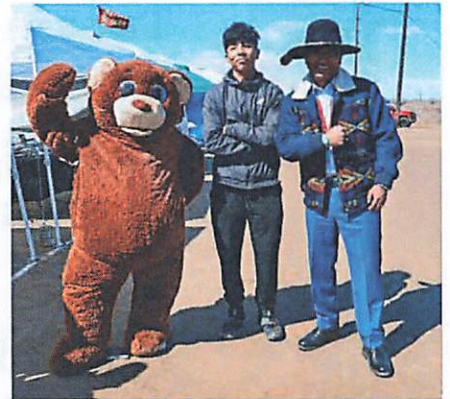


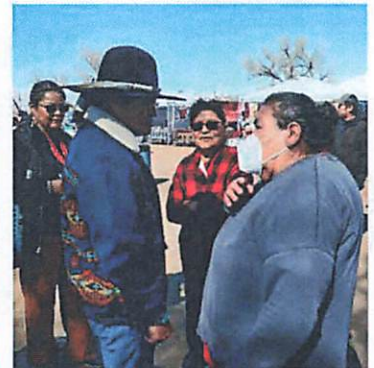


The Navajo Nation **DR. BUU NYGREN** *PRESIDENT*

Yideeskáadi Nitsáhákees | *Think for the Future*



NORTHERN AGENCY COUNCIL MEETING



Prepared by
The Office of the President
March 15, 2025

Tune in Thursdays at 1 PM & 5:30 PM
to your local Navajo radio station to hear
weekly updates given in Navajo by
President Nygren

Follow President Nygren
on Facebook, Instagram, X, Spotify and
Apple Podcast

**Navajo Nation
Office of the President**

100 Parkway
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Mailing:
PO Box 7440
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Phone: (928)871-7000
Fax: (928)871-4025
opvp.navajo-nsn.gov



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Northern Agency Representative Updates	5
Administration Updates.....	6
Congratulations to the Page girls for advancing to the 2025 AIA copper championship, and to the Chinle and Ganado girls for reaching the 2025 AIA 3A final four in Phoenix, AZ.....	15
Navajo Nation celebrates Future Farmers of America Day, honoring youth leaders in agriculture	15
Congratulations to Mary West of Navajo Gaming for being “Chamber Champion of the Year” by the Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce.....	16
Over \$400 million in road projects to break ground with on-call engineering firms	16
Protecting our livelihoods: cattle theft on the Navajo Nation.....	17
Exploring innovative solutions with SpaceX and Starlink	17
Congratulations to “rockisaan” and “rez kidz” on advancing to the first tech challenge world championships!.....	18
Four corners dialysis clinic in chinle, ariz., gets 25-year lease extension	19
Building the future: groundbreaking for the \$6.2 million San Juan Lateral Waterline in Naschitti, NM	19
Good luck to our 3a north teams competing in the 2025 AIA 3A and copper brackets.....	19
Preserving diné bizaad: empowering our children through literacy and community support	20
This President’s Day, we honor our tribal presidents and chairmen and acknowledge the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation government.....	20
Expanding broadband Internet access in Ramah Navajo.....	21
Update: protecting essential federal positions serving the Navajo Nation.....	21
Over \$1 billion dollars in new construction for BIE schools	22
PSAP project to ensure quicker response times in cases of 911 emergencies	22
Navajo Nation celebrates \$3.5 million revenue sharing payment from Goulding's Lodge	23
Protecting essential federal positions serving the Navajo Nation	23
\$80 million new school groundbreaking in Chi Chil’tah Jones Ranch community	24
600 Diné Bizaad books gifted to Diné children at Gallup v. Kirtland Central girls basketball game	24
Closing the digital divide: Permanent Internet now serving Low Mountain	25
Chinle Wildcats dominate 3a north – onward to the AIA playoffs	25
President Nygren addresses the New Mexico House of Representatives	25
Celebrating 50 years of self-determination at 2025 New Mexico American Indian Legislative Day.....	26
Haskell vs. NTU games showcase native athletes' heart and determination.....	26
President Nygren encourages n.m. governor to appoint a Diné citizen to house district 6	26

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

Navajo Nation expresses needs with NM governor..... 27

President Nygren fights for the Navajo Nation in Washington 28

That’s a burger’ secures 25-year lease renewal..... 28

Diné bizaad literacy at the red mesa and rock point basketball game 29

Long-awaited Pueblo Pintado Health Center nears groundbreaking in Eastern Navajo Agency 29

Investing in ourselves: wood delivery for red valley and the path to \$1 billion for navajo communities 30

600 diné bizaad children’s book given to children at the page v. Chinle basketball game 30

Acoma, diné relatives build homes for the 1,000 home initiative 30

Sharing Navajo government lessons with students from Albuquerque Public Schools 31

OMB memo pausing federal funds has been rescinded..... 31

Statement from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren on freeze of federal funds, grants..... 32

41 volunteers help the foster grandparent program shine 32

Prayer of k’e and healing disregarded as two delegates interrupt State of the Navajo Nation Address during the winter session 33

Congratulations to Speaker Curley on re-election 33

New electric line installation, enhancing power supply and efficiency for the Huerfano chapter 34

President Nygren shares Navajo priorities with NM state leaders 35

Sonsela Butte Wildfire is officially contained after burning 133 acres..... 35

National Cheii Day 36

President Nygren urges New Mexico leaders to fund the Shiprock First Responder Substation 36

\$118 million approved for nine solar and batter storage projects across Arizona and New Mexico 36

Crystal, NM fire chars at least 133 acres 37

Navajo Nation leaders advocate for water rights and economic development at inaugural ball 37

Navajo Department of Workforce Development: unlocking training for lasting employment..... 38

Navajo Nation celebrates trump administration at inaugural reception for the 47th President of the United States 39

The late rev. Dr. Martin luther king sought peace, balance, beauty, harmony for the world 39

President Nygren announces groundbreaking partnership for Ne’zaad Solar Project 40

Public Safety at the forefront of Navajo Nation and state leadership 40

President Nygren relieves Olin Kieyoomia of his duties as Veterans Administrator and wishes him well... 41

Diné bizaad is the official language of the navajo nation ... so let’s practice every day 41

Four leaders, same goal— better life for the Navajo people..... 42

A prayer for our NTUA linemen who are traveling to Los Angeles, CA to restore power 42

Thank you, Gerald Keetso, for your 12 years of service as Tuba City Chapter President..... 43

President Nygren presents People’s State of the Navajo Nation: key accomplishments in housing, water rights, tourism and taxation	43
Navajo Nation connects the unreachable: starlink pilot program brings broadband to remote chapters	44
Wishing the 36th WINGS national team success at the USA cross country championships	44
Building bridges to the future: Navajo Nation broadband office expands digital access, connectivity	45
Seven new homes delivered: a step toward the 1,000 home initiative	45
Prayers to our brave Navajos who are on their way to California to fight wildfires	45
Navajo Nation acts against environmental damage: \$4.9 million contract to plug orphaned wells	46
Witnessing the oath: a new chapter for our communities in Chinle Agency.....	46
One step at a time, new Office of the President Legal Counsel made her way home	47
President Nygren unveils \$31 million ERP system to modernize government response to the Navajo people	47
The nations fight for broadband equality.....	48
Ringling in the new year with new officials in Eastern Navajo Agency	49
Diné College President Dr. Charles “Monty” Roessel passes after long illness.....	49
From the Navajo Nation to phoenix: Dragon, a golden eagle’s journey	50
New executive director of the Division of Community Development brings a ‘go get ‘em and get it done attitude’	50
Preparing for winter: emergency support for navajo elders in crystal and sawmill chapters.....	51
Navajo Nation animal control officers push for education on animal care to aid in stray animal problem .	51
Emergency relief supplies prepared for Navajo Nation communities in need ahead of storms.....	52
Congratulations to Supervisor Alton Joe Shepherd on taking his oath as Apache County Supervisor.....	52
From D.C. to Naastah Canyon: Congressman Schweikert’s commitment to the Navajo Nation	53
President Nygren, Speaker Curley sign agreement to remove bureaucratic red tape to enable spending of frf funds	53
A peacekeeper, home builder, man of faith: President Jimmy carter dies at 100	54
Three northern agency schools showed remarkable improvements in their education systems	55
Following in their parents’ footsteps: the watchman siblings revive a family legacy in Navajo, NM	55
Congratulations to our two new animal control officers.....	56
Coyote stories bring parents and children together this holiday season	56
Celebrating diné bizaad the official language of the Navajo Nation.....	57
President Nygren advocates for Navajo Gallup water supply project	57
Planning the Lechee Water Treatment Plant.....	58
Wheatfields Lake to get a makeover	58
Skating at the Office of the President.....	59

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

I extend my gratitude those that attended the 2024 Azee Bee Nahagha of Diné Nation (ABNDN) Youth Education and Special Needs Prayer Day 59

Grant to Support Torreon Library..... 60

Kris Beecher to Serve as Deputy Attorney General..... 60

Time is running out for three water settlements to ensure safe drinking Water..... 61

Statement on removal of Attorney General Ethel Branch 63

President Nygren welcomes new Naat’aanii Development Corporation Board Members 64

First Lady Jasmine Blackwater Nygren becomes first Native American County Attorney in AZ 65

Three Judges receive recommendations for permanent Judgeships 65

Northern Agency Representative Updates

Northern Agency Spelling Bee

On March 6th, twelve schools participated in the challenging spelling bee at Phil L. Thomas Performing Arts Center sponsored by ODY. On behalf of President Nygren, I attended the event and was able to award the Navajo Language “Father’s Boots” book to the winners of each category from 4th through 8th grade. The students were given a pre-exam prior to competition that I was able to grade. The exams ranged from 86% to 96%. The top students do move forward to compete in the Navajo Nation Spelling Bee to be held on March 20 at the Crownpoint Office of Dine’ Youth. Winners there proceed to the Scripps National Spelling Bee May 27-29.

Nihi’awee’ Baa Nihil Dahozho doo Baa Aheeh Daniidzin

Office of the First Lady, Jasmine Blackwater-Nygre, staff and community representatives are currently planning the April 19th 2nd Annual Baby Celebration event and agenda to be held in Tuba City, AZ. We are welcoming all Navajo babies born from April 2024 to April 2025. Baby incentives will be given to all in attendance and lunch will be provided. Navajo Division for Children and Family Services will be providing their services at the booths including all programs available.

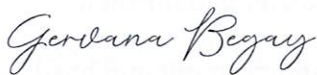
Navajo Agriculture Products Industry to Deliver Food

Office of the President is preparing to assist with delivering 49,333 food boxes. NAPI will be distributing bins of food to 110 Chapters. It will be up to the Chapters to separate and put in boxes for their community. Be prepared to have bags or boxes to prepare and coordinate. I will be there to assist from the President’s office. As soon as Office of Controller issues the MOA# to NAPI, they will start with 10 Chapters per week.

Navajo Utah Commission Meeting

On behalf of President Nygren, I attended the NUC on March 11th and gave a short report. Questions from the Commissioners were invitations for President’s attendance and schedule to be at future events. Concerns were the Four Corners Monument with the bathroom issue and improvement to the Park. Recommendations were given in regards to fundings to assist the Chapter. I do plan on attending future NUC meetings and give feedbacks with Division Director, Tony S. and Stephen Etcitty and M. Halona to discuss the Uranium Hauling fundings.

Ahéheé,



Gervana Begay

Northern Agency Representative

gervana.begay@navajo-nsn.gov

928-871-7000

Administration Updates

Navajo business reception: building a thriving future together with Diné entrepreneurs at RES 2025

March 13, 2025 - At the Navajo Business Reception during the 2025 Reservation Economic Summit in Las Vegas, I felt excitement talking about our Navajo economy and its expanding footprint with hundreds of Diné entrepreneurs. This event wasn't just a reception; it was a celebration of our Diné entrepreneurs and a testament to our shared strength and resilience.

I spotted familiar faces from the Diné Development Corporation (DDC) and many of our tribal enterprises like Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise and the Navajo Times, and their dedication to uplifting our people through their line of work and services. Engaging with fellow entrepreneurs, hearing their stories, and sharing hopes for the future is vital to our tribal sovereignty.

This reception was also the launch of the United Dineh Ventures (UDV), which is an effort to unify our tribal enterprises to expand our global footprint. The goal of UDV is for our larger enterprises like DDC, Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, Navajo Times, Navajo Arts and Crafts Enterprise and Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise, among others, to mentor small businesses to help them grow and expand.

For instance, enterprises like the Diné Development Corporation, which has contributed nearly \$22 million to our community, is a success story with its global information technology sector. I called on our guests to share their own stories of success, knowing their experiences could motivate others to pursue their dreams, and to network to find solutions.

While I acknowledged the challenges we face, particularly with budget shortfalls ahead, I urged everyone to unite in finding solutions. Together, I know we can navigate these obstacles. I envision a thriving future where our Navajo businesses succeed through collaboration, innovation, and community support.

Celebrating our Diné leaders at the 2025 native american 40 under 40 ceremony

March 12, 2025 - Congratulations to our Diné members, Colin Bradley, Candace French, and Adrian Standing-Elk Pinnecoose, who were recognized as honorable awardees during the Native American 40 Under 40 celebration event in Las Vegas.

Last night, these individuals showed pride through their dedication and leadership within our community. I commend their success as they are representing the Navajo Nation by shaping the future by going beyond boundaries.

Hosted by the Native American Leadership Initiative Dedication, this award ceremony was held at the Reservation Economic Summit.

Not only was this event for celebrating inspiring individuals but to recognize their contributions of their hard work that will pave a bright future for the Navajo Nation as leaders and role models.

Every awardee that was present and nominated show how much they are making a difference within their community, and I acknowledge their dedication in making a positive impact for our future leaders and youth.

The evening was full of networking from different programs and other awardees who were in attendance.

I am very honored to have witnessed this moment of our young Diné leaders being acknowledged for their contributions to helping the Diné people.

May the Holy People continue to guide our young people to continue their journey of empowerment and hard work as representatives of the Navajo Nation. I am very proud.

Empowering future entrepreneurs through tribal sovereignty and resilience at the reservation economic summit

March 12, 2025 - This morning, I had the honor of speaking alongside fellow tribal leaders: Jarred-Michael Erickson, chairman of the Colville Business Council, Mark N. Fox, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nations, Stephen Lewis, governor of the Gila River Indian Community, and John Morseau, tribal

councilman of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi at the 2025 Reservation Economic Summit (RES) here in Las Vegas.

Introduced by Derrick Watchman, chairman of the Board of Directors for National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, we all shared our achievements and goals on how we plan to grow and build a thriving economy for our communities.

As Navajo Nation President, I spoke on our evolving Navajo economy, and some of the accomplishments we have achieved for the nation and our people. I was proud to share with hundreds of RES attendees that the Navajo Nation attracts over 2 million visitors and that we collected about \$140 million in our own tribal taxes. In this panel, we also talked about how sovereignty is important to building our respective tribal economies and that we must adapt to the federal changes of this current administration that affect both the Navajo Nation and our fellow sister tribes. In doing so, this reminds us that we are still here and are resilient. Gathering here today at RES not only reflects our commitment to our people but shows the resilience of our tribal sovereignty in thinking for the future.

Our future generations depend on our leadership to guide them through the journey of constant change and current challenges we face in this modern economy. We are the original traders and business folks that builds the American economy, too.

Today reminded me of the strength that we received from our ancestors who fought for us to be here today. We honor them by using our voices to speak.

Investing in our communities: local shopping in nahata'dzil means money back to dine impacted by Navajo Hopi settlement act of 1974

March 11, 2025 – The 1974 settlement act forced nearly 4,000 Diné people to relocate, a hardship they continue to face, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

To support those affected, the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office established the Diné Relocatee Fund, which provides financial assistance to those who were displaced.

On March 3, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed a business site lease modification for the Bashas store in Nahata'Dzil, updating ownership and clarifying rental terms. The change ensures the store can continue to serve the relocated community.

A representative from the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development explained that part of the rental revenue from Bashas is directed back into the Diné Relocatee Fund to assist displaced families.

"It provides the local services to the people who were relocated, provides the jobs, provides the convenience of having the store there, it's a hub to bring in economic development," said the employee.

The relocation disrupted families, uprooting them from their homes and communities. In addition to offering groceries and household items, Bashas helps by contributing to the fund that continues to support the relocated families.

"We understand the pain that comes with the stories of those who were relocated," President Nygren said. "It remains a priority for me to check in and assist our families. It's going to take more than just moving them to a new place—they need continued support. Together with the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission and Bashas, we are working to do what should have been done long ago: help our people."

BEE-ING BRILLIANT: NORTHERN AGENCY STUDENTS BUZZ INTO SPELLING SUCCESS!

March 10, 2025 – Nervous hearts and fidgety hands shifted in seats, waiting for the next challenging word like "token" or "backgammon" for a chance to be a Spelling Bee Champion.

On March 6, 2025, the Northern Agency Spelling Bee held their annual National Scripps Spelling Bee at the Phil L. Thomas Performing Arts Center hosted by the Office of Diné Youth.

The annual Spelling Bee featured 64 students, ranging from 4th to 8th grade who came from twelve schools: Judy Nelson Elementary School, Kirtland Elementary School, Kirtland Middle School, Nizhoni Elementary School, Tse'Bit'Ai' Middle School, Newcomb Elementary School, TiisNazbas Community School, Red Mesa Elementary School, Red Mesa Junior High School, Red Rock Day School, Atsa Biyaazh Elementary School, and Northwest Middle School.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

4th Grade: Champion - Marie Multine (Newcomb Elementary) with “Token.”

5th Grade: Champion - Skylar Begay (Red Rock Day School) with “Sword.”

6th Grade: Champion - Keira Oliver (Judy Nelson Elementary) with “Dawdle.”

7th Grade: Champion - Bennett Weber (Tse'Bit'Ai' Middle School) with “Backgammon.”

8th Grade: Champion - Ethan Stevenson (Kirtland Middle School) with “Unilaterally.”

These winners and the runners-up will compete in the Navajo Nation Spelling Bee on March 20, 2025 at the Crownpoint Office of Dine' Youth in Crownpoint, N.M. Winners there proceed to the Scripps National Spelling Bee on May 27-29.

“I am a big believer in literacy, as I have been an avid reader since I was in grade school,” said Malinda Notah, program and project specialist at ODY. “The Spelling Bee also builds students' confidence in communication, language and critical thinking skills. It also boosts their confidence and adds fun and provides an example of healthy competition among their peers.”

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren sends each student, including the runner-ups and alternates, who did their best to make it so far in the Northern Agency Spelling Bee.

“Our future is bright with each and every one of our students,” President Nygren said. “These young minds striving for excellence shows they will continue to create a healthy future for themselves and our Nation. Ahe'hee to our young, bright minds for pushing yourselves.”

Bringing government to the people: listening, responding and taking action

March 10, 2025 - Every weekend, we are bringing the Navajo Nation government to our people at local flea markets. This past weekend, my team and I visited the Gallup and Shiprock Flea Markets to hear directly from our people to provide immediate government response.

With the recent snowfall, many concerns were about road conditions. Roads remain a top priority, and while maintenance takes time, progress is happening. A few weeks ago, I signed a contract for on-call engineering services to pave roads in several communities, costing around \$400 million. Construction will begin this spring, and I have directed the Navajo Department of Transportation to expedite schedules.

In Shiprock, I was excited to visit the new flea market location under the iconic Shiprock Bridge along the San Juan River. This market is part of a larger development that includes an RV park, vendor spaces, a camping site, and a river walk. Many vendors shared their needs, and I fully support their entrepreneurial spirit.

Being at the flea markets reminds me why I ran for office—to engage directly with our people and address their concerns. Our people remain gracious and supportive of the Nygren Administration and the Office of the President, and I will continue working hard with the executive branch to serve them.

I'd like to thank my team and the Navajo people for coming out on a cold day and with this, please continue to dress warm and be safe.

Congratulations to our 'elite 8' teams for advancing in the new mexico state basketball tournament

March 8, 2025 - I extend my warmest congratulations to the outstanding teams that have advanced to the Elite 8 in their respective brackets of the 2025 Nusenda Credit Union State Basketball championships for New Mexico!

This includes both the Navajo Prep Eagles and Lady Eagles, Tohatchi Cougars and Lady Cougars, Kirtland Central Lady Broncos, Gallup Lady Bengals, Crownpoint Lady Eagles, Newcomb Lady Skyhawks, and the Rehoboth Lynx boys' team!

And to the other schools in the state that feature our Diné ballers, like 3A Santa Fe Indian School Braves and Lady Braves, and the Sandia Lady Matadors in Class 5A.

A special shoutout goes to the Navajo Prep Eagles, who secured their place in the Elite 8 by defeating the Hot Springs Tigers Saturday afternoon, with an impressive score of 47-43. As the defending 3A champions, your skill and determination truly shine through.

The Tohatchi Cougars have also showcased exceptional talent this year, while the Kirtland Central Lady Broncos and Gallup Lady Bengals have made significant strides in the 4A bracket on a potential title clash. Additionally, the Navajo Prep Lady Eagles, Crownpoint Lady Eagles, Newcomb Lady Skyhawks, and Tohatchi Lady Cougars have made their mark in 3A girls' competition, and the Rehoboth boys team in the 2A bracket has demonstrated resilience and dedication.

This year, District 1-AAA is particularly strong, contributing to the competitiveness and success of our teams in both boys and girls Class 3A brackets.

Supporting student-athletes across the Navajo Nation is one of my administration's priorities. I am committed to fostering excellence in academics and athletics to empower our young athletes to achieve their goals both on the court and in the classroom.

Best of luck for the rest of the tournament! I wish you nothing but success as you strive to bring back the Blue Trophy. Congratulations again, and 'Go Eagles, Cougars, Broncos, Bengals, Braves, Lynx and Skyhawks!' You all represent the Navajo Nation!

Shiprock and Gallup Flea Market: Bringing Leadership to the People

March 8, 2025 - I'm bringing my Division Directors and staff directly to the community—where our people are—so we can listen, connect, and take action. We want to hear about the challenges you're facing, whether it's roads, electricity, applications you've submitted, or employment concerns. My team and I are here to follow up, find solutions, and ensure your voices are heard.

We're also handing out my office phone number because I want you to know that we're available Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM. If you share your concerns with us today, we will follow up next week and let you know what's possible and what steps we can take together.

Not everyone can make it to Window Rock during the week, and I understand that—many of you are working, taking care of family, or running errands. That's why we're coming to you. This is our chance to meet at the grassroots level, to engage with the people who need help the most, and to make sure my team remains humble and connected to the realities our communities face every day.

I have always said, I will never forget where I came from, and I will never stop fighting for our people. That commitment is what drives me, and I will continue to show up, listen, and do everything I can to bring real solutions to the Navajo Nation.

Honoring tradition, inspiring the future: the rise of Navajo youth at the 67th annual Heard Indian fair and market

March 7, 2025 - For centuries, the Diné people have held a profound tradition of art, weaving together stories, culture, and history through the power of creative expression. Our art has long been shared, traded, and celebrated, standing as a testament to the strength and resilience of our community. Today, a new generation of Navajo artists are rising! They're carrying the torch of our ancestors and breathing new life into this enduring legacy. The Heard Indian Market offers these young artists an invaluable opportunity to both learn and share with neighboring tribal communities a market space for growth, collaboration, and cultural exchange.

Artists such as Avery Hubbell, Abbygail Etsitty, Karyn Woody, Taylor Begay, Desiree Yazzie, Miley Tsosie, and Sydney Velma White are among the many whose work reflects a deep connection to their heritage, while also embracing the unique perspectives of contemporary life.

Kee Tom III, Ariana Johnson, Sierra Frank, Tirzarina Verdugo, and others represent a bright future for Navajo art - one filled with pride, passion, and purpose.

The Heard Indian Market is not merely a space for art—it is a celebration of who we are as Native people, and a place where young artists like April Taylor, Xemira Oliver, Rober Lee III, Javena Stash, Maleah Butler, Shannon Paul, Jalen Taho, Amelise Barney, and Mary Helen Brown can proudly showcase their talents.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

The Indian Fair and Market at the Heard Museum is a reminder of what our elders share culturally, and their wisdom now fosters our young people to carry their teachings forward. In doing so, they are enriching the world with their voices, their visions, and their expression. Congratulations to all artisans featured at this year's Heard Indian Fair and Market!

