Sundaram Arumugam.

Read at: <https://bit.ly/48nmkuy>



From left, Martin Keller, director of National Renewable Energy Laboratory; Edwina Leslie, an NTU student; David M. Turk, deputy secretary of U.S. Department of Energy; and Dr. Sundaram Arumugam, professor at NTU (Photo/ Navajo Technical University)

Transforming spaces: Pinon celebrates new park

PINON, Ariz. — Pinon community members have pitched in to turn an area of nothing but dirt and overgrown yellow grass into a thriving park with picnic tables, ramadas with grills, an amphitheater and trailheads.

The Pinon High School construction class built and installed signs and the school district's maintenance crew welded grills. Artist Corey Begay painted murals to beautify the space.

Project Coordinator Charles Begay and his team of Donovan Johnson and Claudia Begay all work at the Pinon Chapter. They are the recipients of two Grand Canyon Trust placemaking project grants of \$10,000, which allowed them to turn their dream for a park into reality.

"There was nothing there at all before and there was really nothing planned...so we were able to turn an empty lot into something for the community with this project," Begay said. "We're trying to create a small community park or place where people can hang out and have social activities or maybe even events there in the future."

The small community of Pinon is in Navajo County just outside the Hopi reservation. Approximately 1,000 people live in Pinon, and there aren't many options for recreation outside of the public schools, Begay said.

"We didn't have any developments as far as community-growth wise



in the past 15 years," Johnson said. "So it was really brand new to the community and it really sticks out when you drive through."

Begay said they are developing a path that goes from the park to a shopping center in town, part of Pinon Harmony Trails.

"So we've added some trailheads, we're putting gravel along the way so it doesn't get too muddy, and then we've even put up a couple solar lights that are on the trailhead signs," Begay said. "And on the trailhead signs we've put up information on local wildlife and plants and even some Navajo history."

Read At: <https://bit.ly/41QYd57>

Bulletin Board

A WAY TO BE FOUND: HOW THIS TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING LIFE ON NAVAJO NATION

After four years of fieldwork, the Rural Utah Project announced it completed providing more than 3,000 homes with addresses.



(Courtesy of Rural Utah Project) Daylene Redhorse, a field organizer for the Rural Utah Project, hangs a Plus Code sign on a Navajo Nation home south of Bluff, on October 10, 2019.

By Sofia Jeremias

Jan. 9, 2024

When Daylene Redhorse's mother had a stroke, the ambulance driver struggled to find their home in the Navajo Nation. Without a formal address to give the dispatcher, pinpointing their location proved impossible.

Their water poisoned, Navajo rely on a church well for water

After half an hour on the phone, Redhorse's family put her mother in their own car and met the ambulance instead. "My mom lost a whole hour," Redhorse said, "she never fully recovered from the stroke."

Later, when her father had health issues, Redhorse wondered, "How can we better identify where we live so people can easily find us?"

Her experience is not uncommon in the Navajo Nation, where winding dirt roads, limited cell service, streets without names and homes without addresses make driving an ambulance a difficult task.

But now, thousands of homes in the Navajo Nation have a way to be found. The nonprofit Rural Utah Project (RUP) changed the way people find each other on the Utah portion reservation using an open-source technology created by Google. The nonprofit announced in December that after four years it completed addressing more than 3,121 homes in Navajo Nation.

The addresses are simple alpha-numerical "codes" rather than the step-by-step directions people in the Navajo Nation used on everything from voter registration forms to driver licenses.

Google's "plus codes" make it easier for EMS services to reach those in need, help ensure that registered voters are listed in the right district and even help with day-to-day tasks like receiving mail.

A struggle in emergency situations

Directions to a home in Navajo Nation might

go something like this:

Go three miles past mile marker seven. On your left, there will be a light brown house.

The problem with those directions, explained Otis Oldman, the EMS director for the Utah Navajo Health System, is that "90% of the houses down here are light brown and you have to start over again."

In medical emergencies, every minute counts and direction-related delays have lasting consequences for patients. Dispatchers used GPS coordinates gleaned from cellphones to try and find patients, but those coordinates could be off by a mile or two in areas with only one cell tower.

"A lot of our EMS providers are from the area so they kind of just rely on each other to know where that person lives," Oldman said.

Plus codes are a kind of shorthand for latitude and longitude made up of letters and numbers. For example, the plus code for the post office in Bluff would be: "7CMW+8C Bluff, Utah."

On their webpage, Google, which administers the technology, states plus codes are "street addresses for people or places that don't have one." Plus codes don't require an internet connection to use and are free.



(Courtesy of Rural Utah Project) A Plus Code sign on a home on the Navajo Nation in San Juan County, Utah.

"I can't stress how much it's really helped us out," Oldman said. "I know that it's made the dispatchers a lot happier, knowing that all they have to ask for is the Google Plus code and patients will give it to them."

Nonprofits deployed plus codes in places like Somalia, Kolkata and now Utah.

A personal mission

Daylene Redhorse, an addressing specialist



(Courtesy of Plus.Codes / Google) Monument Valley High School on the Plus Code grid.

for RUP, lives south of Bluff on the reservation. Redhorse spent the last few years driving to people's homes, explaining how the plus codes work, and providing them with the coordinates that match their location.

The first thing people wanted to know was who Redhorse's parents were.

"They'd be like, 'Oh, this is how we're related,'" Redhorse recalled, "and that's how I found a lot of family out there and they remembered my parents."

She not only made new connections while explaining plus codes and registering people to vote, but ended up with a few extra pets too. "A lot of the elders started this whole negotiation," Redhorse said, "OK, you want me to fill out a form, you're gonna have to take a puppy or a kitten."

At one point, she had 17 cats and 11 dogs.

After RUP successfully registered 1,600 new voters in San Juan County, Redhorse wanted to do more. "I wanted the state, the county, to know that Navajos do live in Utah. We reside in Utah," Redhorse said.

Plus codes help in emergency situations, but also with getting other types of health care, like at-home dialysis treatment. "We all deserve a physical address," Redhorse said, "and this is the closest we could come to using physical addresses because we don't have street numbers, we don't have street names."

While her addressing work may be done, Redhorse is adamant about getting more people to vote and run in elections. Navajos, Redhorse said, have a say in decisions being made in San Juan County.

"If you want to run for election," Redhorse said, "come and see me."

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/47tmpLW>

Bulletin Board

'It's a struggle': Bus drivers face challenging conditions on rural Navajo reservation

Road conditions disrupt access to education in the Central Consolidated School District



'Bad weather stops' are put into place by the district to ensure buses do not get stuck or damaged due to harsh road conditions brought on by inclement weather. (Alx Lee/Tri-City Record)

behind Newcomb elementary on Indian Service Route 19B off Highway 491.

Joe is an integral part of the transportation team that evaluates driving conditions during inclement weather. Like Theodore, Joe starts his day early, driving about 4 a.m. to the different routes so that he can report back to the coordinator.

On Friday, Jan. 6, bus drivers started their day at sunup instead of their normal 5:45 a.m. route in the dark. The night before, the district declared a two-hour delay for Newcomb, Naschitti and Shiprock schools.

Bus driver Harry Dale begins his routine check list before his route. His route Jan. 5 consisted of "bad weather stops," put in place by the district when buses can't access stops on muddy or snowy service roads.

Dale has not always driven the Naschitti route. His previous route was on primarily dirt roads toward Sanostee, northwest of Newcomb.

Weather is not the only obstacle for Dale. Cattle, broken-down cars and inconsiderate parking by other transportation vehicles often block the road.

Dale said a functioning radio is crucial on his job because a bus driver could be stuck for hours with no communication.

"903 . that turn around is kind of slippery," said a radio call. A "turnaround" refers to a stop that is accessible and allows for buses to meet students, before returning back to the main highway.

Dale finds a flaw with the 'bad weather stops' when checkerboard pattern of bad weather appears on the reservation. Inclement weather exists in some areas, but not others.

Routes will be clear, but parents complain that alternative stops force them to meet the bus, Dale said.

Dale said he enjoys his job and the kids are the least of his problems.