Honoring heroes: key turning ceremonies for veterans in ganado and huerfano

March 7, 2025 - Honoring and taking care of our Navajo Veterans is one of my key priorities as Navajo Nation President. This administration works diligently to ensure that our most neediest and most vulnerable veterans are taken care of and are provided with a sustainable home.

After a long-awaited process, I am pleased to share that we helped two of our neediest veterans from the Ganado and Huerfano community. These key turning ceremonies occurred earlier this year.

Our Ganado veteran, who served in the United States Marine Corps as a cook pastry chef for 2 years and 11 months, was granted a home on January 24 by the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration.

This veteran's home is a three-bedroom that contains ADA accessibility and functionality, completed with ramps, a roll-in shower and a wood stove. These services will provide support to help our veteran thrive in their day-to-day life.

Additionally, we were able to celebrate another key turning ceremony for our veteran from Huerfano. This veteran served in the United States Army, serving 3 years as an engineer missile equipment repairman.

He received his home on February 3 by the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration. During the early process of the building plan, the program helped this veteran, and his family receive a new home.

These homes not only ensure a better living environment, but it brings our families closer together to honor our veterans who served the Navajo Nation. It is an honor to provide our assistance as a nation to help our fellow veterans who served and I commend their bravery.

I would like to thank the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration and the following team: Senior Housing Specialist William Nez, Housing Specialist Alvira Teller, Taryn Nofchissey, and Executive Director Bobbie Ann Baldwin for their efforts to make this possible for our veterans.

Oak springs chapter builds for the future with a \$3.4 million renovation

March 6, 2025 - Oak Springs Chapter is setting a strong example of what's possible when we invest in our communities. For years, this chapter has pushed for a modern, functional space to serve their growing population. Now, with the help of Dyrion Murphy Architects, we're making that vision a reality with the renovation of a 6,323 square-foot facility on 12 acres of land.

This project is about more than just a building. It's about creating a welcoming, accessible space where the people of Oak Springs can gather, plan, and grow. The design includes ADA-compliant pathways and entrances, improved parking areas, and proper drainage systems to protect the site during heavy rains. Inside, the chapter house will feature an expanded kitchen, a new break area, and a flexible assembly space for meetings, ceremonies, and events. We're also adding overflow parking to handle larger crowds as the community continues to thrive.

With an investment of \$3.48 million, and Loren Miller of LAM Corp. leading construction, Oak Springs is creating a chapter house that meets the needs of today while preparing for the future.

A special thanks to the Navajo Division of Community Development, who oversees our chapter government systems, for their dedication and support in making this project possible.

I'm proud of the leadership and dedication this community has shown. This renovation is a promise kept—delivering the services, space, and respect our people deserve.

Together, we are building more than infrastructure. We are building a future for the Navajo people.

President Nygren supports future Diné law students paving a future at asu law

March 6, 2025 - I was able to meet with four of our Diné law students currently attending the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University (ASU), and one prospective student. Their passion and hard work is not going unnoticed!

As I listened to their stories and experiences in law, I am confident that they will obtain the knowledge, skills and experience to become great future lawyers who represent the Navajo Nation.

"We've had a formal agreement to try to get more Navajo students trained so that they would be good attorneys for the nation and representing the nation and other tribes," said Kate Rosier, executive director for the Indian Legal Program.

Recently, the agreement contract with Navajo Nation was extended for another five years. The only change is that the program will house three attorneys in hopes of utilizing the Beus Center for Law and Society for Diné students to work directly with the nation to receive credit while gaining hands-on experience that is currently in progress.

It brings me pride knowing our students are pursuing law, as it will help to continue bridging a connection to create change for the future by being the voice of the Navajo people by addressing important matters.

"We are really appreciative of our partnership with Navajo," Rosier said.

I would like to thank Mrs. Rosier, professors and the program for supporting our Diné students by guiding them through leadership, mentorship and offering opportunities that will benefit their law journeys.

Moving forward, I believe these students will pave a path for future lawyers and make a difference within the law field by representing the Navajo Nation.

Investing in our chapters: st. Michaels renovation moving forward

March 5, 2025 -As President of the Navajo Nation, I am proud to share exciting progress on the St. Michaels Chapter House renovation—a project that reflects our commitment to building strong, vibrant communities for our people.

In St. Michaels, we selected Buffalo Design Architects out of Albuquerque to lead the design of an 8,500-square-foot renovation and expansion. While the original plan anticipated completion in March 2023, we faced some delays, and we are now targeting July 2025 to finish the work.

This 20-acre site will feature a modern steel structure with thoughtful architectural details like a steel canopy and beautiful salvaged sandstone on the exterior. Inside, we're creating an open office space, a larger kitchen, and a spacious meeting area with high ceilings—all designed to bring people together and support local governance.

With an overall investment of \$6 million, this project is made possible through a combination of Sihasin, ARPA, and Navajo Nation funds. Arviso Construction is hard at work to deliver this much-needed project for the St. Michaels community.

Thanks to the coordination and leadership of our Division of Community Development's Capital Project Management Department, this long-awaited renovation is finally becoming a reality. Together, we are creating the infrastructure our chapters need to better serve our people today and for generations to come.

Flagstaff mayor visits navajo nation for sovereign-to-sovereign talks

March 5, 2024 - I had the honor of meeting with Flagstaff Mayor Becky Daggett in the Navajo Nation's tribal capital for an important sovereign-to-sovereign discussion. This was a follow-up to our meeting last month, where we addressed key issues that affect both the Navajo Nation and the broader Northern Arizona region.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

Our conversation covered a range of topics, including water development, artificial intelligence (AI), and the cultural importance of Rez Ball, which is central to our communities. We focused on finding common ground for regional economic development and sustainable management of resources.

One of the critical issues we discussed was water development. This is an area of great importance to both Flagstaff and the Navajo Nation, and we emphasized the need for responsible, sustainable water use to protect the future of our region. The Mayor affirmed the city's commitment and support for the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement.

I am grateful for the mayor's visit to Navajo land and for the opportunity to continue building a relationship of collaboration. These conversations are crucial in shaping lasting solutions that benefit not only the Navajo Nation but all of Northern Arizona.

This visit further highlighted the importance of maintaining ongoing dialogue between our two governments, aligning our priorities, and working together to address the challenges and opportunities we share.

Fighting against food insecurity with navajo agricultural products industry to deliver 49,333 food boxes

March 4, 2025 - Over the next few weeks, 49,333 food boxes filled with nutritious staples will be delivered to all 110 chapter governments for distribution. Each box—containing blue corn meal, potatoes, beans, and more—symbolizes not just nourishment, but also love and connection to our culture. As President of the Navajo Nation, I feel the weight of our responsibility to ensure the well-being of our people. This initiative is made possible by a pivotal \$5.5 million USDA grant aimed at combating food insecurity in our communities.

I thank the Navajo Nation Washington Office for applying for this grant on behalf of our citizens. It's an opportunity for us to uplift those who need it most, including high-risk patients, the elderly, and families struggling to put food on the table.

I want to acknowledge are other partners who have worked tirelessly to make this happen: NAPI (Navajo Agricultural Products Industry), the Department of Agriculture, USDA's Local Food Purchase Program, and our divisions, such as the Navajo Division of Children and Family Services.

Over the past year and a half, we have aligned our processes with the Navajo Nation's procurement laws to ensure compliance with USDA requirements. Our partnership with NAPI has been essential; their capacity allows us to meet the necessary standards for this funding.

As I prepare to sign this vital agreement, I feel urgency. We must not let these funds go—they are meant to uplift our communities. This is just the beginning of our commitment to addressing food insecurity. Together, we will overcome this challenge, strengthen our community, and build a healthier future for all our Navajo families.

Chinle leads the way: modern wastewater facility to drive economic opportunities and public health

March 3, 2025 - As President of the Navajo Nation, I firmly believe that building modern wastewater treatment facilities is essential for our economic growth and demonstrates our sovereignty and responsibility towards our communities.

Through projects in Chinle, Kayenta, and Shiprock, we are not only enhancing public health and environmental sustainability but also attracting businesses, including big box stores, to our region. Many of our communities currently rely on outdated lagoon systems or aging water treatment facilities that desperately need upgrades. That's why investing in modernizing these treatment facilities is vital for the well-being of our people.

The new wastewater facility in Chinle is particularly noteworthy, with an estimated total investment of \$68 million for the Permanent Replacement Activated Sludge Treatment Plant alone.

This facility will ensure effective management of wastewater, protect our precious water resources, and reduce pollution. It lays a solid foundation for attracting new businesses and creating jobs for our citizens.

Designed to handle a peak capacity of one million gallons per day and to last for 30 to 40 years, this facility represents a significant step forward. We are proud that it is funded through various sources, notably receiving \$44 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

This funding reflects our commitment to environmental stewardship and economic viability for all Navajo people. Together, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future for our Nation, with partners liked NTUA, NECA, AG Solutions, Oscar Renda Contracting, Inc., and WSP.

Showing up matters: strengthening our students and their education

March 2, 2025 - Yesterday, I had the honor of speaking to our Indian Wells community members, chapter representatives, parents, and teachers about something that is vital for the future of our children – the importance of school attendance and the critical role we, as a community, must play in supporting the education of our youth.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Holbrook Unified School District 3 and Superintendent Dr. Robbie Koerperich and Indian Education Director Bernice Gover for the opportunity to speak before our Diné people on behalf of our students.

Our children's future is in our hands, and we must be unwavering in our commitment to building a supportive, thriving community that ensures their educational success, well-being, and growth. We are fortunate to have dedicated teachers who pour their hearts and souls into helping our children excel, not just in the classroom, but in life. However, the work of our educators alone is not enough – we must all show up. Together, we can break down barriers and create opportunities that allow every student to succeed. It begins with something as simple, yet powerful, as encouraging our children to attend school. Every single day of absence represents a missed opportunity for learning, a missed chance to grasp new concepts and materials. I understand the challenges and setbacks that some of our students face, but we can't let these obstacles stand in the way of their success. Every child deserves the opportunity to receive a high-quality education, and it's on all of us to ensure they do.

I urged everyone to view this moment as an opportunity to deepen our understanding of how we can better support our students. By showing up – both physically and emotionally – we can create a foundation for their success.

Let us be a community that does not merely speak about supporting our children but one that actively shows up for them, every day, in every way.

Congratulations to two incredibly persevering teams from dinetah: the lady wildcats and hornets!

March 1, 2025 - Without a doubt, yesterday's games – the Lady Hornets facing the Snowflake Lobos and the Lady Wildcats playing the Payson Longhorns – were truly unforgettable. The energy and passion displayed by our Navajo student-athletes were beyond anything I've experienced. Though the results were tough, I know that each player gave their absolute best, and our families were there every step of the way to support them.

Despite the losses, our teams showed incredible strength, and that's something we, as parents and guardians, can't always teach – but sports do. They help build some of the most resilient individuals. Through this experience, our students have learned humility, discipline, and perseverance. These are the qualities that will serve them well not only on the court but in every aspect of life.

As Navajo Nation President, I am deeply proud to see our students investing in their future through sports. While losing may bring a heavy heart, I encourage each of you to see it not as an end, but as an opportunity to

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

grow. Every setback is simply a setup for a stronger comeback. Let this drive you even harder to push forward and give your best next time.

To all the teams continuing their journey, and to every student-athlete who played with heart and determination – well done. You've made us proud, and we're excited to see where your hard work takes you next!

Revitalizing the church rock facility: opening doors to new possibilities

February 28, 2025 - Yesterday, I conducted an inspection of the Church Rock Manufacturing Facility, a \$38 million project and one of the largest facilities on the Navajo Nation. This critical space is a vital asset for large-scale manufacturing, reinforcing our commitment to creating jobs and fostering economic growth for our people.

Funded by a collaboration of New Mexico state and tribal funds, this facility is situated on private lands owned by the Navajo Nation, ensuring stability for future development.

I am impressed by our local contractors' dedication and the commitment to safety during Phase 2 construction, costing around \$21 million. Built with reliable materials, including innovative insulated panels, the facility spans 65,000 square feet and features energy efficiency superior to traditional concrete.

Created as a vertical engineering project by NECA in collaboration with Murphy Builders, this facility is conceived by Diné, designed by Diné, and for Diné, with significant support from Indigenous Design Studio+Architecture.

We are moving beyond past failures, such as the glove factory, to focus on tangible, economically sound opportunities.

One venture includes utilizing this facility to ramp up the production of manufactured homes, addressing housing needs while boosting economic activity.

To complete this facility, an additional investment of \$17 million is required, ensuring it will cater to various manufacturing opportunities.

While challenges remain—especially in connecting over 1,000 homes to essential water, septic, and sewer systems—our commitment to local employment shines through with a 90% workforce participation rate, turning this project into a valuable asset for our community.

I also want to extend my gratitude to the Navajo Division of Economic Development's Project Development Department, which advocates for large-scale projects like this one, helping us move forward with confidence.

Utility planning for the 1,000 home initiative

February 27, 2025 - As homes are delivered each week under the Nygren Administration's 1,000 Home Initiative, the next critical step is utility planning. To ensure these homes are truly turn-key, we are working to provide electricity, water, and sewer connections—allowing our most vulnerable Diné families to move in with dignity and security.

Since launching the initiative, we have coordinated millions in ARPA funds to build quality homes with modern utilities.

Key partners in this effort include:

Navajo Nation entities:

- Office of the President
- Navajo Division of Community Development
- Community Housing & Infrastructure Department
- Housing Improvement Program
- Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office

- Fiscal Recovery Fund Office
- Office of the Controller
- Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency
- Navajo Division of Natural Resources

Private sector partners:

- Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA)
- Navajo Housing Authority (NHA)
- Navajo Engineering & Construction Authority (NECA)
- Indian Health Service (IHS)

Contractors leading construction:

- BITCO Corp.
- Homes Direct
- Iina Ba Inc.
- Indigenous Design Studio + Architecture

Every two weeks, we advance utility connections. For instance, under the BIA-funded Housing Improvement Program, homeowners have completed clearances with NTUA. The process is well underway, and we remain committed to achieving turn-key status for every home.

This initiative remains a top priority of the Nygren Administration—delivering homes and essential services to the neediest of our people. Ahéhee'!

Congratulations to the Page girls for advancing to the 2025 AIA copper championship, and to the Chinle and Ganado girls for reaching the 2025 AIA 3A final four in Phoenix, AZ

February 24, 2025 - Our Diné girls truly know how to play basketball! We are proud to have three teams left in the 2025 Arizona Interscholastic Association's Girls Basketball Brackets: the Page Lady Sand Devils in the Copper Championship, and the Chinle Lady Wildcats and Ganado Lady Hornets in the 3A Final Four.

This season, the AIA introduced a new Copper Division, featuring the top 16 teams from the 3A, 2A, and 1A classes. Amid mixed opinions on this change, the No. 5 Page Lady Sand Devils now have a chance to compete for a state title for the inaugural Copper Championship.

On Friday, First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren and I attended the semifinal game between Page and the Tuba City Lady Warriors, who had a strong season. The Lady Warriors upset No. 1 Chinle, moving Chinle from the Copper to the 3A bracket. The game ended with the Lady Sand Devils narrowly defeating Tuba City 46-41. With this victory, the Lady Sand Devils advance to the Copper State Title Game against No. 2 seed Phoenix Country Day at 6 p.m. on March 1 at the Arizona Veteran's Memorial Coliseum.

In the 3A Bracket, No. 1 Chinle advanced to the 3A Final Four after beating Coolidge 51-29 and will face No. 5 Payson at 8 p.m. on February 28.

The No. 3 Ganado Lady Hornets, who were also eliminated from the Copper Division, won against No. 6 Valley Christian 76-69 and will play No. 2 Snowflake at 6 p.m. on February 28. There is a chance for a 3A title game between both Chinle and Ganado.

Nonetheless, I'm always proud of our student-athletes across the Navajo Nation! Wishing you the best of luck!

Navajo Nation celebrates Future Farmers of America Day, honoring youth leaders in agriculture

February 22, 2025 - Yesterday, First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren and I had the honor of celebrating our Diné students who are active in the Future Farmers of America (FFA). This day was significant because I signed a proclamation that recognizes the importance of farming and ranching that should be memorialized.

We thank all the parents, agricultural leaders and mentors, our bright FFA youth and Elissa McBride, FFA Advisor at Monument Valley High School. Together, we will continue to learn and lead a future of farmers.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

A fun fact, our First Lady was a member of the FFA program at MVHS, where she shared with our students how she cared for a lamb on campus and that agriculture practices through FFA and from the livestock at her home influenced her career and values as a mother and wife.

Through our teachings as Diné, we have always been caretakers of the land, we plant our own crops and raise livestock to sustain our livelihoods.

I am very proud of our Diné youth for learning these teachings and practices that will continue the legacy that has been passed down from our elders and now to our future generation.

These practices are not just about food or commerce, they reflect our connection to our ancestors, our community and our sacred land.

With this signed proclamation, we honor our Diné youth who are involved in FFA, along with their teachers and mentors who contribute to this significant event.

Our youth are not only learning how to grow crops—they're learning how to lead with integrity, how to care for the earth and how to uplift others along the way.

I hold these achievements close to my heart and I encourage the Navajo Nation to join me in celebrating our youth and to recognize the hard work they are dedicating to preserve our cultural knowledge and continue to carry our traditions in agriculture.

As we reflect on this day, February 21, now known as Navajo Nation Future Farmers of America Day, let us honor the strength and resilience of our people, and continue to build a future full of promise, hope and growth.

Congratulations to Mary West of Navajo Gaming for being "Chamber Champion of the Year" by the Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce

February 21, 2025 - I was invited to the 36th Annual Meeting and ATHENA Awards ceremony at Northern Arizona University, organized by the Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce. There, I had the opportunity to learn more about community engagement and focused on economic prosperity within greater the Flagstaff region which includes the Navajo Nation.

Guest speaker John Gartin, director for Northern Arizona University's Career Development, shared a presentation on promoting Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help boost businesses and how to implement Generative AI in the workspaces.

Additionally, I was engaged in the Q&A session with Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, where she actively shared updates on concerns of the state of Arizona.

Governor Hobbs was the keynote speaker, and she shared that her focus was on housing, childcare, homeland security, economic growth, educational funding and healthcare access. Hobbs said that she is working diligently to address state concerns by advocating for these topics, particularly in rural Arizona.

"We don't want to talk about it because it's too hard to deal with but, if we're not addressing key issues and issuing workforce then there will be no progress," Hobbs said.

I also offer my congratulations to Mary West, executive director of development for Navajo Gaming, who received the "Chamber Champion of the Year" in her work for our gaming enterprises across the Navajo Nation.

I would also like to congratulate the ATHENA recipients who were awarded and acknowledged for their hard work and advocacy.

It was inspiring and I am grateful for the ongoing support that we have towards our women leaders throughout Arizona.

I would like to thank the Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce for inviting me to this event. It brings an insight of what the Navajo Nation can do to help support our local businesses and regional economies.

Over \$400 million in road projects to break ground with on-call engineering firms

February 21, 2025 - Today, the Navajo Nation takes a significant step forward in improving our road infrastructure. I am pleased to announce the signing of contract modifications for on-call engineering services

with Dibble Engineering and Wilson & Company Inc. These agreements reaffirm the Nygren Administration's commitment to advancing road construction planning, backed by over \$400 million in funding.

These contracts are a crucial step in allowing the Navajo Nation to proceed with on-demand engineering services, a necessary precursor to construction. With today's signing, we move closer to the bidding phase, bringing actual construction projects one step closer to reality.

Funding for these projects comes from the Federal Highway Administration's Tribal Transportation Program, which requires rigorous environmental and historical clearances. We are committed to adhering to all federal, state, and Navajo Nation regulations to ensure sustainable and responsible development.

Transparency and open communication remain top priorities for my administration. By working closely with our partners and the Diné public, we aim to create an efficient, modern transportation network that meets the needs of our communities.

Under Fiscal Year 2025, nine communities will see road improvements totaling \$144.7 million—work that traditionally would have taken decades will now be completed in 12 to 18 months.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2026, additional road projects totaling \$243.8 million will further enhance our infrastructure.

I extend my appreciation to Tom Platero, Division Director for the Navajo Department of Transportation, the Resources and Development Committee, and our communities for their leadership and commitment.

Infrastructure is the backbone of progress. Roads, water, power, sewer, and housing—these essential connections embody our vision to "Think for the Future."

I look forward to witnessing the implementation of these projects as we build a stronger Navajo Nation, and our joint effort to use and borrow \$1 billion of our investments to go to more roads.

Protecting our livelihoods: cattle theft on the Navajo Nation

February 20, 2025 - As your Navajo Nation President, I want to address an issue that strikes at the heart of who we are as Diné—our livestock and the sacred responsibility of caring for it. Recent cases of cattle theft have reminded us of how vulnerable our communities and livelihoods can be.

Earlier this month, a vigilant livestock producer noticed stolen cattle being transported through Tuba City. Thanks to their quick action, 57 head of cattle with altered and rebranded markings are being recovered from a stockyard in Marana, Arizona. These cattle, stolen from our Nation, were valued at nearly \$90,000. This is not just theft—it is an attack on the livelihood and spirit of our families.

What is most troubling is that these crimes exploit the trust we place in our neighbors and the traditions we've upheld for generations. Our open-range grazing system is a cornerstone of Navajo life, but it requires protections that criminals are finding ways to bypass.

We must take action. Branding our livestock, particularly calves before six months of age, is not just a federal requirement—it is a defense against theft. I urge every producer to keep accurate tally counts, vaccinate livestock, and work together to safeguard our herds.

As we move forward, I am committed to improving our enforcement mechanisms and modernizing our laws to hold thieves accountable. This fight is about more than cattle—it is about protecting our way of life.

To those who have experienced this loss, know that we are working diligently to ensure justice. Our livestock is sacred, and our unity as Diné is stronger than those who seek to harm us. Together, we will protect what sustains us.

Exploring innovative solutions with SpaceX and Starlink

February 20, 2025 - This week, I had the privilege of visiting SpaceX and Starlink facilities with the Navajo Nation Broadband Office and the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Office to explore opportunities that could transform connectivity across the Navajo Nation.

Yesterday, we toured SpaceX's headquarters in Hawthorne, California, where I witnessed firsthand their rocket manufacturing process and Starlink equipment production. During this visit, we met with SpaceX

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

employees and discussed how their technology could benefit our communities, particularly in our most remote areas.

Today, I will visit Starlink's satellite production facility in Redmond, Washington. This visit is particularly important as we look for solutions to expand internet access across our 27,000 square miles of canyons, mountains and rugged areas of Dinétah.

Just as we saw with the recent Jeehdeez'a Tower project that brings permanent connectivity to Low Mountain, we must continue seeking innovative ways to connect our people.

These visits are part of my administration's commitment to modernizing the Navajo Nation's infrastructure as well as government efficiency to our people. We're exploring how these new technologies could support our schools, emergency services, chapter houses, and families who currently lack reliable internet access.

We will continue to explore potential partnerships and opportunities in the coming weeks and months as we continue this important work. The goal of my "Connect Diné" initiative remains clear: ensuring every Navajo community has access to the technology and connectivity they need to thrive in today's digital world.

Congratulations to "rockisaan" and "rez kidz" on advancing to the first tech challenge world championships!

February 19, 2025 - I was in awe of our students' innovation and creativity at the 2nd Annual RezBotics First Tech Challenge Championship hosted by Diné College recently. These young minds built robots that moved with precision and purpose, combining engineering, coding, and problem-solving into remarkable creations.

Through FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), students explore STEM fields in an exciting and hands-on ways. This global program challenges youth to design, build, and program robots while fostering teamwork and leadership.