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/4236zq9>

By Alx Lee Tri-City Record Reporter

Monday, Jan 8, 2024

As snow fell early into the new year, it brought a snow day for several districts in San Juan County.

While students and faculty might enjoy the school closures in urban areas, transportation teams at Central Consolidated School District face a different narrative.

Central Consolidated covers 3,000 square miles with schools on and off the Navajo Nation.

In a district that has a variety of roads that are not maintained, Cynthia Theodore, district transportation coordinator, starts her day at 3:30 a.m. on days that have inclement weather.

Theodore is a part of a team that reports to Superintendent Steve Carlson.

"Ninety-nine percent of our bus routes on the reservation are unimproved, not maintained, unpaved, and it's been a struggle," she said.

Chapter houses maintain the roads that buses use and are allowed to grade 15 miles of roadway each quarter.

"Fifteen miles is not even one bus route," she said.

Sheldon Joe, Newcomb specialist and mechanic, said routes average around 50 miles and are similar in mileage.

Should a road continue to deteriorate, the transportation department has no choice but to remove that route, based on New Mexico Public Education Department bus guidelines.

'It's for the kids'

In the crisp morning with fresh snow still covering the ground and the sun starting to rise, Joe spreads salt to melt the black ice on the bus barn pavement



Bus driver Harry Dale welcomes each student to his bus by name. He said he let students know about the Tri-City Record ride-along in December. (Alx Lee/Tri-City Record)

Bulletin Board

Chinle celebrates expansion of veterans services

Northern Arizona VA Health Care System to provide 5-day-a-week, face-to-face primary care

CHINLE, Ariz. – In a bid to enhance healthcare accessibility in Indigenous communities, the Northern Arizona Veteran Health Care System (NAVAHCS) has broadened its service offerings, with its rural health clinic in Chinle now operating in-person services five days a week.

Marking this milestone, NAVAHCS hosted a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony at the clinic Jan. 22. The event saw leadership figures from the Veterans Health Administration, Indian Health Service, and Navajo Nation. Navajo Nation Veterans Administration Director Bobbie Ann Baldwin spoke to some of the challenges that veterans in Chinle and surrounding areas face when accessing healthcare.

“One of the things that our veterans face each and every day is getting to the clinic out in Phoenix, out in Albuquerque, out in Salt Lake City,” Baldwin said. “But now we have a clinic here in our backyard where we’ll be able to receive the services that we so desperately need. Only having to travel 10 miles versus 300-plus miles is going to make a vast difference in our lives.”

Kevin Gaines, Chief Medical Officer for Navajo Area Indian Health Service, expressed how important healthcare improvements like these are to veterans in the area.

“I’m excited and pleased anytime we can expand or provide advanced services to our veterans, particularly those who have served in combat,” Gaines said. “Sometimes service and sacrifice continue even beyond the time that the service ends for those who have been traumatized through their combat experiences, so I welcome the expanded clinic here and future expanded benefits that we can provide for those who have served our country.”

For years now, the VA has been hard at working to find sustainable solutions to the healthcare gap that has been evident for Native and rural veterans throughout the country.

This step by NAVAHCS to bring consistent face-to-face healthcare services directly to the Native and rural veterans it serves is one of the first efforts of its kind in the nation.

Bryan Arnette, Deputy Director of the VA’s Desert Pacific Healthcare Network – the regional office that includes northern Arizona – said the VA hopes to use NAVAHCS’s success as a blueprint for other VA healthcare systems.



“This is a milestone we get to celebrate that helps us figure out how we might replicate this for our Native and rural health communities across the country,” Arnette said.

Later this year, NAVAHCS will be introducing the same enhanced healthcare services to its clinics in Kayenta, Polacca and Tuba City. Similar grand opening ceremonies will be hosted for each of the locations once those opening dates are determined.

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/3HDOipZ>

Social media star Ian Teller chosen as Native Youth Leader Champion for Change

TSAILE, Ariz. – At 23, Ian Teller already has an impressive résumé under his sash, with a business degree from Fort Lewis College and Master’s in music industry from University of Southern California.

The Tsaile native grew up loving film, and posted Vlogs of his travels. After a gig with the New Mexico Indigenous Youth Council, his videos transformed into documentaries of notable Indigenous performance artists.

Today, Teller’s interviewees include Native artists and politicians alike, including former Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Attorney General Ethel Branch and comedian James June. He has over 21,000 followers on TikTok, posting short, funny clips of experiences being Navajo.

He is Tódich’íinii (Bitter Water clan) born for Kinyaa’áanii. His maternal grandfather is Ma’í Deeshgiizhnií and paternal grandfather is Tó aheedlíinii.

Teller hopes to increase Indigenous representation in the entertainment industry. He has had music and media partnerships with Warner Bros, Grammy U and Jay-Z’s entertainment company, Roc Nation.

Now, Teller has been chosen as a 2024 Native Youth Leader Champion for Change with the Center for Native American Youth. Each year, the program selects five Native youth as Champions for Change, helping them develop as young leaders through experience-based learning and culturally tailored advocacy training.

Teller is excited to meet the other members of the cohort in Washington D.C. in February. The cohort members include Wambli Quintana, Navajo and Cheyenne River Sioux, Tayler Higgins, of the Seldovia Village Tribe, Sage Phillips, of the Penobscot Nation and Jeidah DeZurney, of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

The Navajo-Hopi Observer talked to Teller about his new partnership, social media fame, and dreams of working in the film and music industries.

What will you be doing as a Native Youth Leader?

The Center for Native American Youth is giving us a new platform to share our work. They are also sharing resources communities. Our hopes are that in partnership we can produce a number of projects throughout our year as Champions.

What shows and movies did you grow up watching and are you fond of today?

Well, growing up I was always fascinated with sci-fi, fantasy and similar genres so, I spent much of my time watching Marvel and Star Wars movies. Today if I’m being honest I still haven’t lost interest in those films, but I have to say some of my favorite films and series today are those like



“Reservation Dogs,” “Prey” and “Killers of the Flower Moon.”

What was your experience with Indigenous representation on the screen? Do you think there is a lack of representation behind the screen as well as in front?

When I was younger the only times I would see Natives on screen were in western films and today we live in a world where Lily Gladstone has just become the first woman of Native American descent to be nominated for an Oscar. I think that says a lot about how far Natives have come in the industry, but there is still room for Native-centered stories, created and produced by Native people to be shared.

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/47WZGYV>

PERSONNEL NEWS -- DCD OPEN POSITIONS

POSITION TITLE	LOCATION	PAY RATE	CLOSING DATE
Administrative Service Centers			
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Wide Ruins, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Oak Springs, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Crystal, NM	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Coyote Canyon, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Tsayatoh, NM	42,407.28	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Jeddito, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Indian Wells, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Sawmill, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Twin Lakes, NM	30,897.32	2/16/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Forest Lake, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Tsaile, AZ	30,897.32	OUF
Community Service Coordinator (S)	Low Mountain, AZ	42,407.28	OUF
Community Service Coordinator (S)	Round Rock, AZ	40,778.64	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Alamo, NM	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Lake Valley, NM	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Standing Rock, NM	30,897.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Tohajilee, NM	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Nageezi, NM	28,897.92	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Huerfano, NM	28,897.92	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Red Mesa, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Teecnospos, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Red Mesa, AZ	42,407.28	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Red Valley, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Teecnospos, AZ	40,778.64	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Sanostee, NM	42,407.24	02/05/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Kaibeto, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Coalmine Mesa, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Navajo Mountain, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Tolani Lake, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Coalmine Mesa, AZ	42,407.28	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Cameron, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Coppermine, AZ	30,046.32	OUF
Community Services Coordinator (S)	Oljato, AZ	42,407.28	2/12/2024
Administrative Services Officer (S)	Crownpoint, NM	49,381.20	2/2/2024
Office Specialist (S)	Shiprock, NM	30,046.32	2/9/2024
Capital Projects Management Department			
Registered Architect	Window Rock, AZ	75,585.60	OUF
Community Housing & Infrastructure Department			
Project Manager (S)	Window Rock, AZ	49,381.20	2/12/2024
Construction Inspector (S)	Fort Defiance, AZ	45,288.72	2/6/2024
Carpenter (S) (T)	Fort Defiance, AZ	45,288.72	2/9/2024
Construction Supervisor (S) (T)	Fort Defiance, AZ	42,407.28	2/9/2024
Carpenter (S)	Fort Defiance, AZ	35,642.16	2/16/2024
Eligibility Technician (S)	Fort Defiance, AZ	30,046.32	2/9/2024
Sr Programs and Projects Spec (S)	Window Rock, AZ	63,642.24	2/7/2024
Eligibility Technician (S)	Chinle, AZ	30,046.32	2/9/2024
Navajo Addressing Authority Department			
Office Specialist (S)	Window Rock, AZ	30,046.32	2/9/2024
Program Manager I (S)	Window Rock, AZ	63,642.24	2/9/2024
Solid Waste Management Department			
Program Manager I (S)	Window Rock, AZ	63,642.24	2/9/2024
Office Specialist (S)	Window Rock, AZ	30,046.32	2/9/2024
Senior Planner (S)	Window Rock, AZ	53,849.52	2/9/2024
Environmental Specialist (S)	Window Rock, AZ	53,849.52	2/9/2024