Participating teams included:

- Wingate High School: "SHASH"
- Shiprock High School: "Chieftains" and "S.H.I.P.R.O.C.K"
- Kayenta Baker Middle School: "Rez Kidz" and "Coltz & Boltz"
- Tsehootsoi Middle School: "ROCK Bots"
- Navajo Mountain High School: "Rocksisaan"
- St. Michael Indian Schools: "Navajo Code Writers" and "Navajo Code Breakers"
- Rock Point Community School: "RoboCougars"
- Greyhills Academy High School: "ROBO-Tech"
- Tohatchi High School: "TOH-MESA"

Congratulations to "Rocksisaan" from Navajo Mountain High School and "Rez Kidz" from Kayenta Baker Middle School for earning spots at the FIRST Tech Challenge World Championships in Houston! Navajo Mountain represented us last year, earning the "Judges' Choice" award—a proud moment for the Nation. This success was made possible by partners like TEAM 2486 – CocoNuts from Coconino High School, Diné College, Navajo Transitional Energy Company, Into The Deep, and FIRST Tech Challenge. We also thank student judges from Diné College and MIT for their expertise and support.

Rezbotics gives the Navajo Nation its own competitive region, allowing our teams to advance directly to nationals. This platform inspires creativity, passion, and innovation, preparing our students to shine on the world stage.

Let's continue growing this effort and encouraging more schools to join. Robotics is shaping the future of STEM for the Navajo Nation.

Four corners dialysis clinic in chinle, ariz., gets 25-year lease extension

February 19, 2025 – With signatures from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, community members from Chinle will no longer need to travel hours off the Navajo Nation for dialysis treatment. On Feb. 10, President Nygren signed six sets of business site leases for TRC Four Corners Dialysis Clinic, which had been in operation for 25 years from a previous lease that recently expired. TRC Four Corners Dialysis also has clinics in Kayenta and Tuba City.

According to the National Kidney Foundation, dialysis is a medical treatment that removes waste products and excess fluid from the blood when the kidneys are not functioning properly.

In a study by Kidney International, Navajo people experience End-Stage Renal Disease (ERSD) at a higher rate than the average American citizen. ERSD is the last stage of chronic kidney disease.

The Chinle clinic has less than 40 employees, which provides valuable services to the 31 chapters in Chinle Agency.

"If they weren't there and the clinic wasn't operating, the patients would have to travel to off reservation locations, so this saves them a lot of travel and travel expense," said Anslem Harvey, who works with the Chinle Regional Business Development Office.

One of President Nygren's priorities is improving the health care and access among Diné people. Through this 25-year lease extension, he is striving toward the Nation building healthcare that the people need and deserve.

"We have high rates of illnesses in various areas among our people, including kidney disease," said President Nygren. "As Navajo Nation President, it's time we take care of these modern monsters, so our children won't have to endure a preventive illness."

Building the future: groundbreaking for the \$6.2 million San Juan Lateral Waterline in Naschitti, NM

February 18, 2025 - Below the snow-capped Chooshgai Mountains, we broke ground on the \$6.2 million Naschitti San Juan Lateral water line in Naschitti, N.M., earlier this morning.

This vital project, part of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, will bring much-needed water access and availability to the community.

This moment was deeply spiritual for Naschitti, guided by healer Jasper Pablo's blessing, which reminded us that the water we receive comes from our sacred connection to Mother Earth and Father Sky. The water pipeline will bring water from the San Juan Mountains' snowpack, reflecting the paper of the Navajo Nation's water rights.

Today's blessing was led by Naschitti Governance Commissioners – Willis Nez, Rhonda Herbert, Orlin Skyberg, Tammy Yazzie and Alexis Wood and Naschitti Chapter Administrator Carissa Wood and staff.

I also thank Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya for her meaningful words, as well as the Navajo Nation Water Resources Department, Clawson Excavating, Inc., and Souder Miller and Associates.

With this water line, Naschitti will transition from its beloved groundwater to San Juan River water. This shift allows groundwater to replenish naturally while the community benefits from reliable infrastructure.

The project will deliver 220 gallons per minute via a 2.12-mile, 8-inch pipeline, with a 200,000-gallon storage tank fed by the main Navajo-Gallup line crossing U.S. Highway 491.

The project, made possible through Navajo Nation ARPA funds and New Mexico's Tribal Infrastructure Fund and Capital Outlay, highlights the power of strategic partnerships with federal and state partners.

As Naschitti prepares for future growth along the U.S. Highway 491 corridor, this water access and availability offers an opportunity to plan for sustainable, economic growth.

I encourage community members to create business plans and engage with their land use committee to shape Naschitti's future with intention—Yidaaskáadi Nitsáhákees.

Good luck to our 3a north teams competing in the 2025 AIA 3A and copper brackets

February 17, 2025 - February Frenzy is here, and that means Rez Ball takes center stage in the Arizona Interscholastic Association state basketball playoffs.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

Congratulations to all our Navajo Nation-based schools in Arizona that qualified for state, and to those eliminated—hold your heads high and be proud of your season.

In the 2025 AIA Girls 3A bracket, during pool play, the Holbrook Lady Roadrunners defeated the Window Rock Lady Scouts 50-39, earning the No. 12 seed. Tonight, the Lady Roadrunners will face No. 5 Payson in the first round of the 14-team 3A bracket.

Other exciting first-round matchups tonight include:

- No. 3 Ganado vs. No. 14 Winslow
- No. 7 Monument Valley vs. No. 10 ALA – West Foothills

All games will tip off at 7 p.m.

In the 3A bracket, after being eliminated from the Copper Bracket by Tuba City, the Chinle Lady Wildcats secured the No. 1 seed. They will face the winner of No. 8 Coolidge vs. No. 9 Yuma Catholic in the quarterfinals this Friday.

In the 16-team Copper Girls Bracket, the No. 5 Page Lady Sand Devils will meet the No. 8 Tuba City Lady Warriors in a Final Four matchup on Friday, February 21. Tuba City pulled off a stunning upset over No. 1 Chinle in the Copper Bracket, winning 48-39.

For the 2025 AIA 3A Boys Bracket, the No. 3 Page Sand Devils are the only remaining 3A North team in the playoffs. They will take on No. 14 Northwest Christian on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

I wish the best of luck to all our 3A teams, as well as our 2A and 1A schools. I look forward to seeing one of our teams bring home a gold ball to the Navajo Nation!

Preserving diné bizaad: empowering our children through literacy and community support

February 17, 2025 - In the most remote regions of the Navajo Nation, our children continue to show remarkable creativity despite limited resources. I ensured that Diné Bizaad books were delivered to the students at Black Mesa Community School.

This federally funded BIE school serves grades kindergarten through eighth grade, drawing students from nearby communities such as Burnt Corn, Low Mountain, Kíts'ííí, Pinon, and Whippoorwill Springs, with a current enrollment of 48 students.

Our administration remains committed to improving language literacy among Diné children. Reading is a skill that grows stronger through practice, and promoting our Diné Bizaad is critical to our future sovereignty. As part of our mission to build healthier families, we work with the Navajo Division of Children and Family Services to deliver books to our communities.

The students at Black Mesa Community School are currently fundraising for an end-of-year trip to California and Disneyland. As a government, we will do our best to support their fundraising efforts.

Visiting remote areas like Dziłíjín serves as a powerful reminder of the beauty of our homeland and people. In these places, our language remains alive and spoken fluently every day. To our young children, I encourage you to keep learning our language and to take pride in being Diné.

This President's Day, we honor our tribal presidents and chairmen and acknowledge the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation government

February 17, 2025 - As public servants, we are entrusted by our people to lead with integrity and focus. While many enjoy this day as a well-deserved break, the Nygren Administration remains committed to advancing critical priorities such as roads, water access, infrastructure, housing, economic growth, education, and the many dimensions of nation-building.

Title II of the Navajo Nation Code firmly establishes the system of checks and balances within our government, providing clarity on the roles of the Navajo Nation President, the Navajo Nation Council, and the Supreme Court of the Navajo Nation.

As President of the Navajo Nation, I embrace accountability as an essential pillar of our government and as a cornerstone of our service to the Navajo people. Through the Office of the President, one of the authorities to

help move our government is the development of a comprehensive budget and that financial resources are managed and allocated appropriately and responsibly for the Navajo people.

The Navajo Nation is a sovereign government, and Title II says the president advocates for our tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and interests in political, social and economic matters. As such, Title II reaffirms the political authority and updates to the Navajo people about the progress of the government's goals and functions.

Whether you're working today or at home with loved ones, enjoy your time off and remember that your government is accountable to you. Happy President's Day!

Expanding broadband Internet access in Ramah Navajo

February 17, 2025 - As Navajo Nation President, one of my top priorities is to expand broadband—high-speed internet access—to our homes, schools, and chapter houses across our vast territory.

"CCPF-Funded Fiber Project: Connecting 78 Families"

In Ramah Navajo, 78 families living in the housing quarters of the Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc. now have high-speed internet, thanks to a fiber project by Oso Internet Solutions. This \$167,504 project is funded by the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CCPF), a grant secured by the Navajo Nation Broadband Office in 2022.

"We work to expand fiber access and keep service affordable to reduce barriers to broadband connectivity," said Margaret Merrill, owner of Oso Internet Solutions.

"ARPA-Funded Fiber Project: Expanding Middle-Mile Infrastructure"

Separately, 13.2 miles of middle-mile fiber have been installed under \$5.8 million in ARPA-funds. This will connect 600 homes, with 300 already benefiting, Merrill said.

"Closing the Digital Divide"

These projects ensure that more families in rural communities can access reliable internet for education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

I thank the Ramah Chapter leadership, the Ramah Navajo School Board, Inc., Oso Internet Solutions, and the Navajo Nation Broadband Office for their efforts. Credit also goes to the Navajo Nation Council for approving ARPA funding and NNBO for securing the CCPF grant.

Together, we are making real progress in bringing broadband to our people.

Update: protecting essential federal positions serving the Navajo Nation

February 16, 2025 - In my previous statement, I assured the Navajo people that my administration was actively working with the Trump Administration to protect essential federal positions within the Indian Health Service (IHS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). I want to provide an update on the progress we've made and challenges we are still addressing.

We first received written confirmation that the following healthcare positions within IHS have been deemed essential and exempt from termination:

- * 93 physicians
- * 350 nurses
- * 26 nurse practitioners
- * 129 medical assistants
- * 25 hospital social workers
- * 45 lab technicians
- * 89 pharmacists
- * 18 dentists
- * 43 dental assistants

Initially, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) indicated that 2,200 probationary IHS employees would be terminated. IHS formally requested exemptions for all healthcare workers, and while many

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

were protected, 950 employees would still be laid off, but has since been verbally rescinded by Secretary of Health, Robert F. Kennedy.

As of Friday evening, we were still working to classify 31 sanitation engineers as essential. Unfortunately, termination notices had already started going out for other positions deemed non-exempt. In response to advocacy by my office and our partners in the National Indian Health Board, we continued working with the Trump Administration on solutions.

We are also actively engaging with the administration on the impact to BIE employees. While all BIE K-12 teaching positions were exempt, we are working to protect higher education faculty and staff who serve Native students.

I want to reassure our people that we have not been silent on this issue. We remain in direct discussions with the Trump Administration, and our advocacy are being seen. We will continue to advocate to restore impacted positions and ensure uninterrupted services for the Navajo people.

If you have concerns or need further information, please reach out to my office.

Over \$1 billion dollars in new construction for BIE schools

February 15, 2025 - Our students deserve the best! I am happy to share with the Navajo people that 17 Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools are either undergoing construction for new or renovated facilities, and/or are being planned out totaling over \$1 billion.

Shonto Preparatory School and Kinteel Residential Campus are undergoing renovations funded by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Additionally, the GAOA is facilitating the demolition of Navajo Region one, two, and three.

Aneth Community School is currently in the design contract phase. Chi'Chil'Tah Jones Ranch Community School is expected to break ground within the month. Cottonwood Day School is in the planning phase for solicitation. Cove Day School is undergoing remediation, demolition, and design work. Crystal Boarding School is in the mobilization phase, with a design-build process underway.

Many Farms High School, Tonalea Red Lake School, Greasewood Springs Community School and the Shiprock Dormitory are in the mobilization phase. To'Hajiilee Community School is in the planning phase. Many Farms Community School is currently in the Navajo Nation 164 review process, while Pine Springs Day School received its notification letter to begin the design process. Further, 35 percent of the Teec Nos Pos Community School is completed. Pine Hill Schools is currently in the solicitation phase, and Greyhills Academy is preparing for the construction process.

Education is also about the conditions in which our students learn.

Some schools, like Crystal Boarding School, have struggled with unsafe, outdated, and even hazardous classrooms that make students sick or disrupt learning.

Thank you to Bureau of Indian Affairs' Chief of Staff of the Office of Facilities, Property and Safety Management Gabriel Draper and Division Chief of Facilities Management and Construction Gary Mosesman, whose efforts are making a tangible difference.

PSAP project to ensure quicker response times in cases of 911 emergencies

February 15, 2025 - When our Navajo citizens dial 911 during an emergency, their calls are rerouted to an off-reservation agency. Operators who answer the call are then forced to relay the calls back to our first responders located on the Navajo Nation – spending precious time that can mean the difference of saving a life.

This is about to change with the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) station project.

I am excited to share that I signed a lease agreement on behalf of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety (NDPS), which kicks off the planning stages for a PSAP station – a new facility will be home to Emergency

22 Navajo Nation Office of the President

Communication Dispatchers, including those working with law enforcement, EMTs, and other vital first responders.

Fully funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), we're expecting the station to be completed and ready to take its first call by August 2026.

The PSAP will be designed with inclusivity in mind, ensuring that all Navajo citizens, including those with disabilities such as hearing impairments and speech impediments, are fully accommodated. This is a huge milestone for our people and Nation as this is the first tribal public safety program to be deployed and recognized by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

This project is more than just a station—it's about improving emergency response times, bringing critical services closer to our people, and setting a precedent for future tribal initiatives in public safety.

Navajo Nation celebrates \$3.5 million revenue sharing payment from Goulding's Lodge

February 14, 2025 - Today is a historic day because the \$3.5 million revenue sharing disbursement check from Goulding's Lodge, operated by the Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise, was presented to the Navajo Nation.

This is the marking of a new era of enterprise partnership and prosperity for the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation Hospitality Enterprise CEO Stanley Sapp presented the Navajo Nation with a \$3.5 million check, as required under the structured revenue sharing agreement. In just six months under the new ownership of NNHE, approximately \$7 million has been generated with half equally coming to our tribal treasury.

In addition to receiving this check, I signed a groundbreaking 50-year lease for Goulding's Lodge.

Generating more revenue will allow our nation to receive profit in return of all the hard work that has been produced in partnership with NNHE and the Navajo Department of Economic Development.

Council Delegate Herman Daniels Jr. acknowledged how the former owners, the LaFont Family, had wanting to sell its operations back to the Navajo Nation.

"Goulding's belongs to Navajo," said Council delegate Daniels Jr, who represents chapters in Utah Navajo, including Oljato Chapter.

I believe that Goulding's Lodge will not only bring good hospitality and tourism, but welcome visitors to our beautiful backyard while receiving an experience of a lifetime.

The purchases from this lease include the historic hotel, a grocery store, ancillary facilities, campgrounds and an RV park. NNHE has successfully provided jobs to over 300 Navajo employees since taking over ownership.

We must continue to invest and structure agreements that will ensure economic sovereignty to the nation. Thank you to past leaders and current leaders, including Mr. Stanley Sapp for leading this innovative business.

Goulding's is not just a business; it is a legacy.

Protecting essential federal positions serving the Navajo Nation

February 14, 2025 - I understand that many have concerns regarding the recent directive from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on the termination of probationary employees within the federal government, and the potential impact it may have on tribal nations.

In particular, there were concerns about positions within the Indian Health Service (IHS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The possible loss of healthcare professionals, educators, and other critical personnel threatened the well-being of our communities and the services they depend on.

I want to assure you that my administration has been actively engaging with the Trump Administration to advocate for the protection and exemption of these essential positions. I am pleased to report that, for

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

the most part, we have been successful. President Trump has heard our concerns and has allowed for the exemption of many IHS and BIE workers, ensuring that these critical services continue without disruption, and we thank him.

Although not all positions have received an exemption, we continue to work closely with federal officials to emphasize the vital role these positions play. Our goal is to restore any impacted positions to ensure uninterrupted service to our people while advancing the shared priorities of the Navajo Nation and the U.S. government.

The well-being of our Nation remains our highest priority. We are fully committed to ensuring that essential services continue uninterrupted for all Navajo people. If you have concerns or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

\$80 million new school groundbreaking in Chi Chil'tah Jones Ranch community

February 13, 2025 - Yesterday, I had the honor of witnessing an exciting new chapter of the new school groundbreaking of Chi Chil'Tah Jones Ranch Community School.

So much hard work has been put into this project to provide a brighter, safer future for our Diné children to thrive within their learning environment.

This school has been in use since the 1930's, which has led to the need to be rebuilt to updated standards. In doing so, it is planned to be 70,000 square feet, which will include 20 dormitory units that will house up to 40 students.

Additionally, staff quarters will be built and so will a 3,000 square foot bus maintenance building.

Construction is expected to be completed in 2027.

With projects like this, it is important to give our children a quality education and a safe school that will allow them to expand their knowledge and will serve students from grades K-8th.

When I met with the Bureau of Indian Education last month, this school was on the list for a groundbreaking. This school is also a BIE funded institution worth \$80 million.

As we gathered to celebrate this milestone for our students, we are not only celebrating education, but our student's hopes, dreams of their futures as Diné children.

I would like to give special thanks to the staff who help our children to learn to their best ability every single day and all the guests in attendance for supporting our children's education and a blessing by Tom Chatto, a Diné Medicine Man.

Congratulations to the Chi Chil'Tah community and may the Holy People bless this new school.

600 Diné Bizaad books gifted to Diné children at Gallup v. Kirtland Central girls basketball game

February 11, 2025 - In partnership with the Navajo Division of Children and Family Services, 2024-2025 Miss Navajo Nation Ranisha Begay and the Gallup Boys Basketball Team, we took another step in revitalizing Diné Bizaad and strengthening our future as a Nation by gifting 600 books to our children and families.

That's 600 opportunities to bring our language into the hands, homes, and hearts of our young people. This effort is part of a larger vision—a commitment to creating fluent and literate Navajo speakers for generations to come.

Diné Bizaad is power. Our language is more than words—it is our connection to our ancestors, our teachings, and our future. The ability to speak, read, and write in Diné Bizaad strengthens our identity and ensures that our culture remains strong. Each book given out is a step forward in raising confident, fluent Diné Bizaad speakers.

This initiative aligns with the executive order I signed to implement Diné Bizaad across executive branch agencies. There is no better way to engage young readers and promote literacy among our people than through basketball or rez ball — an event that brings our communities together.

The showdown between the No. 1 Kirtland Central Lady Broncos (20-2) and the No. 2 Gallup Lady Bengals (20-2) on February 8 was nothing short of intense. Kirtland took the win, 70-45, in this District 1-4A battle. Both teams are ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in Class 4A and are also No. 3 and No. 4 statewide, regardless of class, and will likely face off again in the district championship and the Class 4A title game at The Pit in Albuquerque.

Ahéhee' to both teams for their hard work—and to our young Navajo speakers, who are the future of our language and Nation.

Closing the digital divide: Permanent Internet now serving Low Mountain

February 10, 2025 - Permanent internet access is now available for community members in Low Mountain, Arizona, and students at Jeehdeez'a Elementary School. This milestone bridges the digital divide—connecting families, students, and businesses to new opportunities.

Funded through CARES Act funds from the previous Trump Administration, this project took four years to complete. Delays in funding and the COVID-19 pandemic forced the community to rely on temporary solutions like Cells On Wheels (COW), which only connected 40 people at a time.

Now, with advanced technology installed by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) and NTUA Wireless, the Jeehdeez'a Broadband Tower serves approximately 200 people using Tarana technology—cutting-edge wireless broadband that provides fast, reliable, and scalable connectivity. This ensures the people of Low Mountain are no longer left behind in the digital world.

I acknowledge the dedication of former leaders like former Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay, along with NTUA, NTUA Wireless, and the Low Mountain Chapter leadership, for their persistence in making this project a reality. Their efforts have connected this community to vital services, education, and business opportunities. While the community celebrates, they have also raised concerns about the poor condition of Indian Route 8059. Speaker Crystalne Curley and I heard them. I have pledged to work with my team and the Navajo Nation Council to explore investments in infrastructure, leveraging \$1 billion of our own funds to strengthen our economy and build a better future.

Chinle Wildcats dominate 3a north – onward to the AIA playoffs

February 10, 2025 - Congratulations to both Chinle basketball teams – the girls (26-1) and boys (19-9) teams for capturing the 3A North Conference Championships over the weekend at the Bee Hóldzil Fighting Scouts Events Center!

The Lady Wildcats secured a hard-fought 53-42 victory over Tuba City, while the Wildcats battled past Page with a 41-35 win. Winning a conference title is never easy—it takes dedication, teamwork, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. These championships are a testament to the hard work of the players, coaches, families, and communities who stand behind them.

This is just the beginning. As the postseason unfolds, I want to recognize all the 3A North teams—Chinle, Ganado, Monument Valley, Page, Tuba City, and Window Rock—for their dedication to the game.

The Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) Playoffs begin Tuesday, February 11, and I know our teams will continue to represent the Navajo Nation with pride and determination.

A special acknowledgment goes to the No. 1-ranked Chinle Lady Wildcats, who have earned the top seed in the newly formed Copper Division, a bracket showcasing the best teams from the 3A, 2A, and 1A divisions. Our region is also well represented in the 2A and 3A brackets, and I look forward to seeing our student-athletes rise to the challenge.

Go out there, play with heart, and keep the spirit of rez ball alive. Best of luck to all our teams!

President Nygren addresses the New Mexico House of Representatives

February 9, 2025 - I had the honor of addressing a joint session of the Senate House of Representatives to acknowledge New Mexico's partnership with the Navajo Nation and was introduced by NM

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

State Representative of District five and Chair of House Government, Elections, and Indian Affairs, D. Wonda Johnson.

To respectfully honor the Native American people of New Mexico, during the opening ceremony, the Iron Singers from San Felipe Pueblo were invited to share a prayer song by Representative Derrick J. Lente. In this session, I addressed the utility infrastructure needs in New Mexico and our agreements with NTUA, Continental Divide Electric Cooperative, Jemez Mountain Electric Cooperative and the City of Farmington Utility Service.

These agreements are a key component of our strategy to improve access to essential utility services. Alongside the contract under the Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity, which will provide architectural and engineering services that will allow us to meet deadlines before funds expire.

I am beyond grateful for the support and effort with New Mexico and hope to remain a close connection with our tribal leaders and lawmakers to build a bright future for our youth.

Celebrating 50 years of self-determination at 2025 New Mexico American Indian Legislative Day

February 8, 2025 - In honor of tribal self-determination and the sovereign rights of the 23 tribes in New Mexico, I addressed the importance of collaboration with New Mexico House of Representatives and Senate, and other tribal leaders.

We, as leaders of the 23 tribal nations of NM, acknowledged the needs of our communities and the efforts we've put forth.

Prior to the American Indian Day event, I met with Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham to acknowledge her and thank her for her continued support for our Diné people.

I also had the honor of meeting with NM State Senator Peter Wirth, NM Senator Shannon Pinto, Attorney General of NM, Raúl Torrez, Speaker of the NM House of Representatives, Javier Martinez and NM Majority Floor Leader Reena Szczepanski.

Navajo Chief of Justice JoAnne Jayne was one of the few speakers who made legislative remarks to the general public, royalty and students from neighboring tribes who were in attendance.

During these remarks, I had the honor of recognizing Burton Platero, World War II Korean War Veteran from To'Hajiile and thanked him for his service to our people and our country.

The main takeaway from this listening session is remembering who we are as Native American people and the dedication our leadership pushes toward resilient efforts to preserve our way of life, culture and sovereignty. I believe that we are leaders who are shaping the future for our children.

Haskell vs. NTU games showcase native athletes' heart and determination

February 8, 2025 - Great job to all the teams who played last night! I truly enjoyed the Haskell vs. Navajo Technical University games at the Santa Fe Indian School. Whether it's our Diné athletes or those from other Native communities, our young athletes give it their all, carrying forward the teachings they've grown up with.