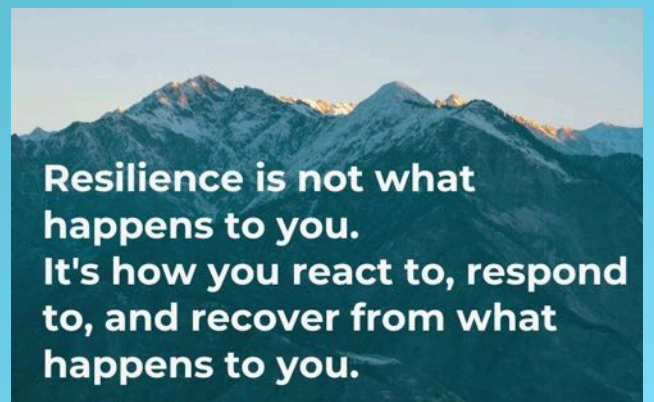
(OUF) Open Until Filled
 (S) Sensitive Position (subject to background check) Closing Dates may change

For the most up-to-date personnel info, please visit DPM's website at
<http://www.dpm.navajo-nsn.gov/jobs.html>

Comic of the Month



Quote of the Month



Groundhog Day: February 2, 2024

February 02, 2024

Press Release Number CB24-SFS.011



Groundhog Day Forecasts and Climate History, from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Centers for Environmental Information:

"Every February 2, a crowd of thousands gathers at Gobbler's Knob in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, to await a special forecast from a groundhog named Phil. If the 20-pound groundhog emerges and sees his shadow, the United States can expect six more weeks of winter weather according to legend. But, if Phil doesn't see his shadow, we can expect warmer temperatures and the arrival of an early spring.

"Even though he's been forecasting since 1887, Phil's track record for the entire country isn't perfect. To determine just how accurate he is, we've compared U.S. national temperatures with Phil's forecasts. On average, Phil has gotten it right 40% of the time over the past 10 years."

READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/groundhog-day.html>

The Opportunity Project Finds Ways to Funnel Investment to American Indian and Alaska Native Communities

January 12, 2024

Written by: Victoria Elizabeth Fine and Thera Naiman

For the first time, The Opportunity Project (TOP) recently focused its efforts solely on improving access to funding for indigenous communities, more than a quarter of whom live in poverty.



In partnership with the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), TOP teams used data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies and worked over the course of 12 weeks to come up with ways to funnel more capital and investment to Indigenous communities and improve their representation in federal datasets.

Each year, TOP collaborates closely with federal agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to identify pressing challenges facing communities across the United States that can benefit from new, accessible data-driven tools.

This TOP challenge was a timely one. According to a 2019 Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) survey [PDF 2.2 MB], more than a quarter of American Indian and Alaska Natives live in poverty and almost a fifth do not have any type of checking or savings account.