Learning humility, perseverance, and discipline isn't always easy, but these athletes embody those values, shaped by the wisdom of their communities. It was especially heartwarming to see respect and sportsmanship on display, even as competitors. At the end of the day, we're all here to support one another. It was a beautiful moment to see athletes helping each other after falls, showing true sportsmanship. Congratulations to both Haskell teams on their wins. The atmosphere was filled with love and support from family members cheering for their student-athletes.

President Nygren encourages n.m. governor to appoint a Diné citizen to house district 6

February 7, 2025 - During my visit to the New Mexico Capitol in Santa Fe this week, I met with New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham to talk about the appointment of a qualified Diné leader to House District 6.

This legislative seat must be filled as soon as possible for Navajo interests, and I strongly encourage the appointment of a Navajo individual who will uplift the voices and priorities of Cibola and McKinley counties throughout this 60-day legislative session.

The seat became vacant following the retirement of Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon, who faithfully served District 6 for 16 years. Now, the Navajo Nation has a significant opportunity to add another community member to the state legislature.

Currently, the New Mexico Legislature includes three state senators and five state representatives with Indigenous/Native cultural backgrounds. If a Navajo leader is appointed to House District 6, the number of Native lawmakers in the state legislature will increase to nine—further strengthening Indigenous value and representation at the state level.

Under state law, the county commissioners from Cibola and McKinley counties must recommend a successor for this seat. Cibola County selected Clemente Sanchez and McKinley County has chosen Martha Garcia, a Diné woman from Pine Hill, N.M.

The communities of Mariano Lake, Thoreau, Pine Hill, Ramah and Zuni are key parts of House District 6, and these communities deserve a Diné leader to represent them.

While the counties submitted their recommendations to the governor, I urged her to appoint a qualified Navajo to the empty New Mexico House seat. This is an opportunity to ensure that our people's voices are heard and that our concerns are represented in the halls of the New Mexico Legislature.

Navajo Nation expresses needs with NM governor

February 7, 2025 - This morning, I met with several leaders from New Mexico, including Governor of New Mexico Michelle Lujan Grisham to discuss the needs of our Navajo Nation.

In 2025, we are seeking to elevate the quality of life for our people with New Mexico's support, by focusing on water settlements, infrastructure, public safety, education, and language preservation.

Key priorities shared with Gov. Lujan Grisham included recruiting tribal police, building homes, and supporting veterans, while regulating uranium shipments to protect health.

I talked about many of our infrastructure needs and projects, which can be partially funded by the \$25 million in reauthorized capital outlay funds from New Mexico. These projects enhance community facilities and roadways.

Economic growth initiatives aiming to support small businesses, renewable energy, and healthcare are other priorities.

Our education efforts will target equitable funding for Navajo students and language preservation.

The Nation also seeks continued support for water rights settlements and infrastructure projects such as with the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

Gov. Lujan Grisham has shown her support for our efforts in putting our Navajo people first.

Along with meeting Gov. Lujan Grisham, I was able to meet with Gov. Lujan Grisham's Policy Advisor, James Mountain, and Cabinet Secretary of Indian Affairs, Josett Monette.

Mountain and Monette shared for the Fiscal year of 2024, in the last six months, between my office and New Mexico, we were able to allocate \$12 million in funding for projects compared to 2023 where the Nation was only able to allocate \$2 million to projects.

Before meeting Gov. Lujan Grisham, I met Native American high school students from the Albuquerque Public Schools. I encouraged them to find a passion that brings happiness to their heart when pursuing higher education. Once they find what drives their mission, it will be fun and rewarding at the same time.

I also met fellow within the Jicarilla Apache Nation legislative members Spencer Wells and Francine Manwell, Veryl D. Chavez and Lisa Vigil, and Jicarilla Apache Legislative Public Information Officer Shasta Campbell. I also met with Ute Mountain Chairman Manuel Heart.

This administration continues to address our nation's needs through collaboration with our state and federal leaders but also with our sister tribes.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

President Nygren fights for the Navajo Nation in Washington

February 6, 2025 — Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren met with top congressional lawmakers this week to fight for resources that directly impact Navajo families, including funding for school repairs, stronger tribal control over public safety, compensation for uranium workers, and securing support for the Nation's future.

President Nygren's meetings with these congressional leaders reinforce the urgent need for federal policies that respect tribal sovereignty and deliver real change for the Navajo people. One of the most urgent priorities for President Nygren is to reauthorize the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), which provides funding for critical infrastructure, including Navajo schools in dire need of repair.

President Nygren met with the Office of Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (D-CA-38) to push for the reauthorization of this vital funding. Without it, the Navajo Nation could lose an estimated \$300 million, leaving children in deteriorating schools that fail to meet basic safety standards.

"Too many of our children go to school in buildings that should have been replaced decades ago," President Nygren said. "This funding is a chance to fix what's broken and provide a safe environment where our students can thrive."

In a meeting with Holmes Whalen, senior counsel to Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), President Nygren pressed for policy changes that would allow the Navajo Nation to set its own enlistment criteria for police officers.

Whalen also suggested the nation work with the AZ delegation to arrange a visit to the Navajo Nation with newly confirmed U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi so that federal officials better understand the challenges of tribal police.

In discussions with Sen. John Curtis (R-UT) and Rep. Mike Kennedy (R-UT), President Nygren pushed for the inclusion of post-1971 uranium workers in the proposed RECA amendments. Many Navajo uranium miners have been left out of previous compensation efforts, despite suffering from severe health conditions linked to their exposure.

While both Sen. Curtis and Rep. Kennedy indicated a proposal is in the works, further coordination with Sen. Josh Hawley's (R-MO) office is needed to RECA amendments forward.

To show goodwill, President Nygren gifted them a photo from his meeting with LDS Church President Russell M. Nelson last year, a meaningful exchange given how the lawmakers are both members of the LDS Church. President Nygren wrapped up his meetings with Rep. David Schweikert (R-AZ), who had recently visited the Navajo Nation in December. During his visit, Rep. Schweikert experienced firsthand the hardships that Navajo families endure to access clean water. Many Navajo people still haul water for miles just to meet basic needs. President Nygren thanked Rep. Schweikert for taking the time to understand these struggles and presented him with a framed photo from his visit. President Nygren said the need for swift action and support on the Arizona Water Rights Settlement will bring lasting solutions.

That's a burger' secures 25-year lease renewal

February 5, 2025 - The beloved 'That's A Burger' in Fort Defiance, Ariz. will continue serving its famous burgers for another 25 years after its business site lease was renewed on January 23 by the Fort Defiance Regional Business Development Office (RBDO) and the Navajo Nation.

Lease renewals are vital for businesses on the Navajo Nation, supporting jobs, generating sales tax revenue, and strengthening the local economy. I congratulate the Wolfe Family, owners of Jack Wolfe, Inc., which also operates Spot Free Power Wash and Fort Storage, for their dedication to keeping their businesses running strong.

Leonard Francisco, program manager for Fort Defiance RBDO, said the significance of this renewal keeps the Navajo economy strong and diverse.

"We strive not to close a business," Francisco said. "Most businesses that shut down leave behind abandoned properties, which can become an eyesore in the community. Jack Wolfe, Inc. has not only maintained its operations but continues to provide employment for Navajo people."

Since 2000, siblings Jacqueline Montgomery and Martin D. Wolfe have managed their family businesses, honoring their late father, Jack Wolfe, who inherited 'That's A Burger' in 1992 and passed away in September. Mr. Wolfe raised his family in Fort Defiance as a member of the Window Rock Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Montgomery said.

"It means everything," Montgomery said. "We love being out here. I love providing employment for my girls (Navajo employees). It's really important for me to provide a wage for them and their families."

With this lease renewal, 'That's A Burger' remains a pillar of the community, ensuring jobs and economic growth for years to come.

Diné bizaad literacy at the red mesa and rock point basketball game

February 3, 2025 - I had the honor of attending two exciting basketball games at Red Mesa High School, my alma mater. My wife, First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren, also joined in on the fun. Both the boys and girls teams faced off against rival Rock Point Cougars.

The girls' game had both teams showcasing incredible athleticism and grit. There were steals left and right, and despite the fierce competition, Rock Point's girls came out on top with a 65-point victory and a 62-point win for Red Mesa Boys. Congratulations to them! It was clear from the court that every player gave their all. During halftime of the boys' game, I took the time to share with our Diné citizens the importance of literacy, particularly through Diné Bizaad, our official language of the Navajo Nation. Thereafter, we gave out books written in Diné Bizaad, a resource to encourage our children and families to embrace and preserve our language.

Thank you to Navajo Division of Children and Family Services for helping provide these wonderful books for our families.

I'm grateful to those who took a book—thank you for supporting this initiative!

I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Red Mesa High School community for welcoming the First Lady and I to their conference games. The talent, dedication, and sportsmanship displayed by all the athletes is truly inspiring.

Long-awaited Pueblo Pintado Health Center nears groundbreaking in Eastern Navajo Agency

February 3, 2025 — A long-awaited health center for Pueblo Pintado in the Eastern Navajo Agency is finally becoming a reality, bringing critical healthcare access to five chapters in the region.

The Pueblo Pintado Health Center, funded through the Indian Health Service, has been on the federal priority list for decades. Thanks to persistent community advocacy, the facility is now nearing its groundbreaking.

According to Janice Arthur, the chapter's community service coordinator, Pueblo Pintado is centrally located among the Counselor, Nageezi, Ojo Encino, and Torreon/Star Lake Chapters.

For years, residents of these communities have traveled long distances to access basic healthcare services in Dził-Na-O-Dith-Hle, Cuba, Crownpoint, or Shiprock.

"When the health center comes up, it will relieve Crownpoint of the walk-in clinic services," Arthur said.

"Right now, (our people) have to travel 43 miles, and it will be here."

Arthur has been a vocal advocate for her community, working since 1995 to push the \$110 million facility higher on the federal priority list.

"It's a long time coming," she said.

The 125,884-square-foot facility will provide 24 healthcare services and other specialty care, serving an estimated 48,573 patients annually. It will also create approximately 82 staff positions.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren emphasized that the new health center in the Eastern Navajo Agency will ease the burden of healthcare access—a key priority for his administration.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

“Navajos healing Navajos is the value that my administration works from,” President Nygren said. “I thank the grazing permit holders in Pueblo Pintado for giving up their grazing lands to bring a much-needed health center to their communities.”

Investing in ourselves: wood delivery for red valley and the path to \$1 billion for navajo communities

February 1, 2025 - Before delivering three cords of wood to the community of Red Valley, Ariz., with the Navajo Department of Emergency Management, I met with Red Valley Chapter's elected leadership. I congratulated them on their elections and re-elections to their four-year terms, because every project we accomplish begins at the local level.

Red Valley's leadership includes returning and new officials: President Leonard Benally, Vice President Clarence Chavez, Secretary/Treasurer Susan Cisco, Grazing Officer Jerald Begay, and Farm Board Official Zelma King. I also want to recognize Community Service Coordinator Marlene Palmer and Office Aide Carol Castillo—without them, this wood delivery wouldn't have been possible.

One of our key discussions focused on investing in ourselves by utilizing \$1 billion of the Navajo Nation's funds to build stronger communities.

“As president, I need your help,” I told them. “We sit on a lot of money.”

In 2025, I'll be visiting all 110 chapters, and I urge local leaders to work with the Navajo Nation Council to unlock these funds for community projects. We should not have to wait on Washington, D.C., when we have resources available now.

We also addressed the ongoing cleanup of abandoned uranium mines in the chapter and advocated for the new BIA-funded Red Valley School. These are critical issues that require immediate action from all three branches of the Navajo Nation government.

Together, we can build a future where our communities thrive.

600 diné bizaad children's book given to children at the page v. Chinle basketball game

January 31, 2025 - On Tuesday (January 28), First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren and I distributed 600 children's books during a crucial Arizona's Division 3A girls' basketball game at the Chinle Wildcat Den between No. 1 Chinle Lady Wildcats (23-1) and No. Page Lady Sand Devils (15-8).

It was an amazing turnout. It warmed my heart because, as a parent and as a leader, I want to see our children learning our Diné bizaad.

I've signed an Executive Order declaring Diné Bizaad as the official language of the Navajo Nation, which requires executive branch offices and programs to use Navajo language in their daily tasks.

Within the Office of the President, I am honored to have Mr. Peter Thomas on staff as my Diné language and cultural advisor. Mr. Thomas is credited for being a Navajo language scholar, translating children's books into Navajo.

Thank you to the Navajo Division of Children and Family Services for aiding in getting the books and helping us pass them out during halftime!

Our Navajo language keeps us grounded and rooted in who we are, while keeping us close to our ancestors who fought for us to be here today.

For our parents, please read to your children. Be patient with them and teach them Diné Bizaad from a place of love. Learning a language is not easy and our children who do want to learn should not be laughed at. I encourage you to use these children's books as tools to share and teach our beautiful language with humbleness.

Acoma, diné relatives build homes for the 1,000 home initiative

January 30, 2025 - Yesterday (January 30), I excitingly witnessed one of my biggest priorities as Navajo Nation President come to life.

I had the opportunity to tour the Clayton Homes construction warehouse, where the BIA's Housing Improvement Program and Navajo Community Housing and Infrastructure Development (CHID) houses are being built. This is a milestone moment for our people. When I took office, I told voters that I would bring homes to our Diné under the "1,000 Home Initiative." Today, we are making progress on that vision. Achieving this goal means ensuring that some of our most vulnerable Navajo families receive affordable, high-quality homes because they deserve stability, security, and a place to call their own. Our people should not have to live in overcrowded, deteriorating homes. I grew up like many Navajo children—without electricity, in a small, rundown house. That experience shaped my understanding of what our people need. Given the opportunity to lead, I vowed to help provide families with homes where they can feel safe. I want to extend my appreciation to General Manager of Clayton Homes in Albuquerque Vance McMillan, President of Developer Division with Homes Direct Greg McClanahan, Acting Department Manager for CHID Patrick Dalgai, and Division Director for the Navajo Division of Community Development Candice Yazzie. McClanahan reported that Homes Direct has delivered 11 homes to date, with 10 more in production and 371 pending work orders. Three developers are working to complete 150 homes. Each warehouse can build four homes per week, meaning 12 homes are completed weekly. Walking through these homes today, I saw the careful craftsmanship from the flooring to the framework. Thank you to our hardworking construction crews, including our Diné and Acoma relatives. These homes are built to last—beautiful homes for our Navajo people.

Sharing Navajo government lessons with students from Albuquerque Public Schools

January 29, 2025 - It is always an honor to teach our Navajo and Native students about our tribal government systems and how they operate for the Diné people. There is no better experience than to get this real-life experience during a Navajo Nation Council session or a visit to the Office of the President. Earlier this week, I enjoyed the visit by 25 Indigenous students from Cleveland Middle School, which is part of the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS). They made the four-hour round trip from Albuquerque, New Mexico to our tribal capital with APS School Board Members, four chaperones and a bus driver. I shared with them the value and teaching of resilience and that being grounded in who they are – that their DNA and bloodstreams – have overcome many historical obstacles to be here today. And that as the future leaders of Mother Earth and Father Sky, they're meant to be here today among us all. I thank our Navajo Department of Diné Education for organizing this field trip with APS, a growing partnership agreement. APS Board Members Ronalda Tome-Warito, District 2, Josefina E. Domínguez, District 6, Dr. Antonio Gonzales, deputy superintendent of leadership and learning for APS, and Tanya Campos, chief equity officer for APS, were among other visitors. In New Mexico, we have approximately 26,000 Diné students enrolled in public schools, some of which attend Albuquerque Public Schools. The school district serves 6,850 Native students from 123 tribes, with 4,114 students listing their tribal affiliation as Diné/Navajo. Also huge thanks to the Kyle Tapaha, chairman for the City of Albuquerque's Commission on American Indian and Alaska Native Affairs, Phil Farson, Indian Education Department's (IED) Senior Director, Thorn Begay, IED Instructional Manager, Cheryl Antone, IED Indigenous Education Coordinator, Alvino Sandoval, Navajo language teacher at Cleveland Middle School, along with the librarian and parents of the Cleveland Middle School students. Ahéhee for visiting the Office of the President!

OMB memo pausing federal funds has been rescinded

January 29, 2025 - The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum that directed federal executive agencies to "pause" funding obligations and disbursements for financial assistance, loans, and grants has officially been rescinded. Our team, in collaboration with the Navajo Office of the Controller, the Navajo Nation Washington Office, and the Navajo Nation Council, will continue to monitor the effects of ongoing Executive Orders to ensure the protection of our financial resources.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

At this time, there is no immediate concern regarding the daily operations of the Navajo Nation government or its federal funding. Additionally, portals for drawdowns are now open and fully operational.

Statement from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren on freeze of federal funds, grants

January 28, 2025 - I write to update you on the Nygren Administration's review of President Trump's memorandum calling for federal executive agencies to "pause" funding obligations and disbursements of financial assistance, loans, and grants.

After consulting with my legal team and having read the plain language of the memorandum, there should be little impact to the daily operations of the Navajo Nation government. Programs that are funded with federal dollars may be impacted however as the Memorandum is implemented.

Take special note that Social Security benefits, Medicare, and other federally funded social programs remain unaffected by the memorandum. Earlier today, the federal funding portal, which releases federal dollars for these programs, was shut down for a short period of time but has since been reactivated.

It is also important to emphasize that as a sovereign government, the Navajo Nation operates under treaty obligations with the United States. Treaty agreements create legal protections for our government's funding and operations.

We are closely monitoring the situation and conducting the necessary analyses. As of now, a lawsuit has been filed challenging the Office of Management and Budget's memorandum, and an injunction has been issued. The legal and policy landscape is evolving rapidly, and we are committed to providing timely updates as developments occur.

I want to assure the Navajo people that the Office of the President is working diligently with the Office of the Controller and the Navajo Nation Council's Budget and Finance Committee to identify unspent federal funds and determine how they can be utilized without interference from these executive orders.

The Nygren Administration remains steadfast in protecting the interests of the Navajo Nation. Thank you for your patience and trust as we navigate this matter.

41 volunteers help the foster grandparent program shine

January 28, 2025 – On December 30th, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren made a powerful move to strengthen the bond between elders and youth.

He signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Window Rock Unified School District (WRUSD) and the Navajo Division of Aging and Long-Term Care Support, strengthening the partnership with the Navajo Foster Grandparent Program.

The WRUSD District #8 is now one of the volunteer stations for the program.

The volunteers, elders 55 and over, receive stipends and, if needed, travel reimbursements, but the real reward comes from the connections made with the youth.

"They become mentors, helping kids from low-income households, single-parent families, or homes where grandparents are raising grandchildren," said Lee Begay, Sr. Program and Project Specialist. "Many of the students continue to stay in touch with their elder even after graduation."

The program began in 1965 and was created under the Older Americans Act.

The program supports tutoring and mentorship across the five agencies and is funded by AmeriCorps.

"Because of the grandmas and cheiis, we see kids go to school, further their education, and graduate," Begay said. "That's the impact our grandmas and cheiis have."

However, while the program thrives in many areas, Begay points out that the Eastern and Central agencies have been struggling with a shortage of volunteers and are working hard to recruit more this year.

President Nygren also signed an MOA with the Beclabito Day School in Northern Navajo Agency to bring the Navajo Foster Grandparent Program to elders and students there.

"These programs are essential," President Nygren said. "Our elders are vital to our community. They often provide the guidance and wisdom that helps shape our lives. It's heartwarming to see our elderly giving their time to guide the next generation."

Prayer of k'é and healing disregarded as two delegates interrupt State of the Navajo Nation Address during the winter session

January 27, 2025 - Historically, Navajo Nation Delegates have walked the President to the Council Chambers before the State of the Navajo Nation Address, symbolizing unity between the executive and legislative branches. It is a tradition rooted in respect and collaboration, reflecting the values of K'é and mutual commitment to serving the Navajo people.

Earlier today, I had the honor of continuing this tradition alongside Delegates Germaine Simonson and George Tolth, who graciously escorted me to the Council Chambers. Together, we witnessed the Speaker election and celebrated Speaker Crystalyne Curley's second term. This moment was beautifully grounded by a prayer led by Delegate Tolth, which emphasized healing, unity, and respect among leaders. The prayer set a tone of hope and commitment to serve our people with dignity.

However, it is with disappointment that I recount the disruption that followed. As I began delivering the State of the Navajo Nation Address—a critical opportunity to update the Nation's leadership and citizens on progress and challenges—Delegates Eugenia Charles-Newton and Vince James repeatedly interrupted. Their focus on procedural concerns regarding the Vice President's participation overshadowed the purpose of the address and the opportunity to share the accomplishments and needs of the Nation.

While Vice President Richelle Montoya explained that she had not prepared a report, and Delegate Danny Simpson clarified that Title II and the Council's Rules of Order designate the President as the sole presenter of the State of the Nation Address, the interruptions persisted. These actions detracted from the spirit of unity established by Delegate Tolth's prayer and undermined the importance of the moment.

It has been eight months since my last in-person address. I was eager to share the administration's updates, highlight the progress we have made, and outline the challenges we must tackle together. Instead, this critical opportunity was overshadowed by divisive behavior and misplaced priorities. Such actions do not serve the interests of our people, who deserve leaders focused on solutions and healing rather than political distractions.

Despite these challenges, I remained committed to honoring the prayer of unity and healing. In an effort to de-escalate the situation and refocus the session, I invited Vice President Montoya to join me at the presentation table. Although I ultimately yielded my time to her, the interruptions had already diverted attention from the address.

Our roles as leaders are sacred. We are entrusted to serve the Navajo people with integrity, respect, and collaboration. The behavior displayed by certain delegates today does not reflect these values. Our people, especially our youth, deserve to witness leadership rooted in K'é—unity, harmony, and mutual respect. I remain steadfast in my commitment to working for the people and moving our Nation forward. Let this serve as a reminder of the importance of unity and the need to prioritize the well-being of our people above all else. Together, we can and must do better.

Congratulations to Speaker Curley on re-election

January 27, 2025 - Today, during the first day of the 2025 Winter Session, the 25th Navajo Nation Council elected Crystalyne Curley, once again, to serve as Speaker for the next two years. Your oath obligates you to serve the Navajo people through the legislative body, and I am eager to collaborate with you during this term.

As Speaker and President, we both have two years remaining in our terms. It is imperative that we work together to ensure access to basic water, power, and electricity for our communities. Our constituents elected us to serve them, and addressing these urgent needs must be our top priority.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

As we move into 2025, I encourage both of us to hold each other accountable, alongside Chief Justice Jayne. The three-branch government provides essential checks and balances, enabling us to achieve significant goals for our people.

Speaker Curley's election followed three rounds of runoff, demonstrating the confidence the council has in your leadership. I look forward to working with the entire Navajo Nation Council on our progress and urge everyone to roll up their sleeves and pass the budget.

Congratulations again, Speaker Curley on your re-election!

Prayers to the Tó'nánees'díí community today

January 27, 2025 - Last night, I learned of the tragic events that unfolded in Tuba City, Arizona. My heart is heavy as I send prayers to the family of the individual who lost their life and to the entire community of Tuba City. Our prayers also go out to the second person who was taken to Flagstaff Medical Center. I am grateful for the swift response of our first responders and law enforcement, who acted quickly to ensure the safety of others. Their dedication is truly appreciated.

While rumors and fears can often spread in times like these, I want to reassure the community that the situation is under control. The Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety has confirmed that the suspect is in custody, and the community is now safe. However, we must all remain vigilant, continuing to support law enforcement and work together to ensure our community is safe.

Tragic events such as these not only result in loss of life, but also add to the mental health challenges that many of our people already face. Let us all commit to helping each other find healthier ways to cope with life's struggles. Whether through prayer, counseling, or traditional ceremonies, may we seek the healing we need. Today, I encourage you to reach out to those who may be hurting and offer comfort. Let us hold the families of the victims in our prayers.

Warm hearts: anonymous donor provides coats to Diné people amid freezing temperatures

January 26, 2025 - Nearly 2,000 coats were distributed to Diné people in and around Shiprock, as well as the broader Northern Navajo Agency, this past Friday, thanks to an anonymous donor.

The coat drive was organized by former Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer, Pastor Robert Tso of Victory Life Church, staff from the Office of the President, and Northern Agency Veterans Commanders in collaboration with the nonprofit Operation Warm, based in Salt Lake City.

The coats, available in a variety of colors, arrived just in time, as temperatures across the Navajo Nation have plummeted, with some nights dipping into the negatives.

Additional partners included volunteers from the Shiprock Chapter and Comes As You Are Ministries. Some coats were also given to students from Dream Diné Charter and Shiprock Associated Schools Inc. Our deepest thanks to this anonymous donor for their generous support for our Diné people during this challenging time, as well as to all the community volunteers and organizers who braved the cold to distribute these jackets.

Jackets serve as our robes and shawls, providing shelter, warmth, and security.

New electric line installation, enhancing power supply and efficiency for the Huerfano chapter

January 24, 2025 - The Huerfano Chapter is working on a new electric line project so 15 residents will receive electricity.

The first electric line was built between 2004-2005. It was the first major electric line that drew power from the Newcomb grid line, coming into Burnham to power over 55 homes in the community.

Prior to this project, the Huerfano Chapter received a waterline in October 2024. This is a small step toward helping our surrounding communities receive resources that will benefit their homes.

Currently, the project is working with right of ways on homes that may not have adequate wiring, where wiring is not fully completed or has no wiring at all. With mobile homes, wiring is outdated.

With the assistance from NTUA, wiring can be brought up to standard.

The project is funded by the State of New Mexico and Navajo Nation ARPA funds with the help of NTUA.

With state funding ending in June 2025, the chapter is applying again in an attempt to extend funding that will be used to expand power lines to others in the community.

A new electric line would provide essential services to the large population of ranchers, farmers and students, as well as to Diné returning home, as electricity and water become increasingly available.

At least five people have been served so far while 10 more are on the list. This positively impacts young people and retirees who are trying to move back home.

"We are very thankful for Nygren Administration for doing all he can to help us," said Harrison LaMone, President of Huerfano Chapter.

Thank you, Mr. LaMone, for the faith you have in me but also the administration. And thank you for working with us so we can all work toward a better future for our communities.

More projects are yet to come in the new year. This is a start to bring infrastructure to the community to maintain efficiency and assistance for those who need it.

President Nygren shares Navajo priorities with NM state leaders

January 23, 2025 – At the New Mexico State Capitol, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren met with state leaders, including Speaker Javier Martinez, to discuss Navajo's legislative priorities.

Speaker Martinez invited tribal leaders from the state's 24 tribes, nations and pueblos to Santa Fe to meet with him and other members of the legislature to hear tribal needs, upholding tribal sovereignty.

President Nygren shared that the Navajo Nation is taking bold steps in 2025 to uplift the lives of the Diné, with a strong focus on economic growth, public safety, and cultural preservation. The administration is prioritizing critical water rights settlements, including the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, which will bring vital water access to communities across the Nation. Education remains a core issue, with efforts to ensure equitable support for Navajo students and increase the use of the Navajo language in schools and daily life.

Public safety is also a major concern, with recruitment of Navajo police officers to tackle crime and the ongoing Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) crisis. The administration continues to push for the Shiprock First Responders Substation, a long-awaited project to centralize emergency services in one modern facility, improving response times for Shiprock and surrounding areas.

Economic initiatives, like the Navajo Small Business Credit Program, are helping small businesses grow and create jobs, with a particular focus on renewable energy, agriculture, and cultural tourism. Infrastructure development, including broadband expansion and road improvements, will help connect rural communities and boost access to healthcare and commerce.

Sonsela Butte Wildfire is officially contained after burning 133 acres

January 22, 2025 – On Tuesday, Jan. 21, the BIA Wildland Fire Management-Navajo Region responded to the Sonsela Butte Wildfire, which charred 133 acres north of Crystal Chapter House on Indian Route 12.

Today, BIA Wildland Fire Management-Navajo Region officials announced that the human-caused fire has been, and were able to do so thanks to low winds and low temperatures.

Sharen Sandoval, executive director for the Navajo Department of Emergency Management, said there was no new growth to the fire. No homes were affected, except damage to one telephone pole, she said.

"Fire danger has gone up from low to moderate," Sandoval said, noting that fire prevention awareness would be the next step across Navajo Nation communities.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren thanked the frontline firefighters and Navajo Nation Departments for ensuring the fire did not get out of control, while monitoring the surrounding communities.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

“I understand during these times things can get hectic and everyone is doing the best they can to help,” said President Nygren. “I want to thank Director Sandoval and BIA Wildland Fire Management-Navajo Region for keeping me updated on what is going on. I encourage our people to stay safe and be careful burning fires during these dry conditions. Only you can prevent forest fires.”

National Cheii Day

January 22, 2025 - Today, we honor our Cheiis, the strong pillars of our families and communities. With deep gratitude, we thank them for the strength and wisdom they have passed down, teaching us how to protect ourselves and care for one another. Many of our Cheiis have shown us the importance of listening, not only to the elders but also to the matriarchs who guide us. Na’ashó’ii dich’ízhii, the horned toad, to us as Diné is also our grandfather. We are taught to bless ourselves as they provide protection. As we reflect on our Cheii’s and horned toad’s teachings, let us continue to honor their legacy by respecting the wisdom of those who came before us and nurturing the generations that follow. May we walk in balance, as they have shown us, and carry their teachings forward in all we do.

President Nygren urges New Mexico leaders to fund the Shiprock First Responder Substation

January 22, 2025 - At the New Mexico State Capitol, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren met with state leaders, including Speaker Javier Martinez, to discuss legislative priorities for the 60-day session. Speaker Martinez invited tribal leaders from the state’s 24 tribes, nations and pueblos to Santa Fe to meet with him and other members of the legislature to hear tribal needs, upholding tribal sovereignty. Nygren stressed the need to fund the Shiprock First Responders Substation, highlighting a \$3.5 million shortfall in its \$15.9 million budget.

“Our police officers in Shiprock are operating from an old post office with significant structural and environmental issues,” President Nygren stated. “Shiprock is the largest community in the Navajo Nation.” Nygren submitted a written report to lawmakers that outlines the need for consultation and collaboration on capital outlay funds for essential infrastructure, public safety, and resources to address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples crisis.

Another priority is working with chapter governments in New Mexico to access capital outlay funding for basic infrastructure projects. Currently, about \$21.5 million in state capital outlay funding has expired. “Over the past several months, we have engaged with the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department to ensure that funding is not returned,” President Nygren said.

\$118 million approved for nine solar and battery storage projects across Arizona and New Mexico

January 22, 2025 – On Tuesday, President Buu Nygren proudly announced that the Navajo Nation, through the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA), is taking a significant step toward energy sovereignty. The funding, secured under the Department of Agriculture’s Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Powering American Clean Energy (PACE) program, is set to contribute to Navajo Nation’s clean energy infrastructure and creating economic opportunities for the Navajo people.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has committed more than \$100 million through the Powering Affordable Clean Energy Program to finance solar-powered facilities and a battery energy storage system for NTUA. This investment is expected to generate over 30 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy, providing power to approximately 40,000 NTUA customers in rural Arizona.

“This initiative marks a transformative moment for the Navajo Nation,” said President Nygren, “By embracing renewable energy, we are doubling down on meeting today’s needs while securing a future of sustainability and self-reliance—empowering the Navajo Nation to lead in energy independence and environmental stewardship.

NTUA’s proposal includes nine solar projects strategically located across rural Arizona and New Mexico, with three incorporating battery storage systems:

Solar with Battery Storage Projects:

Cudei, New Mexico (4.9 MW solar, 20 MWh storage)

Ganado, Arizona (4.9 MW solar, 20 MWh storage)

Round Rock, Arizona (10 MW solar, 20 MWh storage)

Solar-Only Projects:

Chinle, Arizona (4.9 MW)

LeChee, Arizona (4.9 MW)

District Office locations (Chinle, Dilkon, Crownpoint, and Headquarters), totaling 1.15 MW

These renewable energy projects will provide immediate and lasting benefits to NTUA customers by reducing reliance on costly third-party energy providers and reinvesting savings into local communities. By harnessing solar power, the Navajo Nation is advancing toward energy independence, strengthening current energy resources, and driving economic growth.

The projects will also create approximately 525 construction jobs, offering workforce training and skill development for Navajo workers. More specifically, 1,000 hours of specialized training will equip participants with translatable experience and expertise in renewable energy, opening doors to long-term career opportunities.

Post-construction, each facility will sustain 2-3 full-time jobs, contributing to local employment and economic stability. Additionally, tax revenues generated will support the Navajo Nation government and help NTUA expand electricity access to homes without power. Beyond economic impact, these projects will transform lives by providing reliable electricity to thousands of households, enabling families to focus on education, employment, and community growth in their home communities.

"Our vision is clear," President Nygren stated. "We are investing in a future where the Navajo Nation stands as an example of self-sufficiency, resilience, and innovation in clean energy by harnessing the power of the sun right here in our home communities. My administration excited for NTUA and we urge the Navajo People to join us in building our Nation for the future.

Navajo leadership is dedicated to responsible energy development that respects traditional values, protects the environment, and advances the Nation's position as a leader in renewable energy.

Crystal, NM fire chars at least 133 acres

January 21, 2025 - A human-caused wildland fire is 0 percent contained and has charred at least 133 acres in the community of Crystal, N.M. off Route 12, according to BIA Wildland Fire Management-Navajo Region.

The fire, called the "Sonsela Butte Fire," started around 1 p.m. this afternoon off the Navajo Route 12 highway between mile marker 53 and 55. Resources are currently deployed to suppress the fire.

As of 5:40 pm, Navajo Route 12 north and south bound lanes are open. Drivers are asked to proceed with caution if commuting through the area. First responders are still on site and are on an active scene.

Fire officials are currently on the ground suppressing the fire, said Johnson Benallie, of the BIA Wildland Fire Management-Navajo Region.

"Proceed with caution with driving through," said Benallie, who attributed the growing fire to dry conditions.

"Be careful and take it slow."

As of 5:30 p.m. fire crews from Navajo Region BIA, Navajo Department of Emergency Management, Navajo Police Window Rock District, Ganado Fire District, Navajo Nation Rangers and Navajo Fish and Wildlife were actively suppressing the fire.

There are no evacuations at this time, Benallie said.

Navajo Nation leaders advocate for water rights and economic development at inaugural ball

January 21, 2025 - Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren attended the Inaugural Ball in the nation's capital this week, leveraging the high-profile event to advance

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

critical federal priorities on behalf of the Navajo people. Their visit underscored the administration's commitment to addressing issues such as water rights, economic development, and sovereignty restoration. During the event, President Nygren had the opportunity to join Congressional leaders in welcoming President Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States. To President Nygren, it is important that the Nation be willing to work with the administration on advancing shared priorities including respecting sovereignty, improving economic development, and providing safe sustainable housing.

The First Lady and President Nygren also connected with UFC fighter Jorge Masvidal, who expressed deep interest in the resilience of the Navajo people and their rich cultural heritage. Masvidal's engagement highlights the broader appeal of Navajo traditions and the importance of sharing their stories on a global stage.

In addition, President Nygren and the First Lady met with Pastor Lorenzo Sewell, who delivered the closing invocation at President Trump's 2025 inauguration. Pastor Sewell's reflections on faith and service resonated with the administration's vision of fostering unity and community-focused leadership.

Key discussions during the visit included meetings with Congresswoman Harriet Hageman, Chair of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries, and Congressman Bruce Westerman, Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee. These conversations focused on the Arizona Water Rights Settlement, a cornerstone legislative priority aimed at securing water security and access for the Navajo Nation.

"The Arizona Water Rights Settlement is more than a legal framework—it's a lifeline for our communities," said President Nygren. "Water is life, and we are committed to ensuring our people have the resources they need to thrive for generations to come. I am encouraged by the support and commitment from our federal partners."

Beyond water rights, President Nygren highlighted the importance of revitalizing the Navajo Nation's economy through investments in infrastructure, workforce development, and renewable energy. These initiatives aim to create sustainable opportunities while upholding the principles of tribal sovereignty.

"This week in Washington, D.C., has been a powerful reminder of the importance of collaboration," said President Nygren. "By engaging with federal leaders and partners, we are taking critical steps to address longstanding challenges and secure a brighter future for the Navajo people."

President Nygren remains committed in his efforts to maintain proactive engagement with the federal government. He emphasized the importance of working together to secure resources, implement sustainable solutions, and uphold the federal trust responsibility to Indian Country.

Navajo Department of Workforce Development: unlocking training for lasting employment

January 21, 2025 – With a remarkable 90% completion rate and an annual average of 200 participants, the Navajo Department of Workforce Development is transforming lives.

Open to eligible applicants across the Four Corners region, this vital department serves both Native Americans and non-Natives. The Navajo Department of Workforce Development provides essential services to pave the way to sustainable careers.

The Navajo Department of Workforce Development (NDWD) provides valuable support, including work experience placements, vocational training, and GED assistance, helping many people in the area. They also offer housing support and relocation aid to assist participants. Whether you're looking to gain hands-on experience or need help with living expenses, Workforce Development is a great place to start building a better future. Interested applicants can apply online at www.ndwd.org.

"This program is about giving people the chance to enhance their resumes and build their careers," said Orlanda Wauneka, NDWD Program Manager. "We create opportunities within 100 miles of the Navajo Nation, allowing participants to gain valuable experience in real-world work settings."

One standout success story comes from a participant placed with the tribe's fleet management, who went on to secure a full-time position after completing their placement. Wauneka said the program helps non-Navajo individuals, too.

"Our goal is to equip people with the skills and opportunities they need to achieve financial independence," Wauneka said.

Roger James, now the chapter president for Red Lake Chapter, is a prime example of benefitting from NDWP. Starting as an office assistant at the Office of the President, James has since climbed the ranks, proving that being part of NDWP can lead to great employment outcomes.

"It's an incredible opportunity for people of all ages," James said. "Workforce Development helps you get back on your feet and set you up for your next step—there are resources available, you just have to take that first step."

Navajo Nation celebrates trump administration at inaugural reception for the 47th President of the United States

January 20, 2025 - During Donald J. Trump's inauguration activities, the Navajo Nation Washington Office proudly hosted a reception on Sunday evening in Washington, D.C. Alongside First Lady Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren, we celebrated this historic occasion with Rep. Eli Crane, a staunch ally of the Navajo Nation.

Working collaboratively with Rep. Crane, we have made significant progress in advocating for our water rights in Arizona, particularly through the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement. We remain dedicated to ensuring that rural Arizona, including the Navajo Nation, has access to vital resources such as water, power, and electricity.

Also in attendance were former Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer and former Second Lady Dottie Lizer. This event celebrated the new golden era under the Trump Administration, emphasizing the many allies standing with the Navajo Nation. Ahehee!

The late rev. Dr. Martin luther king sought peace, balance, beauty, harmony for the world

January 20, 2025 - "Returning violence for violence multiples violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars." – The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, legacy to all people is to remind us that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Injustice is what he called moral blindness.

On Jan. 15, he would have been 96 years old. Tragically, his life was taken on April 4, 1968, as he sought for the country what Diné know as hózhó. He was only 39 years old.

His life represented the continual struggle to promote freedom, equality, peace, justice and dignity for all races and all people. He sought to bring an end to people's inhumanity to others.

Dr. King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on Dec. 10, 1964, just five months after President Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law that he worked so hard for.

Dr. King reminds us of our own great leaders of the past, and the struggles they confronted to achieve justice for the Diné.

Our Navajo hataathlis and naataanis long ago understood that for peace and happiness to thrive, our people need to live in harmony and beauty. Even now, all of our prayers and all of our aspirations for ourselves, our families and our Diné has this at its center.

Like the virtues of love, tolerance, understanding and empathy, the shortcomings of hatred, intolerance, racism and apathy are learned from childhood. We must teach our children that the teachings of our Navajo elders hold all that we need for a good life.

On this Martin Luther King Day, I ask that our thoughts for our families, our Navajo Nation and our country be good thoughts, and that we strive to forgive the shortcomings of those around us.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

President Nygren announces groundbreaking partnership for Ne'zaad Solar Project

January 19, 2025 – Today marks a significant step forward in our commitment to sustainable energy and economic growth for the Navajo Nation. I am proud to announce the full support of my administration for the Ne'zaad Solar project, a groundbreaking collaboration between the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA), Shijing, Lion Point Capital, and Navajo Sun.

The Ne'zaad project, situated in the Nenahnezad Chapter, represents a pivotal investment in our future. This ambitious undertaking will bring not only a state-of-the-art 5GW solar cell manufacturing facility and a 5GW solar module assembly plant but also a much-needed economic revitalization to a region significantly impacted by the decline of the coal industry.

This project aligns perfectly with our administration's commitment to transparent and accountable governance. The Nenahnezad Chapter has voiced its strong support through Resolution NZC-036-2024, reflecting a shared vision for progress and prosperity. We are confident that this project will generate over 2,000 construction jobs and 2,000 long-term, well-paying positions for our Navajo people.

Beyond immediate job creation, the Ne'zaad Solar project will provide substantial revenue for the Nation through taxes and lease payments, enabling us to invest further in critical community programs. The chapter's intention to use these funds to support scholarships, internships, youth programs, and veteran services exemplifies the broader positive impact this project will have on our communities.

We are deeply grateful for the collaborative spirit and foresight demonstrated by NTUA, Shijing, Lion Point Capital, and Navajo Sun. Their commitment to sustainable energy development, coupled with the Nenahnezad Chapter's strong support, signals a bright future for our Nation.

We anticipate the project's substantial contribution to creating a stronger, more equitable, and energy-independent Navajo Nation. NTUA will provide regular updates on the project's advancement.

Public Safety at the forefront of Navajo Nation and state leadership

January 18, 2025 – In 2023, numerous Navajo citizens were trafficked off the Navajo Nation through scams, particularly to fake sober-living homes.

Thanks to a coordinated effort by Navajo Nation leaders and Arizona lawmakers, these Diné are now safely returning home.

Operation Rainbow Bridge, launched in May 2023, exposed a troubling trend where individuals seeking recovery from substance use had been exploited by fraudulent sober-living facilities.

The "homes" were being used to defraud the insurance system. Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs and Attorney General Kris Mayes partnered with Navajo leaders, including Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and Senator Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar, to bring victims back to the Navajo Nation.

Senate President Warren Petersen also played a crucial role. He supported Hatathlie's sober-living bill. While the bill didn't pass last year due to language issues in the bill, it will be presented again during this legislative session.

"This has to stop," Petersen said. "I know Sen. Hatathlie will make this (sober-living bill) a top focus of hers this year and again, Sen. Hatathlie will have my full support."

Public safety remains a top priority for state leaders, including House Speaker Steve Montenegro, who has pledged to assist in any way possible.

"If I can help, I will," said Montenegro, emphasizing the importance of integrity in government.

He asked President Nygren how the House could better represent the Navajo Nation, and Nygren's response was clear: language.

Nygren recalled a close call where a man was nearly scammed but was saved when another person spoke to him in Navajo.

"Our language is essential," Nygren said. "It saved a life, and it continues to protect our people."

The Navajo language, once crucial during WWII, remains a vital tool in protecting the community from scams and preserving the nation's security. Both Petersen and Montenegro understand and commit to helping where they can.

President Nygren relieves Olin Kieyoomia of his duties as Veterans Administrator and wishes him well

January 17, 2025 - I am writing to inform you about the recent situation involving Olin Kieyoomia, now former deputy director of the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration.

A local newspaper published a notice recently on the arrest of Mr. Kieyoomia by local law enforcement. I issued an initial statement in support of Mr. Kieyoomia based on the preliminary report I received.

Unfortunately, that initial report differs from the information we just received from authorities. As a result of these developments, Mr. Kieyoomia has been relieved of his duties with the Navajo Nation Office of the President and the Veterans Administration. We are in the process of helping him transition to the necessary resources and help.

This is an unfortunate and sad situation all around as many of our Navajo people suffer from similar issues. I know first-hand the service and advocacy Mr. Kieyoomia has provided to the Navajo Nation, our veterans, our people and our country as a U.S. Army veteran. Mr. Kieyoomia dedicated himself to serving our Navajo veterans and has changed the lives of countless veterans.

We are very sympathetic to his medical conditions, which we believe contributed to the circumstances surrounding this incident. I am thankful that no one was hurt. However, under the circumstances, this action to relieve Mr. Kieyoomia must be taken. I urge the public to pray for Mr. Kieyoomia and send him positive thoughts for a healthy recovery.

As we move forward, my administration remains committed to transparency, accountability, and efficiency in all our operations and decision-making processes. The political pressures associated with nation-building are heavy, as we strive to bring equity and justice to our people. This work involves not only setting policies, but also fostering a sense of unity and ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

Nation-building encompasses addressing the historical injustices faced by our communities, enhancing access to resources, and ensuring that all Navajo people can thrive. As we work towards a more equitable future, it is essential to recognize the emotional and mental toll this work can take on individuals dedicated to our cause, especially during a time of transformation under the Nygren Administration.

Supporting the mental health and healing of our Diné people, including our Navajo veterans, is a top priority for my administration. I fully support Mr. Olin Kieyoomia in his healing and recovery process, as we continue to work together toward our shared vision of a stronger, more equitable Navajo Nation marked by transparency and accountability. Bless our Navajo Nation and our People.

Diné bizaad is the official language of the navajo nation ... so let's practice every day

January 17, 2025 - Earlier this week, during the Second People's State of the Nation event at Greyhills Academy High School, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed Executive Order No. 01-2025, which directs Executive Branch's Divisions, Departments, Commissions, Offices and Programs to find ways to implement and use the Navajo language throughout the workday.

The executive order comes after the Navajo Nation Council passed legislation codifying Diné Bizaad as the official language of the Navajo Nation. On Christmas Eve, President Nygren signed the Council's bill into law. On Tuesday, in front of over 1,500 attendees at the SONN, President Nygren signed the executive order. In celebration of this significant moment, 300 books were distributed to Navajo youth who attended his second address as a start to help encourage them to learn and speak Navajo by reading and sounding out the language.

"Next week, the Office of the President will begin offering Navajo classes for the public and my team will begin in-person Navajo lessons," President Nygren said.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

The executive order requires at least one Navajo word or phrase to be included in written documents. For non-Diné Bizaad speaking staff employed with the tribal government, they will have the opportunity to learn the language.

The executive order also specifies how the Navajo Nation government will include street signs and signs in office spaces that spell out both the English and Navajo translations.

Ensuring this huge step not only continues to preserve the beautiful Diné Bizaad for the current generations of Diné people but for the most precious resource, the future generations.

"This is just the beginning of a bright future ahead for the 2025 year," President Nygren said. "Ya'at'eeh doo ahéhee nitsaago!"

Four leaders, same goal— better life for the Navajo people

January 16, 2025 – From the Senate and House floors to the Arizona Governor's office, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren put his people first.

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the 30th Annual Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day, Native American leaders and their members filled the Arizona Senate floor and gallery to bring attention to their needs before President of the Senate, Warren Petersen and Speaker of the House, Steve Montenegro.

President Nygren continued his advocacy for his people and after the session met with Governor Katie Hobbs. With Hobbs, President Nygren and Council Delegates Shawna Claw and Cherilyn Yazzie shared critical issues facing the Navajo Nation and its people, ranging from water access to the preservation of the Navajo language. Council delegate Yazzie said the growing need for water from outside cities such as Phoenix and especially now with wildfires in Los Angeles County is more important than ever for the water security of the Navajo Nation and other tribes. This demand for water, Yazzie said, depends on the passage and federal funding of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement.

Meanwhile, Council delegate Claw reshared the value of getting Navajo language on signs, so when tourists enter the Navajo Nation, it shows the importance of ongoing language preservation of a thriving Diné culture. President Nygren said the governor's support and commitment to the Navajo Nation with halting uranium transport across the nation and the continued advocacy with tribal water rights issues and overall tribal economic development helps the Navajo Nation grow.

He thanked Claw and Yazzie for their help in the effort to secure water and sustain the Navajo language. It's what the Navajo people deserve, he said.

"(I'm) so grateful for your partnership. I know we've made a lot of progress," Hobbs said. "I'm so excited about the water settlement. I think it's going to be all hands on deck from us and I know our senators are really focused on getting that through so we will continue to work with you on that— we're on top of that and whatever else we should be, let us know."