TOP initiatives including this challenge will be presented at the Census Open Innovation Summit 2024 January 17 to January 19. TOP brings together government, technologists and community groups to rapidly prototype digital products using federal open data. In this sprint, teams had the opportunity to work alongside leaders from Indigenous communities to create solutions. Many focused on Native Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) key to increasing access to capital, credit and financial services in these communities.

Some of the tools the teams created:

- **A workforce resource map for Native CDFIs.** Sweet Grass Consulting, LLC used Census Bureau data to build the interactive [Native CDFI Workforce Resource Map](#), which provides information about workforce resources to Native CDFIs looking to build their staff capacity
- **Interactive maps to connect investors to Native communities.** Oweesta used its international databases and the CDFI Fund's [List of Certified CDFIs](#) [XLS <1.0 MB] to build two interactive maps – one for funders aiming to invest in Native communities and one for Native CDFIs in search of funding. These maps connect Native CDFIs and investors to support moving capital into Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian communities.
- **Identifying a thriving wage for the Cheyenne River Reservation.** [Indigenous Impact Co.](#) and [Four Bands Community Fund](#) collected local data to identify the hourly wage required for families on the Cheyenne River Reservation to thrive. The methodology can be replicated to empower other Indigenous areas. The data can be used to guide decisions by Native CDFIs, tribal economic development departments, reservation-based businesses, businesses considering hiring a reservation-based workforce and future Native homeowners.
- **Combining data with personal stories to attract capital to Indigenous communities.** [Lenderfit](#) promotes storytelling as a way to attract investments. It used data from Census' [My Tribal Area tool](#) to share [stories of Indigenous business owners](#) with potential investors and loan pool funders.

"These products provide Indigenous thought leaders, economic development practitioners, and private and public funders data-driven, human-centered tools to thoughtfully deploy capital in Indigenous communities," said Thomas Hitz, a management and program analyst in EDA's Performance, Research and National Technical Assistance Division.

To spotlight current discussions regarding open data initiatives and tribal data, Census Open Innovation Labs (COIL) is set to host a panel about the importance of Tribal Data Sovereignty January 18 at this year's Census Open Innovation Summit 2024.

"The Census Bureau strives to prioritize the unique government-to-government relationship between the Census Bureau and American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) tribal governments," said Dee Alexander, a tribal affairs coordinator at the Census Bureau. "So, it is wonderful to see how this Opportunity Project sprint enabled us to partner with and learn directly from Indigenous-led organizations and community experts that participated in the sprint."

READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/01/top-indigenous-communities.html>

2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR

New Year's Day

U.S. population

335,893,238

World population

8,019,876,189

Feeding Our Communities

Estimated Sales, Value of Shipments, or Revenue for Select Food-Related Industries in 2021



Full-Service Restaurants (SAS)
\$365.5 billion



Dairy Product Manufacturing (ASM)
\$130.3 billion



Grocery and Related Product Merchant Wholesalers (AWTS)
\$1,117.2 billion



Specialty Food Stores (ARTS)
\$26.9 billion



Mobile Food Services (SAS)
\$2.8 billion



Sugar and Confectionery Product Manufacturing (ASM)
\$40.2 billion



Grocery Stores (ARTS)
\$792.3 billion



Cafeterias, Grill Buffets, and Buffets (SAS)
\$5.2 billion

Note: Data are based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Data are not adjusted for price changes. Data are representative of employer firms only, with the exception of data from the Annual Retail Trade Survey that includes estimated nonemployer data. These statistics are estimated from sample surveys and are subject to sampling variability, as well as nonsampling error. Information on survey methodology can be found in the technical documentation section of the respective survey source webpage: 2021 Annual Survey of Manufactures (ASM), 2021 Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS), 2021 Annual Retail Trade Survey (ARTS), and the 2021 Service Annual Survey (SAS). Measures of error can be found in the data tables of the appropriate survey: ASM, AWTS, ARTS, and SAS. The U.S. Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data. (Project No. P-7500114, Disclosure Review Board [DRB] approval number: CBDRB-FY23-086 [ASM], Project No. P-7500133, DRB approval number: CBDRB-FY23-047 [AWTS], Project No. P-7500134, DRB approval number: CBDRB-FY23-0058 [ARTS], Project No. P-7502871, DRB approval number: CBDRB-FY22-330 [SAS]).