Hobbs said that she wants to see road signs in the Navajo Nation that reads in both Navajo and English.

A prayer for our NTUA linemen who are traveling to Los Angeles, CA to restore power

January 15, 2025 - My Navajo People, I come to you today with a heartfelt request - let us unite in prayer for 11 of our bravest NTUA linemen—two full crews and a superintendent—who are embarking on a critical mission to Los Angeles.

They are answering the urgent call to action following the devastating wildfires that have ravaged Southern California, leaving thousands without power.

These skilled men are selflessly putting themselves in harm's way to assist the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and other utility companies in the monumental task of restoring essential services. Their willingness to travel far from home, to work long hours in dangerous and challenging conditions, is a testament to their dedication and the compassionate spirit of the Navajo Nation.

This act of selfless service is a powerful reflection of the mutual aid and support we have always shown others. It is a direct echo of the generous assistance provided to our communities by LADWP crews for over

three years through the vital "Light Up Navajo" program. We remember their kindness and support, and now we demonstrate our own commitment to helping those in need.

I implore all of us to join in lifting these 11 courageous linemen up in prayer. Let us ask for the divine guidance and unwavering protection of the Holy People and the Creator.

May their journey be safe, their work effective, and their return home blessed. May they be shielded from harm and guided by strength and wisdom in their important work. Let us pray for their safety, their well-being, and their safe return to their families.

Thank you, Gerald Keetso, for your 12 years of service as Tuba City Chapter President

January 15, 2025 - We honor your remarkable 12 years as Chapter President of Tuba City. Your leadership has been inspiring, marked by your unwavering commitment to our community's well-being. Throughout your tenure, you faced daunting challenges yet remained determined, always prioritizing the needs of Tó'Nanéés'Díí. Under your guidance, your community has not only survived but truly thrived. Your dedication to the Navajo Nation shines through all that you have accomplished. You exemplified what it means to lead with humility and resolve. In stabilizing our fiscal policies and procedures, you laid the groundwork for essential growth. Your tireless work with the NTUA ensured that Tuba City residents had access to reliable services and resources, benefiting generations to come.

Thanks to your vision, significant projects like the community center, Dodson Pond revitalization, and amphitheater expansion became reality. Your foresight and determination made these transformations possible. You have turned our chapter into a model of local governance that reflects our values and meets the needs of our people.

Your diligence to the youth of Tuba City highlights your understanding of our Nation's future. Recognizing that today's youth are the leaders and guardians of our culture, you committed yourself to nurturing and empowering them, creating a legacy that will endure.

As you pass the baton to the next administration, we hope they continue the important projects you started. Your legacy will forever be part of the Tuba City Chapter, guiding us into the future. Ayóó Aniinshní, Cheíí.

President Nygren presents People's State of the Navajo Nation: key accomplishments in housing, water rights, tourism and taxation

January 15, 2025 - In a captivating hour-long address delivered in rapid-fire Navajo, President Buu Nygren showcased the top accomplishments of the Navajo Nation for 2024 during the second annual People's State of the Navajo Nation address.

Covering 22 significant topics, he emphasized the administration's commitment to sovereignty, government improvements, infrastructure, and more.

"With our focus on accountability, transparency, and efficiency, we've dedicated ourselves to addressing the essential services our people need," President Nygren stated as he opened the address.

Following cultural performances and briefings, he took the stage at 11 a.m. and completed his detailed speech of 4,300 words by noon, concluding with an executive order declaring the Navajo language, Diné Bizaad, as the official language of the Navajo Nation.

Among the highlights of his administration, the Navajo Small Business Credit Initiative secured a remarkable \$26 million from the U.S. Treasury, providing \$89 million in loans over the next decade. The Navajo Nation Tax Commission achieved a record \$140.7 million in tax revenue, 26% above projections, largely driven by a booming tourism sector.

"We've seen an impressive rise in tourist visits, with over 1.9 million guests flocking to our parks, notably Lake Powell Tribal Park," he reported. This influx generated \$15.5 million in revenue from tribal parks and museums.

Significantly, the planned Horseshoe Bend Resort is set to create 3,000 jobs and boost the economy by \$14 million annually. Additionally, the purchase of the historic Goulding's Lodge is expected to yield \$7 million in annual revenue.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

In terms of housing initiatives, President Nygren announced the “1,000 Home Initiative,” which has already achieved 474 housing contracts. Moreover, various partnerships are underway to develop modular homes, with considerable allocations from ARPA funds.

To realize his priority of providing clean water, the President highlighted successful water settlements in Arizona and New Mexico awaiting congressional approval. Ongoing projects aim to connect more families to clean water, with substantial investments in infrastructure.

President Nygren concluded with an outline of future projects, reinforcing his administration's commitment to ensuring that every Navajo family enjoys strong housing, infrastructure, and services.

Navajo Nation connects the unreachable: starlink pilot program brings broadband to remote chapters

January 11, 2025 – The Navajo Nation Broadband Office launched a transformative pilot program with Starlink, the Low Earth Orbit satellite provider, as part of a broader Chapter Connectivity Plan.

The initiative will bring reliable internet to all unconnected Navajo chapters across the Nation.

“By merging innovative satellite solutions with a comprehensive connectivity plan, NNBBBO is creating a future where every corner of the Navajo Nation is empowered through technology,” said Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren.

The pilot program has connected five chapters – Burnham, Jeddito, Coppermine, Tolani Lake, Ojo Encino – and the Red Rock Senior Center, as well as government facilities in St. Michaels.

Mobile units equipped with Starlink are being used for people with high mobility needs.

Sonia Nez is director of the Broadband Office. She said this initiative serves as a temporary solution while long-term middle-mile and fiber projects are being developed.

“Building on the program's success, a plan is underway to extend LEO satellite technology to 50 more underserved chapters,” she said. “A feasibility study is also evaluating satellite coverage for over 6,000 households in remote areas that may be difficult to reach with traditional broadband technologies.”

The Chapter Connectivity Plan will expand these efforts and enable virtual meetings, telehealth access, enhanced education, and improved administrative functions for chapters. This approach also strengthens emergency response capabilities.

Wishing the 36th WINGS national team success at the USA cross country championships

January 10, 2025 - I would like to extend my best wishes to the 36th Wings National Team as they compete in the “Junior” race at the USA Cross Country Championships in Lubbock, TX on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025.

Since 1989, Wings has proudly sponsored this exceptional inter-tribal squad, showcasing the fastest Native runners in the U.S. aged 14-19. I am particularly proud that of the 17 runners selected for this year's team, 10 are affiliated with the Navajo Nation, along with our honorary men's team coach, Herbert Beyale (Diné from Shiprock).

Wings has been instrumental in encouraging Native runners to participate on national and international stages. For over 35 years, they have promoted running as a vital tool for building and maintaining physical, mental, and spiritual health among our youth.

Last summer, the Navajo Nation Department of Health was proud to partner with Wings to offer eight two-day “Running & Fitness Camps” for kids ages 6-18 across eight communities in the Navajo Nation. Through vital funding from the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Health Services and Community Health Representative programs, Wings provided free summer enrichment for nearly 750 youth.

Notably, Wings hires and trains Navajo high school and college-aged runners to lead these camps, fostering a sense of community and mentorship. Programs like Wings not only promote fitness but also honor our long-standing tradition of running among Indigenous Peoples, a tradition that transcends geographic and cultural boundaries.

Building bridges to the future: Navajo Nation broadband office expands digital access, connectivity

January 10, 2025 – The Navajo Nation Broadband Office has made significant progress this year to close the digital divide for the Diné people.

Through strategic partnerships with the Digital Equity Initiative, tribal leadership and industry stakeholders, NNBBO achieved several key milestones that promise lasting impact.

NNBBO Division Director Sonia Nez has reported:

- **Middle Mile Infrastructure:** NNBBO completed Phase I planning, which includes 36 new towers and 325 miles of fiber. Phase II will expand this with 42 additional towers and 1,200 miles of fiber to lay the groundwork for 5G and broadband access.
- **Rapid Deployment Pilot:** In partnership with Starlink, NNBBO launched a pilot program to connect six Navajo chapters and government facilities to provide immediate access to broadband in underserved areas. The initiative will expand to other unconnected chapters.
- **BEAD Program Funding:** NNBBO coordinated efforts in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah to secure funding for last-mile broadband services. In Arizona alone, reclaiming thousands of Business Subscriber Locations, or BSLs, could unlock up to \$100 million in additional funding.
- **ARPA Initiatives:** With ARPA funding, NNBBO supported fiber-to-home, or FTTH, projects, 4G LTE upgrades and middle-mile fiber installations to achieve 450 FTTH connections and upgrades to 33 cellular sites.
- **Regulatory Reform:** NNBBO is working with the Navajo Land Department to streamline regulations to accelerate deployment of 5G and broadband infrastructure across the Nation.

Seven new homes delivered: a step toward the 1,000 home initiative

January 10, 2025 - I am pleased to report that the Navajo Division of Community Development's Housing Improvement Program is about a third of the way to complete its first contract/work order for new homes.

This initiative is an important part of my commitment to the 1,000 Home Initiative to address the housing needs within the Navajo Nation.

Through this program, we are set to help at least 74 new homeowners, all of whom have passed the HIP application process.

Here are some key updates:

Delivered Homes: I am happy to report that seven homes have already been delivered and two homes are in production as of today.

Partnerships: Recently, my office visited the HIP office in Fort Defiance to meet with Rita Begay, the program manager, and Greg McClanahan, the president of developer division for Homes Direct, to receive updates on their progress. Together with our external contractors, LBH Investment, Inc., and Speedy Sales and Services, we are working hard to ensure the successful delivery and setup of these homes.

Quality Assurance: Homes Direct is building our homes to the Navajo Nation's construction standards, federal and state housing codes. This ensures that our families receive quality residences.

This project represents a significant step forward under HIP and is supported by BIA ARPA funding and its application requirements. I want to extend my gratitude to Rita, Greg and all the partners involved for their dedication to bring new homes to our most vulnerable relatives.

Prayers to our brave Navajos who are on their way to California to fight wildfires

January 9, 2025 - As more people evacuate the Los Angeles area from the blazing wildfires, our Navajo Scouts are answering the call to help fight and protect the millions of people in LA County who are fleeing their homes.

I ask that we, as a united Navajo people, keep our Navajo Scouts in our thoughts and prayers. Let us send them our heartfelt wishes for protection, so that they may return home safely after aiding our relatives in Southern California during this challenging time.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

According to reports from California Fire, there are currently five active fires: the Palisades Fire, the Eaton Fire, the Hurst Fire, the Lidia Fire, and the Sunset Fire. The Palisades Fire has already burned over 17,234 acres, while the Eaton Fire has charred approximately 10,600 acres. Both of these fires ignited on January 7 and have forced massive evacuations, destroying homes and property, and tragically resulting in five lives lost.

The cause of these wildfires has been undetermined as of this social media post. However, extreme fire behavior has been attributed to the Santa Ana winds combined with the dry conditions that have been exacerbated by climate change.

Our Navajo Scouts, a dedicated team of 23 members, including a courageous female wildland firefighter, are highly trained and available to combat fires like these for ten months out of the year. They represent various communities across the Navajo Nation, united in their mission to help those in need.

Let us continue to pray for our Navajo Scouts and for the safety of everyone affected by these wildfires in the Los Angeles area.

Navajo Nation acts against environmental damage: \$4.9 million contract to plug orphaned wells

January 9, 2025 – More than 50 orphaned wells have been identified by the Navajo Nation Minerals Department, and a \$4.9 million contract will allow 19 of them to be properly plugged and abandoned. An orphaned well is an oil or gas well that is no longer in use and has been abandoned by its owner or operator.

The wells on the Navajo Nation are primarily located in northwestern New Mexico and southeastern Utah.

The wells were not properly plugged, though left abandoned by former operators.

The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health reports that people living near orphaned wells may experience higher mortality rates. Orphan wells can leak methane and hydrogen sulfide, which poses risks for water contamination.

On December 30, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and the Minerals Department committed to the plugging of the wells, ending a century of environmental damage caused by outside drilling companies.

The President signed a \$4.97 million service contract with Navajo Nation Oil & Gas Co., a tribal enterprise, to carry out Phase Two of the plug and abandon activities. The contract is funded through the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

“Our people come first, their needs, but also their safety,” President Nygren said. “Many of our loved ones have suffered health complications because of these wells. I commend the Minerals Department and NNOGC for working with me to protect our people.”

Navajo Oil & Gas is completing Phase One of the project. It includes environmental assessments by Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife to ensure endangered species are unharmed during the plugging of the wells.

“When an oil company leaves because the well is no longer economically producing, they are required to follow a process,” said Rowena Cheromiah, manager for the Minerals Department. “What we found with these orphaned wells is that operators didn’t follow that process or didn’t do it according to standards.”

Since 1956, 577 oil and gas wells have produced 428 million barrels of oil from the Navajo Nation.

“Some (orphaned wells) are still seeping, causing harm to the environment and to the groundwater,” said Mike Halona, director of the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources. “They pose a safety hazard for individuals who live out there. Once we address these properly, it’s good for the environment and good for the people.”

Witnessing the oath: a new chapter for our communities in Chinle Agency

January 8, 2025 - Today, I reflect on a significant milestone we celebrated—the inauguration of our chapter officials—president, vice president, secretary/treasurer, grazing officers, farm board, and school board members. For those who were unable to attend, I want to share why this day matters so much to our community.

As I witnessed our dedicated local leaders take their oaths of office, I felt a profound sense of pride and responsibility. These individuals are committed to shaping the future of our Chinle Agency, which comprises 14 vibrant communities.

Throughout the ceremony, we honored our rich Navajo heritage. Our clans connect us to our identity and our ancestors, and it is essential for us as leaders to uphold these traditions while striving for progress in regions like Chinle, Rough Rock, Round Rock, Wheatfields, Tsaile, and beyond.

One of the highlights of the day was recognizing the incredible work done at the Rough Rock Community School. This institution plays a vital role in maintaining and revitalizing our language. Its commitment to teaching Navajo is crucial for preserving our cultural traditions and instilling a strong sense of identity in our youth.

I expressed my eagerness to collaborate with local leadership to bring community projects to life, ensuring our initiatives reflect the values and needs of our people. Together, we can make a substantial impact.

I also want to extend my gratitude to the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors and the students and staff for hosting this inauguration. Their support exemplifies the spirit of community we cherish.

As we move forward, let us remember that leadership is about collaboration, innovation, and building lasting relationships. This day is not just a new beginning for our officials but a collective commitment to the hopes and aspirations of our community. Congratulations to our re-elected and newly elected chapter officials in Chinle Agency!

One step at a time, new Office of the President Legal Counsel made her way home

January 8, 2024 - It is with great pride that I welcome and congratulate Darrah Blackwater, our new legal counsel, distinguished two-time tennis champion from Farmington, New Mexico, and a dedicated advocate for her people.

Darrah's journey is one of perseverance and determination, qualities that have driven her success both on and off the tennis court.

In 2009, she led the Farmington High School tennis team to a state championship victory, while securing the doubles state title with her partner. That same dedication, focus and commitment to excellence now shapes her legal career and her service to the Navajo Nation.

Darrah is Béésh Bich'ahii, born for Tsi'naajinii. Her maternal grandfather is Béésh Bich'ahii, and her paternal grandfather is Táchii'nii. Her path has been one of extraordinary service advocating for those in need across the globe or returning home to the Navajo Nation to uplift and serve her community.

Darrah graduated from Fort Lewis College in 2013 with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. In 2020, she earned her Juris Doctorate from the University of Arizona. Before returning to the Navajo Nation, Darrah led her own law firm, Blackwater Consulting. She specialized in broadband and spectrum rights.

Her legal career began with the Department of the Interior, where she focused on Indian law. With her extensive experience in advocacy and her expertise in key areas like broadband policy and federal law, Darrah is poised to be an invaluable asset to our team.

"It's nice to be asked to come home," Darrah said. "I went to law school with the intention to better serve my people. So, to be in a position to now serve the Diné, my people, is something I'm truly proud of."

With Darrah's leadership, we are on the brink of making tremendous progress to advance the work of the Navajo Nation Broadband Office – an essential step to achieve digital equity for our people.

Congratulations, Darrah, and welcome home! We are excited to have you on our team, ready to continue your legacy of service, leadership and dedication to the Navajo Nation. (Courtesy photo by Darklisted Photography)

President Nygren unveils \$31 million ERP system to modernize government response to the Navajo people

January 7, 2025 – Hundreds of Navajo Nation employees heard firsthand from Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, Controller Sean McCabe and Arctic IT CEO Thomas Mercer about the Navajo Nation's new groundbreaking Enterprise Resource Planning system, or ERP.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

It's a technology designed to raise efficiency and improve service delivery to the Navajo people.

The ERP system integrates finance, HR and tribal enrollment onto a single platform. That promises greater efficiency, cost savings and enhanced citizen services.

In November, President Nygren signed a \$31 million contract with Arctic IT. With the current system, the Nation pays \$5 million per year for the FMIS system for accounting, but at five years with Arctic IT there will be a slight cost saving for various functions.

"This will be the largest technology rollout in Indian Country," he said. "You will demonstrate to Indian Country what a truly efficient, high-performing government looks like, the kind of government the Navajo Nation deserves."

Arctic IT CEO Thomas Mercer said the ERP system leverages Microsoft Dynamics to streamline workflows, reduce paperwork and strengthen data security.

"We're adapting this software to your specific business processes, customizing it to meet the unique needs of the Navajo Nation," Mercer said.

The key benefits include:

- Increased efficiency: automation reduces processing times and eliminates redundancies.
- Cost savings: lower operational costs and reduced reliance on external consultants, ultimately costing less than the current FMIS system.
- Improved citizen services: easier access to information and services for all Navajos.
- Alignment with Presidential priorities: the project directly supports President Nygren's commitment to efficient governance.

Today's project kickoff at the Window Rock Cinema marks the beginning of training for tribal employees from the Office of the Controller, Office of Management and Budget, Office of Vital Records and Identification, and the Department of Personnel Management.

Arctic IT, its consultants and Navajo DIT will provide instruction on Microsoft Dynamics.

Although the initial investment is substantial, the long-term cost savings are projected to be outstanding. The ERP system will enhance Navajo Nation's government operations to improve the lives of its citizens.

Controller McCabe noted that securing the \$31 million allocation involved extensive collaboration with the Navajo Nation Council's Budget and Finance Committee.

The nations fight for broadband equality

January 7, 2025 – Broadband is more than high-speed internet. It's the bridge to opportunity, safety and choice.

For the Navajo Nation, reliable broadband means ensuring digital equity for all communities by unlocking access to education, healthcare, public safety and commerce, while enabling full participation in the digital economy and preserving Navajo culture and community ties.

Broadband connects people to the world in ways that empower them like online education, telehealth services or new economic opportunities. Broadband is high speed, always-on internet that is essential for the modern digital age.

According to the Navajo Nation Broadband Office, over 80% of Navajo Nation households are underserved or unserved.

"Unserved" means households experience internet speeds below 25 MegaBits Per Second (Mbps), the measurement of internet speed, for downloading and 3 Mbps for uploading, making even basic activities like schoolwork or checking emails a struggle.

"Underserved" areas have speeds below 100 Mbps for downloading and 20 Mbps for uploading, which are necessary for modern activities like video conferencing, telehealth and remote work.

Households in urban areas across the United States are able to access internet speeds above 25 Mbps to upload and 100 Mbps to download.

“Our approach is focused on fostering an environment of choice and fairness, promoting open-access infrastructure and driving healthy competition,” said Sonia Nez, director of the broadcast office. “With affordable, reliable broadband, we’re not just connecting homes, we’re building a foundation for economic growth and opportunity.”

Without proper internet speed, the digital divide limits the Navajo people's ability to improve economic development, growth for businesses and new opportunities.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said NNBBO and the Digital Equity Initiative are working to change that. “Establishing the foundational infrastructure to connect every household, chapter house, business and school with reliable, high-speed broadband, we ensure that our Navajo people are not excluded from the opportunities that the rest of the world has access to, advancing the digital age,” said President Nygren.

Ring in the new year with new officials in Eastern Navajo Agency

January 6, 2024 - Today, I had the privilege of congratulating the newly elected officials of the Eastern Navajo Agency. For some of you, this is a return to leadership, and for others, it marks the beginning of a new and meaningful chapter. I know this journey comes with a mix of excitement and uncertainty—believe me, I’ve been there.

When I first decided to run for president, I quickly realized that I could not do it alone. It was the support of family, friends, and loved ones that continue to carry me through the tough moments. It’s been incredible to see that same support around you all today—those who believe in you and in your potential as leaders. Remember, in those moments when the path ahead feels uncertain, they will be right there for you. Their guidance, love, and encouragement will be your anchor.

But, as many of us know, leadership isn’t always smooth sailing. There may be times when people you thought were your closest allies step away, when the pressure feels like it’s too much to bear. Change is never easy, and sometimes it can make you feel alone. But remember, positive change requires us to be resilient and to rise above the challenges. Trust that the work you do, no matter how hard it gets, is worth it.

We all share a common goal: to put our Navajo people first. To serve them with everything we’ve got. Let that mission guide you—hold it close to your heart as you navigate both the highs and the lows.

Thank you to the Eastern Navajo Agency Council for putting together the inauguration ceremony at the Navajo Technical University Wellness Center in Crownpoint, N.M.. Your efforts truly honor our new community leaders.

Once again, congratulations to each of you! You are stepping into a role of great responsibility, and I have no doubt that you are ready for it. Best of luck as you begin this new journey as our Náátáníis. I’m proud of each of you and look forward to seeing all the good you will do.

Diné College President Dr. Charles “Monty” Roessel passes after long illness

January 6, 2025 - It’s with great sadness that I learned this morning of the loss of Diné College President Dr. Charles “Monty” Roessel. He was 63.

Dr. Roessel died this morning while in hospice care in Albuquerque after a long illness. His brothers and sisters were with him. Dr. Roessel’s nephew is Navajo Nation Council Delegate Carl Slater. We extend our sincerest condolences to each of them.

Despite his illness, Dr. Roessel continued to valiantly lead Diné College, where he was the beloved 18th president since 2017. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Dr. Robert Roessel, the college’s first president from 1968 to 1969.

During his tenure, he led its transition from a two-year institution to a four-year college. Since its founding, Diné College has served its predominantly Navajo student population from its campus in Tsaile, Ariz.

Under his leadership, the college established four new transdisciplinary schools. These include the School of Diné Studies and Education, the School of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, the School of Arts, Humanities and English, and the School of Business and Social Science.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

Significantly, Dr. Roessel guided the college to begin the Navajo Sovereignty Institute, the Navajo Cultural Arts Program, and the creation of the Navajo Law Program.

In 2020, Dr. Roessel was elected to the distinguished American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His class included Joy Harjo, Suzan Harjo, Kevin Gover, Greg Sarris, Kay WalkingStick, Edgar Heap of Birds and Aileen Moreton-Robinson. Academy members are leaders in the arts and sciences, business, philanthropy and public affairs.

Dr. Roessel was a journalist, photographer, author and educator. His work was published in Time, Newsweek, Arizona Highways and National Geographic and in many books. In the 1980s, he was the first managing editor of Navajo Times.

From the Navajo Nation to phoenix: Dragon, a golden eagle's journey

January 5, 2025 - "Dragon," a 25-year-old Golden eagle, is being transported to the Phoenix Zoo to become a companion for another eagle. She has been at the Navajo Nation Golden Eagle Sanctuary since July. Thanks to a transport permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, she is headed to the Valley of the Sun. Dragon was brought to the sanctuary by Curtis Martin, a falconer from Farmington, N.M. Dragon suffered from West Nile virus, which can cause neurological issues in birds of prey and hinder their ability to fly.

Since 2012, the Navajo Nation Zoo has distributed over 10,000 eagle feathers to tribal members, including those from neighboring Zuni and Hopi tribes. The zoo holds a permit for Live Eagle Possession for Indian Religious Purposes, reflecting its commitment to cultural and ecological preservation.

Visitors to the Navajo Nation Zoo can observe various Indigenous animals that inhabit Dinétah. Our dedicated zookeepers work tirelessly to rehabilitate wildlife, with some animals returning to the wild while others find permanent sanctuary.

However, zookeepers reported that Dragon was not meeting the necessary milestones for release.

Fortunately, she fits well with the needs of the Phoenix Zoo.

For our urban relatives living in Phoenix, I encourage you to visit Dragon and learn more about the vital role we play in protecting our animal relatives. Together, we can ensure their well-being and combat poaching.

New executive director of the Division of Community Development brings a 'go get 'em and get it done attitude'

January 4, 2025 - It is with great pride that I congratulate Candice Yazzie on her new role as the Executive Director of Community Development. From Fort Defiance, Arizona, Yazzie is Tódích'íí'nii born for Naneesh't'ézhí Táchii'nii, her maternal grandfather being Naashashí and paternal grandfather is Kinlichíí'nii. Yazzie earned her Bachelor's degree in Construction Management from Northern Arizona University in 2003 and has spent her career mastering community development within the construction industry. Her first project was with the Hopi community, where she learned the importance of collaboration between tribes and construction teams to achieve meaningful results.

"I know it's going to be a lot of communication and team building to push these projects through," said Yazzie. "I hope I can bring the collaboration and positivity that any successful team needs because it's important in getting things done."

Like many Navajos, Yazzie left the reservation to pursue higher education. Upon returning home, she faced challenges in finding a job on the Navajo Nation despite submitting numerous resumes.

Fortunately, Yazzie now has the chance to give back to her community in this important role.

With experience in both New Mexico and Arizona, working alongside private owners, state, and federal entities, Yazzie is ready to lead with a "get it done" attitude.

"I was excited getting the call from President Nygren because that means I get to come home," Yazzie shared, expressing her pride in returning to serve her people.

Congratulations, Ms. Yazzie - we look forward to seeing how your leadership will drive the future of community development

Preparing for winter: emergency support for Navajo elders in Crystal and Sawmill chapters

January 3, 2024 - Navajo Nation President Nygren and the Navajo Department of Emergency Management dropped off a cord of wood at the home of the Mark sisters.

The sisters rely on spring water from Hidden Springs, hauling buckets for drinking, cooking, and bathing. Their childhood home has become dilapidated, with a leaky roof and an incomplete bathroom. One sister is disabled, and both are elderly, depending on each other for support.

After assessing their home, President Nygren assured the sisters he would work with Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority to address their bathroom using a portion of the \$50 million ARPA funds allocated for bathroom additions. He also committed to helping to repair the roof through the Navajo Division of Community Development's housing repair programs.

"This is one of the first projects where we will release bathroom addition money," Nygren said. "With NECA, this is the perfect opportunity to work on this home."

In a related effort, wood was delivered to Thomason Damon, a Vietnam veteran living in Sawmill.

"It is just me and my wife that stay here," Damon said. "I was out getting wood in the forest but turned around when I got the call about this delivery."

Sharen Sandoval, executive director for the Department of Emergency Management, noted that the wood delivery is part of their initiative to prepare the Navajo people for emergencies. She emphasized that ensuring homes are prepared for winter alleviates concerns during emergencies.

"Our approach to preparedness is crucial for some of our most vulnerable community members," Sandoval said.

Community service coordinators from both chapters identified these elders for the wood delivery, highlighting the importance of support and readiness in the community.

Navajo Nation animal control officers push for education on animal care to aid in stray animal problem

January 2, 2025 - Between 60 to 80 stray animals are euthanized each week, according to Navajo Nation Animal Control Officers based out of Fort Defiance, Ariz.

"People think we just kill dogs (but) they don't understand it's them," said Nina Brady, Animal Control Officer in Fort Defiance.

In previous reports provided in 2023, there are an estimated 250,000 stray dogs roaming the Navajo Nation. Within a month, Brady said on average, 12 to 18 percent of animals captured. While some are adopted by rescuers or are reclaimed by their owners, the rest aren't so lucky and face being put down.

For those not claimed, the clock starts ticking. In dog bite cases, dogs are kept in quarantine for 10 days for observation and based on observations, they could be put down. Stray dogs that are deemed adoptable can be rescued and taken from the shelter, but if they don't get the dog within 72 hours, the dogs are put down.

"Eighty percent of diseases the dogs get can be passed to humans," Navajo Animal Control Officer Gregory Pahe said, adding that the public generally doesn't know. "We have to keep ourselves safe too."

Pahe said at the end of each day, animal control officers are required to decontaminate their units, clothes and the facility so diseases and contaminants aren't spread.

"We're trying to keep the communities safe and they don't understand that," said Jennifer Johnson, Navajo animal control officer. "People say we just take dogs (and) we kill them. But it's because the owners don't understand they need to take proper care of their animals. Keep them on leashes, get them vaccinated, make sure they're chipped, these are ways to protect your pets, there's no excuses."

To help with public awareness, the animal control officers created a pamphlet with information on animal shelters located across the reservation including those in Fort Defiance, Many Farms, Shiprock, Crownpoint, Tuba City, and Kayenta. Their phone numbers and a central dispatch number is included. In the pamphlet, laws are outlined that relate to owning animals on the reservation and the fines for not following the law.

On the Navajo Nation, pet owners are required:

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

- To have proof of vaccinations,
- Microchipping and
- Collars.
- Pet owners are allowed to have up to four pets.

“These (rules) are in place for the safety of the people,” said Johnson. “These dogs are running around all over the place and if elders and children are alone out walking around, I’ve seen what these dogs can do, so that’s why there’s these rules.”

Emergency relief supplies prepared for Navajo Nation communities in need ahead of storms

January 1, 2025 — Staff from the Office of the Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) are taking proactive measures to prepare Navajo communities for potential storms and natural disasters.

At Gorman Hall recently, staff organized food purchased with DEM’s emergency funds and packaged into boxes for future use. These boxes will be securely stored until they are needed by communities throughout the Navajo Nation.

DEM Director Sharen Sandoval said the boxes are reserved for emergency situations only.

“They are intended for communities that are completely depleted, whether due to power outages, rain storms or snow storms,” she said. “When people cannot access stores, we go to them.”

President Nygren’s staff volunteered their time, and the Sawmill Chapter joined in to help prepare the emergency food supplies. Together, they packaged around 200 boxes in five hours.

DEM operates with a small team of three individuals, two of whom are certified emergency managers and one administrative worker. Sandoval is one of the certified managers. She stressed the immense challenge of managing emergency preparedness with such a limited workforce.

“We have to take care of hundreds of thousands of people at any given time,” she said. “So preparedness is huge, and that’s why packaging these boxes today is important.”

President Nygren commended Sandoval’s work to be ready in case of any emergency.

“Amid the flooding in Shiprock, the Department of Emergency Management stepped in, working hand-in-hand with various organizations to assist affected families,” the President said. “DEM has consistently been a steadfast partner in our time of need. It’s vital that we support them in return. That’s why I’m pleased that my team was able to help prepare essential boxes to aid their efforts.”

Congratulations to Supervisor Alton Joe Shepherd on taking his oath as Apache County Supervisor

December 31, 2024 - Thank you, Supervisor Alton Joe Shepherd, for inviting me to join you as you renewed your oath Monday as Apache County District 2 supervisor.

As you begin your third term, I extend my deep appreciation to everyone who helped organize such an honorable Oath of Office ceremony.

Special thanks to Leonard H. Pete for the invocation, former Ganado Primary Princess Jewels Jones, Apache County Manager Ryan Patterson, Superior Court Judge Michael Lathem, and Melvin Owens, Sr., for the benediction.

It was with great pride and honor that we congratulate Supervisor Shepherd on his reelection. He brings invaluable experience and knowledge to this position from his years in law enforcement, public administration, service on the 22nd and 23rd Navajo Nation Council, and his long-standing involvement with the Ganado Fire Board.

Supervisor Shepherd told us he’s proud to see that Apache County has graveled more than 100 miles of school bus routes, and he will push to do more.

Like him, improving road conditions across the Navajo Nation is a top goal of mine. It is leaders like Supervisor Shepherd who I appreciate so we can work together to fulfill similar goals.

Working with Apache County, we were able to open a gravel pit in Carrizo in June. I look forward to get more work like that done with him. His leadership, marked by long service and collaboration, will be instrumental to address the needs of our communities, especially for our Navajo relatives.

As President, I am committed to work alongside Supervisor Shepherd and Apache County to ensure progress, unity and a prosperous future. Congratulations, Supervisor

From D.C. to Naaslah Canyon: Congressman Schweikert's commitment to the Navajo Nation

December 31, 2024 – Arizona Congressman David Schweikert and his 9-year-old daughter Olivia visited the Navajo Nation after Christmas to see for himself the toil Navajos endure to live without running water.

Arizona's Republican District 1 congressman spent three days to better understand the difficulties Navajos face with a visit to the Benally family sheep camp in Naaslah Canyon near Round Rock. The visit was organized by Navajo Nation Washington Office Government and Legislative Affairs Associate Tim Benally. Rep. Schweikert, a co-sponsor of the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act, and Olivia pitched in to help haul water for the family's flock, which is a daily chore. He also helped another family repair its plumbing.

"I owe President Nygren a huge thank you, because it's been an amazing trip," the congressman said.

President Nygren said nothing educates congressmen, senators, federal and state officials better about the hardships and disparities Navajos face than seeing how they live within such a stunning landscape.

"We've met repeatedly in Washington, D.C., to discuss the need for improved water infrastructure," President Nygren said. "Rep. Schweikert shares my commitment to find solutions, for which I'm grateful."

On the road into the heart of Navajoland, the congressman and his daughter saw dry sandy washes, Navajo sandstone formations shaped by millions of years of erosion and sparse vegetation across miles of rangeland.

"The scale of the challenges across the Navajo Nation is enormous," he said.

On their last day, the father and daughter explored Navajo cultural landmarks, buildings, Navajo Veterans Memorial Veterans Park beneath the renowned Window Rock, and distributed holiday presents to children at Hogan Hozhoni.

"The shared experience strengthened our resolve," Rep. Schweikert said.

The congressman has recognized the patriotism of countless Navajos through their military service, the skill of Navajo Code Talkers. He's expressed appreciation for the Navajo people's rich traditions and how they've overcome adversity throughout their history.

President Nygren, Speaker Curley sign agreement to remove bureaucratic red tape to enable spending of frf funds

December 30, 2024 – Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley took a bold step today by signing an Interagency Agreement designed to remove the bureaucratic red tape to allow the Nation to spend over \$2 billion in Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Funds (NNFRF).

The Interagency Agreement (Agreement) will accompany Resolution CD-54-24, which was signed last week by the President. The Navajo Nation has already obligated nearly all of its \$2 billion through subrecipient agreements, contracts, purchase orders and memoranda of agreement. The only unobligated NNFRF was \$5.6 million, which was earmarked for hardship assistance. Having signed the Agreement, all NNFRF has been obligated including the \$5.6 million.

"This is a historic Intergovernmental Agreement because we want to turbo charge the government so that we meet that deadline in December 2026," said President Nygren.

The Nation now has two years – until December 31, 2026 – to spend the NNFRF.

"The primary goal was to save and encumber and identify a purpose for all 100 percent of our ARPA funding, so not one penny or one dollar gets sent back," said Speaker Curley.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

President Nygren thanked the Office of the Controller and the Department of Justice, whose expertise was instrumental in developing a more streamlined process.

"We all came together because at end of the day, when we're all working together, it's all about our people in our communities," said Controller Sean McCabe. "And that's what this agreement really showcases – that we're getting the bureaucracy out of it and so that we can deliver services for our people."

This streamlined process also allows Navajo leadership to address the critical community needs. The improved system will facilitate the timely delivery of essential services and support infrastructure development, public health initiatives, and economic relief efforts across the Navajo Nation.

This collaborative effort shows the Navajo Nation's commitment to responsible governance and efficient resource management. The Agreement also serves as a model for future initiatives, ensuring that vital funds are used effectively and transparently to benefit the Navajo people.

Key deadlines and terms to understanding the FRF:

- Dec. 31, 2024: deadline to "obligate" NNFRF. "Obligate" means to place orders for property and services; or to enter into contracts, subawards, and similar transactions that require payment; or to commit funds to an activity in accordance with programmatic requirements for a grant appropriation.
- Dec. 31, 2026: deadline to "expend" NNFRF. "Expend" means to spend the NNFRF.
- Any NNFRF not spent by Dec. 31, 2026 will be returned to the federal government.

A peacekeeper, home builder, man of faith: President Jimmy carter dies at 100

December 30, 2024 - President Jimmy Carter is being remembered as a humble peanut farmer who rose to become the 39th President of the United States. He died at age 100 on Sunday after two years of home hospice care.

He served as President during a tumultuous time from 1977 to 1981. But his presidency will be remembered for the Camp David Accords that brought peace between Egypt and Israel when other presidencies failed.

As President, Jimmy Carter signed the 1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act. He supported the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act to give tribes jurisdiction over child welfare cases involving Native children.

He signed the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act in 1980 to resolve a long-standing land dispute between the state of Maine and the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes.

The law provided a financial settlement to the tribes and recognized their rights to their ancestral lands.

President Carter's administration prioritized education for Native students. The Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act of 1978 gave funding to reservation community colleges to allow Native students higher education opportunities near their families and communities.

On the environment, President Carter helped establish of the Superfund program that mandates the cleanup of hazardous waste sites, including those on tribal lands.

His policies and actions showed a commitment to support the rights and well-being of tribes. His administration's focus on self-determination, education and environmental protection promoted greater autonomy and opportunities for Native American communities.

President Carter graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1946 with distinction and entered nuclear power school in 1953.

After completing sea duty on the USS Wyoming, Carter was chosen by Admiral Hyman Rickover for the nuclear submarine program where he gained had expertise in reactors and nuclear physics. He was one of the few officers selected for the program.

The USS Jimmy Carter (SSN-23) was commissioned in 2005 and was the first submarine to be named after a U.S. president who had qualified on submarines.

After his presidency, Carter set a new standard for achievement by former presidents. He founded the nonprofit Carter Center in 1982 that led to peacekeeping and hunger relief missions in more than 80 countries.

For his work in brokering peace around the world, he was awarded the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize.

In his later years, he continued to teach Sunday school classes and build houses with Habitat for Humanity in his 90s.

President Carter will be remembered as a humble and joyful man of faith who dedicated his life to promote democracy, human rights, and global peace

Three northern agency schools showed remarkable improvements in their education systems

December 28, 2024 – Navajo Nation leadership united to support students post-COVID-19, and with schools meeting reauthorization requirements, Diné Education leaders are seeing progress.

Matthew Tso, legislative analyst, presented the Department of Diné Education report on December 21, congratulating Shiprock Associated Schools Inc. (SASI), Kinteel Residential Campus, and Rock Point Community School for clean audits and improved test scores.

While SASI and Rock Point didn't meet proficiency standards, Tso noted significant improvements in their test results.

"That's impressive and very important because these schools are coming out of COVID. A lot of the students have been virtual for quite a long time," said Tso. "And it shows the leadership, the boards and schools are doing the best they can for our schools."

Schools must pass clean financial audits to be reauthorized for two years, along with an academic proficiency audit for one more year. If they fail either audit, they must undergo yearly evaluations to ensure quality education.

Tso highlighted Kinteel, another Northern Agency school, for significant improvements. Many Kinteel students attend Aztec Public Schools, where Native American students from Kinteel outperformed their peers. Tso also thanked Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren for his leadership and urgent efforts to secure necessary funding to support improvements in schools like Kinteel.

"When I took office, my goal was to make significant progress, especially for our Navajo students," said President Nygren. "The students and faculty at Kinteel Dormitory needed upgraded and new facilities to ensure they have a safe, supportive environment where they can study and thrive. Healthy, stable homes are essential for students to focus on their education. I am committed to continuing to approve legislation that will strengthen these efforts and provide the resources our students need to succeed."

Following in their parents' footsteps: the watchman siblings revive a family legacy in Navajo, NM

December 27, 2024 - Lone Pine Enterprise, led by siblings Leo Watchman, Derrick Watchman, and Derrith Watchman-Moore, has successfully acquired the business site lease for the Marathon convenience store in Navajo, N.M. The siblings are reviving the gas station originally established by their father, Leo Watchman Sr., in 1967. As one of the first Native-owned gas stations, it holds profound cultural value and has served the Navajo community for over five decades.

The passing of their mother in April inspired the siblings to honor their family's legacy and entrepreneurial spirit. With a strategic location in Navajo, the gas station not only provides essential fuel but also operates as a convenience store, fulfilling critical community needs.

"We want to be a vibrant part of the Navajo community," Derrick Watchman expressed, highlighting their commitment to local engagement.

The Watchman family understands that the community faces numerous challenges, from economic decline to environmental issues following the closure of businesses like Navajo Forest Products Industries. However, through the renewal of its business lease, Lone Pine Enterprise is poised to continue making a positive economic impact for the Red Lake Chapter.

With plans for significant renovations, including fixing leaky roofs and introducing a fast-food venue, the siblings are dedicated to enhancing the services offered at the Marathon convenience store. They are also committed to collecting fuel and sales taxes to support the local economy.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

"Each time we shop and gas up at local convenience stores across the Navajo Nation, we are generating taxes for the Navajo people," said Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren. "The Watchmans exemplify long standing entrepreneurship, and I'm proud to support their transition under Lone Pine Enterprise."

Congratulations to our two new animal control officers

December 26, 2024 - Nina Brady and Jennifer Johnson bring valuable experience from their previous work with animals and a commitment to enhance the safety and well-being of our communities. On Thursday, December 19, both of them were officially sworn in as Navajo Nation Animal Control Officers. And both are particularly concerned by the growing issue of stray dogs in so many of our communities. Stray dogs pose a significant risk to our elders and young children. We are all too aware of the tragic and devastating consequences these animals can have. Jennifer Johnson has worked as a veterinary technician, kennel officer, and assistant to animal control officers. She says in her experience she has witnessed pets being abandoned due to neglect, abuse, or financial hardship.

"I saw it every day," she says. "I decided to become an animal control officer because I felt the need to take action and help in the field."

I want to thank Nina Brady and Jennifer Johnson for their compassionate hearts and their desire to make a meaningful difference with the other eight dedicated Navajo Nation Animal Control Officers who serve across the Navajo Nation.

Their work is vital to ensure our communities remain safe and our animals are treated with care and respect. For Animal Control Services, please contact the Animal Control Dispatch at (928) 871-6491. The services they provide include:

- Reporting dog bites or vicious dogs
- Reporting livestock damage by dogs
- Animal (dog & cat) surrender
- Reporting loose or stray dogs/cats
- Reporting injured or sick animals (dogs/cats)

Together, we can create a safer and more compassionate environment for everyone.

Coyote stories bring parents and children together this holiday season

December 26, 2024 – Díné bizáád may seem to some like a foreign language, but it is certainly not a forgotten language – thanks to Ma'íí.

In animated films from the 1970s, Ma'íí became popular among Diné children and families for retelling traditional stories on TV.

The film was created by the Computer Image Corporation in Denver and directed by Kent Tibbetts, director of San Juan School District Media Center. Don Mose Jr., former cultural consultant with SJSJSD, is also behind the scenes of the Ma'íí character.

Mary Ben, who has a three-year-old and one-year-old, sat with her children at the Navajo Nation Library and Museum on last Friday, December 20, watching videos of the animated Coyote Storytelling series.

"My son has been watching these over and over," she said. "I think these films like the coyote storytelling can be multigenerational or visual storytelling like this, where it's fun, age appropriate and they get to learn the language more. They're going to cling to language more at a younger age."

Alma Yazzie, the library assistant at the Navajo Nation Museum, said that while young children may not understand Díné bizáád, the animated Coyote stories keep young children and younger generations entertained with the voices, visuals and the storytelling.

"There are stories about our culture and heritage, but the younger generations don't understand," Yazzie said. "But they want to."

When President Buu Nygren proclaimed October 18 as Diné Bizáád Teachers Day, it was his priority to revitalize Diné bizáád. Similarly, President Nygren tries to keep younger generations intrigued in the language every chance he gets, just like Yazzie.

"Animated series like the Coyote stories are educational to our young children," the President said. "Hearing them laugh while hearing our language keeps them interested, so they can keep learning and, most importantly, they will want to learn."

Celebrating diné bizaad the official language of the Navajo Nation

December 24, 2024 - Today, we take a monumental step forward in our commitment to our culture and language - Diné bizaad.

On this festive Késhmish Eve, I feel much gratitude to everyone dedicated to preserving our beautiful language. It is a language that has identified us as a people since time immemorial and continues to guide our future generations.

I'm delighted to announce we have officially signed legislation to designate Diné bizaad as the official language of the Navajo Nation. It is now recognized officially through legislation as integral to the sovereignty of the Navajo Nation.

This step reflects our respect as a people for our Navajo language teachers and cultural advisors who tirelessly champion language initiatives. Their hard work sets the foundation for our younger generations to embrace their culture.

I extend special thanks to Council Delegates Dr. Andy Nez and Shawna Claw, the sponsor of this legislation. Your leadership and advocacy have made this achievement possible.

As we sign this bill into law, we take actionable steps to ensure our language thrives. Navajo Department of Transportation is committed to producing "STOP" signs that will now read "Altsé." Our Navajo Police cars will display "Silao." Within my office, we are committed to offering Navajo language classes for anyone who wants to learn.

In January, our team will begin to provide Navajo language modules through social media every week to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow in their fluency.

Listening to voices from our community, I understand the significant impact our language has had in our creation stories to the Long Walk to World War II, and even today.

Let's celebrate Diné bizaad and recognize its importance in our homes and throughout our schools, government and society. Together, we will ensure our legacy is preserved and enhanced for generations to come.

Here's to a brighter future for the Navajo Nation where our language and culture flourish!

President Nygren advocates for Navajo Gallup water supply project

December 24, 2024 - As part of the federal continuing resolution signed by President Biden on Saturday was an extension and increase in the cost ceiling for construction of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply project.

Congress raised the authorization ceiling for the project from \$870 million to \$1.6 billion for the next year.

Last week, President Nygren returned to Washington to advocate for Navajo Nation water rights and funding for the project.

Congressional support came with bipartisan support from Representatives Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.) and John Curtis (R-Utah), Senators Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.) and Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), who pushed for inclusion of the cost ceiling amendment.

The President also met this year with Senator Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.), Representative David Schweikert (R-Ariz.), Senator-elect Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Representative Juan Ciscomani (R-Ariz.), Senator Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), and representatives and senators from other states.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

“Securing funding for the Navajo-Gallup project has been a top priority for us,” President Nygren said. “We needed to extend its timeline to ensure this water project serves our communities without interruption, and I greatly that our representatives on both sides of aisle were there for us.”

This important waterline segment of the larger Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project faced a significant funding shortfall that risked delaying its completion. This stopgap measure ensures continuity for the next year as President Nygren works toward a permanent solution for the funding shortfall.

“I advocated very hard for Congress to include language on NGWSP in the continuing resolution,” the President said. “I met with them nearly weekly, and I am proud of this accomplishment.”

First authorized in 2009, the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project has been an ongoing 15-year effort to bring sustainable water resources to the eastern part of the Navajo Nation, the southwestern portion of the Jicarilla Apache Nation, and the City of Gallup

This historic infrastructure initiative will transport water from the San Juan River through 300 miles of pipeline. It’s supported by 19 pumping stations and two water treatment plants.

The system will divert nearly 37,000 acre-feet of water annually from the San Juan River and will be treated to meet Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) standards.

Although Congress did not pass any Indian water rights settlements, it passed a continuing resolution to keep the federal government operating until March 2025.

Planning the Lechee Water Treatment Plant

December 23, 2024 – Twice, the Navajo Nation came close to securing water access in Arizona for its people in 2010 and 2012 but failed.

However, Navajo Nation leaders and Navajo Nation Water Resources continue moving forward and building the infrastructures ahead of the settlements so that when they pass, there is no more waiting for water.

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed a contract to increase funding for the LeChee Water Treatment Plant, which is phase one of a larger project, Tuba City Regional water plan.