ATTENTION

DCD ARPA Telephones:

Paulene Thomas	(928)551-8935
Edwin Begay	(505)870-6252
Dawnell Begay	(928)551-8941
Ryan Begay	(928)551-8947

**You may contact us Monday-
Friday 8:00 am-5:00pm**



MAIN: (928) 871-7182

WWW.NNDCCD.ORG

Housing Improvement Program

Bldg #8229 Field House Road
Fort Defiance, Arizona

Rita M. Begay
Program Manager I
P.O. Box 527
Fort Defiance, AZ

Phone No.# (928) 729-4017
Fax No.# (928) 729-4277

FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

Housing Improvement Program
Bldg# 8229 Field House Road
Fort Defiance, Arizona 86504

Phone No.# (928) 729-4017
Fax No.# (928) 729-4277

CHINLE AGENCY

Bldg #2492 SW of Chapter House
Chinle, Arizona 86503

Phone No.# (928) 674-2260
Fax No.# (928) 674-2266

WESTERN AGENCY

CLOSED

contact Chinle Agency Office.

EASTERN AND SHIPROCK

AGENCY

CLOSED

contact Fort Defiance Agency Office.

HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (HIP)

Community Housing & Infrastructure Department – CHID

Division of Community Development



Contact any of the HIP Agency Office for additional information or to obtain housing assistance application.

Application can be downloaded from the DCD Website:

nndcd.org

The **Housing Improvement Program (HIP)** is federally funded by P.L. 93-638 contracts. The program is to improve the living standards by providing decent, safe and sanitary homes within the territorial boundaries of the Navajo Nation. HIP provides housing assistance through home repairs, renovation, and replacement of existing house or new construction to assist very-low-income families and/or individual.

Eligibility Requirements

- Total annual household income does not exceed 150% of the federal poverty income guidelines.
- Enrolled member of the Navajo Tribe.
- Lives in an approved Navajo Tribal service area.
- Present housing is substandard.
- Has no other resource for housing assistance.
- Has not received assistance from HIP for repairs, renovation, replacement and new housing, or down payment assistance.
- Has not received any other type of federal government sponsored housing program assistance over the previous 20-year period.
- Down Payment Assistance available to eligible borrowers to participate in HIP. The applicant must still meet all the eligibility requirements. A letter from the funding institution that specifies the down payment amount and closing costs required to qualify for the loan must be provided.

Application Requirement

Complete housing assistance application must be fully complete and sign and date. Provide required documents.

- Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) and Social Security Card; for all permanent household members.
- Provide proof of all income for all permanent members of the household.
 - Award letters from social security, general assistance, retirement, unemployment benefits and other unearned income.
 - Signed copies of current 1040 tax returns, including W-2s, if filed.
 - Signed notarized statement explaining why you did not file a tax return.
 - Signed notarized statement of how you support yourself, if you are reporting no income received.
- Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts.
- If claiming disability, provide a Doctor's statement or documents verifying disability.
- Must have a finalized and approved home site lease in your name.
- Cultural Resource Compliance Form & Archaeological Inventory Report
- Proof of Veteran status (veterans' card, discharge forms, DD214)

All permanent household members over the age of eighteen (18) years is required to provide and complete all income verification forms.

All applications are reviewed to determine if you are eligible. Eligible applicants are ranked in order of need, from highest to lowest, based on the total numeric priority ranking points outlined in the 25 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Part 256.14. The application can be carried over into next fiscal year but the applicant must submit an undated information form and provide income documentation for all permanent household members.

Housing assistance applications are available beginning February ending September 30. To obtain an application, call your local agency office.

**25 C.F.R., Part 256
HIP REGULATIONS REVISIONS;
EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 10, 2015**

NEW RANKING POINTS

- **Annual Household Income**
- **Aged Person;**
- **Disabled Individual;**
- **Dependent Children;**
- **Veteran;**
- **Homeless;**
- **Overcrowded;**
- **Dilapidated House;**
- **Down Payment Assistance; Applicant must meet all HIP requirements and must be eligible. Applicant must be approved for a home with a bank or mortgage company.**

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