“I always say the wait for running water is long overdue. It’s about to be 2025, over a century of treaties being signed where water was included and we still don’t have running water throughout Navajo,” said President Nygren. “Thankfully we have phenomenal departments like Water Resources, Department of Justice and many others who have helped push for water infrastructure projects and at the same time continue pushing our settlements through Congress.”

Over \$1.6 million will be allocated to the LeChee water project, an increase of \$10 million funds which will come from the Permanent Trust Fund Income.

“We’re talking about building an entire water system that would deliver water to the entire Antelope Canyon area,” said Jason John, Director of Water Resources. “Right now, there is no water system in the Antelope Canyon area, and it would tie into the existing water system in LeChee. Now they’ll be able to deliver water from Lake Powell to the communities and LeChee.”

Currently LeChee relies on the city of Page for their water which also disproportionately gives more water usage quantification to an off-reservation town when a reservation town is using the water.

The planning for construction began over a decade ago with the Tuba City Regional Water plan and now over a decade later, John said they’re in phase one, design and construction management for water treatment plant, water lines and associated facilities.

Wheatfields Lake to get a makeover

December 22, 2024 – Wheatfields Lake will receive a makeover soon, allowing it to continue being the local fishing hub.

A \$617,615 construction contract from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Subpart Subject J will fund significant upgrades to Wheatfields Lake’s recreational facilities, enhancing outdoor experiences for all visitors.

"It's an upgrade but if you visit now, you'll see that much of what's there is dilapidated and essentially been removed," said Jeffrey Cole, Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife Manager since 1992.

On December 10, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed a contract with the BIA to secure the funding for the project. In addition to this funding, Fish and Wildlife received \$530,000 in grants for the design and planning of renovations not only for the fishing areas around the lake but also for the campgrounds west of Highway 12, on the opposite of the lake.

"I am dedicated to providing safe, reliable spaces for our communities to enjoy the activities they love," said President Nygren. "Whether fishing, racing, camping, or barbecuing, these outdoor pursuits are crucial for both physical and mental well-being. It's vital that these spaces remain secure, accessible, and well-maintained for all."

Originally constructed in 1962, Wheatfields Lake had 135 acres of land withdrawn for recreational use in 1985.

"Wheatfields Lake is our most frequented fishing destination," said Cole. "With the new facilities, I believe it will attract even more visitors. The campgrounds aren't just for fishermen—they'll be enjoyed by all types of groups. It's (the lake) for everyone."

Skating at the Office of the President

December 20, 2024 - Last night, we opened the City Star Circus skate rink in the parking lot of the Office of the President. Well before 6 p.m., families were already coming by with their children and started enjoying this holiday activity.

"It's really important to have events like this here on the rez because it's rare that we have them for the kids," said Thomas Kellwood a manager of City Star Circus.

While some families can afford to spend money on gifts and decorations, some have very little resources. I know this because I too came from struggle and hardship. My family didn't always have the resources to buy Christmas gifts or to take me places, but we always made do. I think of our little ones who come from the same background and all we want to do is brighten the faces of our little ones!

This was an effort to bring out City Star Circus and to make sure we could offer all families and children a free and fun event. I also encourage our parents to relax and spend time with their children.

We have one more night of the skate rink so please come on out tonight at 6 p.m.. Skates and helmets will be provided on site.

I extend my gratitude those that attended the 2024 Azee Bee Nahagha of Diné Nation (ABNDN) Youth Education and Special Needs Prayer Day

December 21, 2024 - I am glad this event is called "Home Away from Home" because we do our best to bring a piece of home to our urban friends and families.

As President of the Navajo Nation, I have always believed in the importance of supporting our people—whether on the reservation or in urban areas. I want to assure you that I am committed to working with and supporting Division Director Thomas Cody and our dedicated staff to continue improving services and outreach to our urban Navajo relatives.

We know the challenges you face and are actively working to ensure that you receive the support and resources you need. We will continue to strengthen our partnerships, especially with our diverse faith communities, including the Native American Church, to honor and respect the spiritual and cultural practices that are vital to our people.

To those participating, your presence at the event speaks volumes about the strength of our Navajo community, and I am deeply proud of each of you for taking the steps necessary to ensure the well-being of our families. Together, we will continue to look out for one another, no matter where we are located.

Thank you once again for your dedication, your presence, and your unwavering commitment to our shared future. We are stronger together, and I will continue to work tirelessly to support you and your families.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

Grant to Support Torreon Library

December 20, 2024 - In a push to inspire other Chapters on the reservation to open libraries, the Navajo Nation Library and Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren are working together to secure funding for Torreon Library.

On December 9, President Nygren signed a grant for \$15,363.84 from the New Mexico Rural Library Program fund for the library in Torreon, N.M. which is also a new branch to the Navajo Nation Library.

Home to about 200 people, Torreon lacks activities for both youth and elders, and Torreon Library Director Martina Martinez believes that improving the library with the grant could bring positive change.

"There aren't a lot of places out here because there's no community centers or youth centers or things like that," said Martinez. "The library would be a place where we could do those things."

A faculty member at Navajo Technical University has been donating textbooks to the library for students in need. Martinez aims to expand partnerships like that with NTU with other colleges and programs to bring more resources to youth and elders in Torreon and get new furniture and funding full-time employees. With help of Navajo Nation Library funding the library and President Nygren signing of the grant, they are operating at 36 hours a week.

"The great hope is that we can set up a library at every chapter," said Donovan Pete, Navajo Nation Library Director. "There has been a shift I've been doing with the Navajo Nation Library and instead of being a place of books, it's a community hub."

Pete said the Torreon library has not been fully operating for five to six years and decided to tackle the challenge of getting even more library branches with the Navajo Nation library.

"The unique thing with tribal libraries is that there isn't a curriculum, there isn't anyone trying tell us how we need to act," said Pete. "So for us, a lot of what we try to do is trying to focus on Diné k'éechi (the Navajo way) and do a lot with language and culture."

Kris Beecher to Serve as Deputy Attorney General

December 18, 2024 - The Navajo Nation Council voted, 13-6, to remove Attorney General Ethel Branch.

On December 18, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren sent an appointment letter for Kris Beecher, his deputy chief of staff, to be the next Attorney General. Until Mr. Beecher is approved by the Council, he will serve as the Deputy Attorney General.

"I have consulted with Deputy Attorney General Heather Clah, and Mr. Beecher will serve as Acting Deputy Attorney General until he is approved by the Navajo Council," said President Nygren. "I appreciate Ms. Clah's leadership and commitment to serving the Navajo People by ensuring a smooth transition as we work through the unprecedented removal of the Attorney General."

President Nygren sent his recommendation to Speaker Crystalyne Curley appointing Mr. Beecher as the Attorney General for the Navajo Nation in accordance with 2 N.N.C. §1962 (B), which states that, "...The Attorney General and Deputy Attorney General shall be appointed by the Navajo Nation Council, upon the recommendation of the President..."

Clah will serve in the stead of the Attorney General until the Navajo Nation Council approves Mr. Beecher as the Attorney General.

Following the removal of Ms. Branch, President Nygren expressed his disappointment with the 25th Navajo Nation Council for removing Ms. Branch.

"We made huge strides toward justice for our Navajo people, that is who they terminated," said President Nygren of Ms. Branch. "I know appointing Kris Beecher as AG, he will continue to keep making those strides for our people. He's been right there with us and knows what needs to be done."

Mr. Beecher is Kin'yaa'anii born for Biligaana. His maternal grandfather is Todich'ii'nii and his paternal grandfather is Biligaana, and he is from Tuba City, Ariz. He received his JD and MBA from Arizona State University's Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law and W.P. Carey School of Business. Mr. Beecher then went on to work at a prestigious national law firm before coming home to work on the Nation.

60 Navajo Nation Office of the President

"I'm honored and humbled to serve the people of the Navajo Nation in this capacity. I look forward to working with all three branches of the government to help the nation move forward," said Mr. Beecher. "Thank you to President Nygren for trusting me to carry out this role, and it's time to get back to work. We still have so much more to accomplish."

Time is running out for three water settlements to ensure safe drinking Water

December 18, 2024 – From Diné youth to elders, *tó* (water) defines the Navajo Nation and its people. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote in *Arizona vs Navajo Nation*, a 2023 U.S. Supreme Court case, that pursuant to the Treaty of 1868, the Navajo people would have a permanent home where they could farm and have animals, but that they needed water. However, Frederick Liu, representing the federal parties arguing against the Navajo Nation, simply said, "No," to Gorsuch's statement in March 2023. The Supreme Court's ultimate decision confirmed Liu's argument, but to Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, that wasn't a loss. President Nygren saw this decision as a step forward to truly gain access to water for Diné. Since March 2023, President Nygren has sat before the Senate and House of Representatives multiple times testifying in support of several pending pieces of legislation, specifically concerning three Indian water rights settlements, one of which has been passed but is needing extra funding and is now back in front of Congress for approval: the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act, the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, and the Navajo Nation Rio San Jose Stream System Water Rights Settlement Agreement in New Mexico.

"It's in our hands to quantify our own water," said President Nygren. "Only we know what we need, only we know the struggles of living without water, so why don't we create the plan to save our water."

Alongside President Nygren in securing access to safe and clean drinking water are the Navajo Nation Department of Justice (NNDOJ), 25th Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation Water Resources (NNWR), and Navajo Nation Water Rights Commission (NNWRC).

Starting on November 13, Crystal Tulley-Cordova and Robert Kirk, both Principal Hydrologists at NNWRC, along with Dwight Witherspoon, an attorney in the NNDOJ Water Rights Unit, launched their informational series, "Preserving Dinétah," focusing on the current water rights related legislation pending before the Senate. To help aid community members to understand each piece of settlement related document that actually culminates to a 140-page document, on November 18, the trio continued their outreach efforts with a presentation at San Juan College. During the session, they distributed documents that provided an overview of the history of Navajo Nation water rights, summaries of the ongoing settlements, the approval process the Nation must navigate, and the progress made so far toward securing vital water resources.

The Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP) was authorized by Congress in 2009 through Public Law 111-11 which also approved the Navajo Nation's water rights settlement with the State of New Mexico to the San Juan River Basin. Over the next 15 years, the project faced a challenge that resulted in needing a deadline extension for securing funding for the completion of the construction of the NGWSP. The deadline extension and increase of funding was facilitated by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission. In September 2023, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland signed a formal extension, amending the project's completion date to December 31, 2029.

In 2019, the BOR began exploring how the San Juan Generating Station's water conveyance system could support the NGWSP. This investigation led to collaboration between the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) and the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources (DWR), culminating in the transfer of the now named Frank Chee Willetto Reservoir to the United States for use as part of the NGWSP. This additional reservoir serves the project well and led to the need for an extension of the deadline for completing construction of the NGWSP.

As part of their informational outreach, the Water Rights Commission distributed materials to attendees, outlining what steps the community needs to take next.

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

A key action for supporting the NGWSP is to contact a local congressperson or senator and urge them to support S. 1898 and H.R. 3977.

The Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement follows a pivotal decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in March 2023. This settlement marks a significant step in the Navajo Nation taking the lead in securing its water rights in Arizona.

The settlement involves water from several key sources: the Upper and Lower Basins of the Colorado River, the Little Colorado River Basin, the Gila River Basin, and groundwater.

Under the settlement, the Navajo Nation is entitled to 44,700 acre-feet per year (AFY) of water from the Upper Basin of the Colorado River and 3,600 AFY of water from the Lower Basin of the Colorado River after quantification.

The settlement also affirms that, in the Little Colorado River basin, the Nation will have rights to all the water that reaches the reservation, as well as joint management of the upper reaches of the stream with the Hopi Tribe. Groundwater rights include all water from the Coconino Aquifer, and the Navajo Aquifer with a limit of 8,400 AFY, and a management agreement with the Hopi Tribe.

Beyond securing water rights, the settlement also secures essential resources to build and power the necessary infrastructure. A total of \$5 billion will be appropriate in order to build nine major water delivery projects, including the Iina ba-paa tuwaqatsi Pipeline, the Southwest Navajo Regional Project, the Ganado Area Project, the Code Talker Lateral, the Black Mesa Project, the Four Corners Project, the Kayenta Area Project, the Lupton Area Project, and various Local Groundwater Projects. Additionally, funds will also be dedicated to powering the nine water delivery infrastructures.

The next step for the community is to contact their congressperson and senator to support S. 4633 and H.R. 8940.

Lastly, the Navajo Nation Rio San Jose Stream System Water Rights Settlement Agreement in New Mexico (RSJSSWRSA) would appropriate \$200.271 million for a RSJSSWRSA trust fund that would be used for water infrastructure development, proper water supplies, management and administration, watershed protection and enhancement, agriculture support, water-related projects for the community and economic development, and cost of settlement implementation.

This would also quantify water rights for the Navajo Nation in the Rio San Jose Stream System and Rio Puerco Basin while NOT impacting allottee water rights.

“Nizhoni is what I can say to you guys, I’ve listened to what you guys are saying, I’ve seen this problem since I was a kid and I’ve seen people moving off the reservation, they don’t want to go back,” said Wayne Lee of Shiprock, N.M. “I’m one of those– Gah lee, it’s so much cheaper to live in Farmington.”

All three settlements aim to secure water for the Navajo Nation and bring Navajo people back to the reservation.

According to the Navajo Epidemiology Center in a 2020 census, there were 423,412 people who claimed to be Navajo or part Navajo within the United States and half of those individuals make up the population on the reservation.

During the boom of boarding schools and uranium mining on the reservation, the Nation was deprived of its people and minerals. When the younger generations were away at boarding schools, many found opportunities off the reservation like jobs, better education, better economy and access to healthcare.

While uranium mining was stopped in 1986 and the education of the nation shifted toward western public education, the economy on the reservation remained behind the economy of the United States which further persuaded Dine to leave home.

Securing housing and a good paying job, safe drinking water at a cheaper cost, groceries at reasonable prices, and quality education, were all reasons many Diné like Lee left the reservation.

However, President Nygren took office wanting to bring Dine home where the Nation has potential to be an even greater example of being a sovereign nation. A part of that mission is securing water access for those who do not have it and ensuring the cost of living is affordable.

Tulley-Cordova explained, “We’re trying to educate the public about the infrastructure projects and help secure and sustain our water future, not just for the generations that are current but the generations that are yet to come.”

At a second “Preserving Dinétah” event, Tulley-Cordova, Kirk, and Witherspoon presented in Tsaile, Arizona, at Diné College.

Amidst the audience was a returning Diné College student, Ashleigh Chee.

“I feel that water is very important to our life and our placement here because it’s key to everything,” said Chee. “It’s key to what we eat, it’s key to what we drink everyday, especially with our agricultural fields.”

Chee grew up without running water in the Tsaile/Wheatfields area and when her family finally received access to running water, her grandparents had passed on.

In high school, Chee moved away from home and into the dormitories and now as a student at Dine College, continues to stay in a dormitory where she benefits from immediate access to water.

The three water settlements run through areas that would aid hundreds of Diné homes.

With the potential of returning water to the reservation, there's the potential of younger generations returning home.

“Living without water builds grit, you learn to respect it a lot more,” said Chee. “Having water brings relief. It allows you to wash yourself and it allows you to drink and remain hydrated and to remain healthy, it’s vital in our everyday tasks.”

The 118th Congress has just several days before the holidays leading up to adjournment on Jan. 3, 2025.

President Nygren keeps his hopes high but also prepares to continue advocating for water rights.

“I know the 118th Congress will adjourn, but if these are not enacted, we will do what we can to continue pushing for this in the 119th Congress,” said President Nygren. “Until we have running safe drinking water, the water fight will continue in each Congress.”

Statement on removal of Attorney General Ethel Branch

December 17, 2024 - I am greatly disappointed with the Navajo Nation Council’s action yesterday, December 16, 2024, to arbitrarily remove Ethel Branch as the Nation’s Attorney General – decided through a vote of 13-6 that came without any debate or reason.

The Council failed to state a reason in its legislation for the removal of Ms. Branch. There was no debate on the matter, nor did the Council provide the Navajo people with reasons for such an extreme action. This is not how the highest legal officer of the Navajo Nation should be treated. This is definitely not how our naat’áaiis (leaders) should act or lead.

Ironically, the legislation to remove the Attorney General passed without reason and debate at the Naabik’íyáti’ Committee level first on December 12, 2024 – the committee that is literally named “Naabik’íyáti” which translates to “talking it out.” When it passed there, it then moved forward to the full Council, where again, there was absolutely no transparency, no reasoning, and no thought about how this will impact the Navajo Nation as a whole.

The Attorney General is the chief legal officer of the Navajo Nation and represents and protects interests of the entire Navajo Nation government and people, including in cases filed against the state and federal government.

The action to remove the highest legal officer of the Navajo Nation without explaining its reason to the Navajo people and public sends an unmistakable message to businesses, states, the federal government and other tribes that the Navajo Nation government is unstable, unreliable and subject to political tampering by a legislature that oversteps its policy-making role.

There is irony in the Navajo Nation Council not comporting its agenda with Rule 6(B) of the Navajo Nation Rules of Order. The Council requires that all legislation requiring a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Council be

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

placed on the agenda before all other legislation. This requirement is so important to the Council that it cannot be subject to the suspension of rules.

Even some delegates called out their own colleagues for “not following our own rules.” There is much concern when our Navajo lawmakers call out other lawmakers for not following Council rules – rules that the Council established for itself. There was more debate about whether the Council followed its own rules, than on what the Attorney General did to warrant her removal.

I am gravely concerned by the Council’s action as it could thwart the Navajo Nation’s initiatives like the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Act and the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) amendments that are now before Congress. It affects high stakes negotiations where the Attorney General was advocating for and protecting the Navajo Nation.

As for Attorney General Branch’s accomplishments and service to the Navajo Nation, there are plenty. She delivered several of the most significant water rights settlement agreements in Indian Country to the Navajo Nation Council in only 19 months when the two previous administrations couldn’t get it done at all. At the time the Council voted to remove Attorney General Branch, she was leading negotiations and discussions with Energy Fuels Resources about how or if uranium shipments can be safely transported across Navajoland.

Under Attorney General Branch’s guidance, the Navajo Nation Department of Justice saw significant success:

- **UPHOLDING ICWA:** First, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the Indian Child Welfare Act in *Haaland v. Brackeen*. The high court’s ruling now ensures the protection of Navajo children’s rights in foster care and adoption cases. AG Branch sought to update agreements to verify ICWA eligibility in custody cases, expanded the Arizona legal team to facilitate earlier intervention, and began to upgrade the Children’s Code to strengthen the Navajo ICWA framework.
- **ARIZONA INDIAN WATER RIGHTS SETTLEMENTS:** AG Branch facilitated discussions and brought dozens of parties together to achieve the Northeastern Arizona Indian Water Rights Settlement Agreement and have it introduced in Congress with bipartisan support, among other water right settlements she’s overseen. Previous Administrations were unable to get traction to bring parties together, achieve a settlement, much less get it before Congress.
- **PROTECTING NAVAJO WATER RIGHTS IN THE CASE OF CLARK V. HAALAND:** The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed dismissal of New Mexico residents’ water rights claims that alleged that state, tribal, and federal defendants violated federal water law. The Tenth Circuit agreed with the district court that the claims must be dismissed because sovereign immunity prevented the courts from exercising jurisdiction over the Navajo Nation.
- **OPERATION RAINBOW BRIDGE:** AG Branch ensured that hundreds of the most vulnerable Navajo citizens were no longer taken advantage of and returned to their families or treatment centers through Operation Rainbow Bridge.

She did an exemplary job that was clearly unappreciated by the 25th Navajo Nation Council. It is unfortunate that the legislation to remove the Attorney General Branch was sponsored by Shiprock Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton, a social media critic of both the Attorney General and myself with a penchant for reporting inaccurate information.

Ms. Branch was confirmed as the 13th Attorney General of the Navajo Nation in April 2023 with a vote of 17-3. Charles-Newton was one of the three “nay” votes. Ms. Branch received a Juris Doctorate in 2008 from Harvard Law School and an M.P.P. from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Thank you for your service to the Navajo Nation, Attorney General Branch.

President Nygren welcomes new Naat’aanii Development Corporation Board Members

December 17, 2024 – Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren welcomed on Thursday five new Board of Directors to the Naat’aanii Development Corporation.

The newly appointed board members are:

- Ann Marie Chischilly, a lawyer, speaker and vice president of the Office of Native American Initiatives, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals at Northern Arizona University.
- Delmar R. Blackhorse, MBA-Finance, of Chandler, vice president of investments for Tallsalt Advisors, LLC, with experience in mergers, acquisitions and valuation.
- William H. Draper, an architect and president of Johnson Smitthipong & Rosamond Assoc., Inc., of Tucson.
- Quincy Beau Natay, a senior accountant with the firm of Wipfli, LLP, of Milwaukee, Wis., and Chinle.
- Jacqueline Ahasteen, an electronic engineer, entrepreneur, local business owner and IT systems administrator with the City of Gallup.

NDC is a federally chartered corporation under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. It is a wholly-owned Navajo Nation corporation that was created in 2018 to increase economic opportunities for the Navajo Nation.

"We have selected high caliber, professional Navajos that want to see change and see a vision for NDC," said President Nygren. "They envision NDC being an economic driver for the Nation, which is exactly what NDC was created for. I am excited that these individuals have stepped up to take on this challenge."

First Lady Jasmine Blackwater Nygren becomes first Native American County Attorney in AZ

December 16, 2024 - I am incredibly proud of my wife, Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren, as she makes history once again. Today, she was sworn in as the first Native American woman to serve as the Apache County Attorney, a monumental achievement for our family, our community, and for Native American women everywhere.

Jasmine is an extraordinary mother to our two daughters, but she also continues to break barriers and inspire countless individuals with her courage, determination, and leadership. More than half of Apache County is the Navajo Nation, and I know she will be a powerful voice for our people, ensuring that the Diné are rightfully represented in all matters of justice and governance.

As a former Arizona State Representative, Jasmine worked tirelessly to secure millions of dollars for the people who needed it most, and her work continues to create lasting change for our community. I have no doubt she will continue to lead with integrity and passion, making an even bigger impact for both the Navajo Nation and Apache County in the years to come.

Jasmine, I am so proud of you and all that you've accomplished. You are a true trailblazer, and your unwavering commitment to our people makes us all better. The future is brighter because of you.

Three Judges receive recommendations for permanent Judgeships

December 16, 2024 - I sent over my highest recommended to the Navajo Nation Council for three hard working Navajo public servants for permanent judgeships.

They are for Victor J. Clyde, Malcolm Laughing, and Letitia Stover. All three demonstrate in their own unique ways the best of our Navajo people and culture. In my interviews with them, I was awed by their hard work and learned about the challenges they face in serving as judges. I have identified six areas that need to be addressed, which will allow our Navajo courts to better serve the Navajo people.

I am committed to infrastructure development and the probate processes need to be improved.

First, the Navajo people struggle to complete probate processes because they cannot afford the costs of publication. We need to reform the probate rules so these publication costs are no longer required.

Second, while the rules are being updated, I will direct the Navajo Nation Executive Branch to find resources to help families pay the costs of publication for probate purposes. Third, our judges need housing. I received reports about the long distances judges must travel on a daily basis to cover courts that need to be covered. I also received reports of judges sleeping in their chambers or their vehicles in order to do their work and to keep up with the demands. I will direct my team working on housing to include housing for judges.

Further, we need more judges. The workload of each judge is overwhelming leading to a backlog of cases.

Fourth, our judges need an increase in their pay to reflect the importance of their work and the time-consuming nature of their jobs. Fifth, I will direct our Department of Education to develop a Navajo language

Northern Agency Council Report – March 15, 2025

program so our young Navajo attorneys can obtain learn to speak Navajo so they can serve as judges. One barrier to recruitment to judgeships is our people's inability to speak Diné bizaad. Many of our young attorneys are highly credentialed, but do not speak the Navajo language.

Sixth, we need to revisit our traditional values and resolve disputes among ourselves without resorting to the courts. I support the reinvigoration of Peacemaking and offer the resources of my office to support this. Peacemaking allows the people to talk out issues and handle disputes with K'é instead of resorting to an adversarial process.

These three individuals are committed to serving the Navajo Nation and Navajo People and serve as role models for our young attorneys.