

24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

Official Newsletter for Honorable Council Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr.



Communities Represented:
**Crystal, Fort Defiance, Navajo/Red
Lake #18, and Sawmill**

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Red Lake #18 Chapter

Progress:

New Chapter House Complex:

The chapter house leadership is planning on building a new chapter house complex to operate out of, since the current one is old and structurally unsafe for both the community and employees. The funding secured is approximately \$1 million for the planning, designing, and construction. The projected construction date is still being finalized at this time.

Challenges:

Navajo Forest Products Industry Clean Up:

This past May, there have been discussions with the chapter leadership, Navajo EPA, Navajo Vice President and Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr. to clean up the old NFPI site. The former tribal sawmill was shut down in 1994 due to ecological concerns of its activity. The left-over materials such as asbestos, wood shavings and large open holes pose a risk to the public, animals, and environment. Navajo EPA Brownfields staff was also able to receive a grant of \$350,000 to test for further contamination at the proposed clean up site. More details are still forth coming.



Delegate Wilson, Navajo EPA, Chapter Officials and Vice President Myron Lizer overlooking the abandoned NFPI site in Navajo, NM. (Photo courtesy by Timothy Y. Begay, Jr.)



Crystal Chapter

Progress:

Bridge Replacement:

The chapter leadership is working with the Navajo DOT and BIA to inspect a closed off bridge on route N321. The funds are to be appropriated with the intent of creating a new bridge design, along with providing estimates of the new bridge construction costs. Funding is a combination of Navajo Nation Road Fund Plan and BIA with the total project cost to be \$700,000. Through the Navajo Nation Road Fund Plan, only \$300,000 of the \$700,000 total has been approved for planning and designing. The projected date for construction is still being finalized.

Waterline/Water Storage Project:

The chapter is currently working on extending the waterline to a dozen residences and increasing the water storage capacity. The total project is expected to cost around \$2 million, but only \$165,666 has been approved for planning and designing, whereas the rest will be distributed for the construction phase. Projected date for construction is unknown at this time.

Challenges:

Crystal Irrigation Project:

The chapter leadership is working on constructing a new underground irrigation to help approximately 35 farms within a quarter mile of the Crystal Creek. This will eliminate open ditches and better serve the local farmers in sustaining their crops. The estimated start date is the summer of 2021 and the total project will cost \$275,000 to complete from planning, to designing and to construction. Funding has not yet been identified.



Sawmill Chapter

Progress:

Chapter Sanction Lifted:

Since 2003, the chapter has been sanctioned, and was required to meet standards before the sanction could be lifted. After years of hard work from the chapter leadership and staff, the sanction has finally been lifted back in early 2021. With the sanction being lifted, the chapter can now expand their services to the public and become potentially LGA certified in the future.

NavaMill Lumber and Logging Company:

A 25 year business site lease was signed on May 2021 by the Navajo Nation President for the NavaMill Company to operate in the Sawmill community. The business is Navajo owned and will create jobs for the community. The plan for the business is to offer 'competitive prices' for lumber so that people may build homes or hogans while being environmentally conscious.

Road N7 Improvement:

In collaboration with Navajo Department of Transportation, a portion of the road in the heart of Sawmill will be rehabilitated with new road line stripes. They will also fix the potholes and major road damage as they are safety concerns for the community. The projected construction date will start in 2022.

Challenges:

Chapter Renovation:

The chapter house leadership is currently working on renovating their office space due to hazards of the current building deteriorating due to age. The projected cost is \$600,000, and the construction date is being determined.



Fort Defiance Chapter

Progress:

Solar Street Lights:

After many years of collecting signatures, and finding Navajo owned contractor businesses, the chapter was able to secure funding and contract for the construction of solar street lights. The total project costed around \$1 million dollars to complete, and the lights will last 10+ years. There are also plans to construct more solar lights in the near future. This is an important step in trying to utilize renewable energy and build a safer community.

Challenges:

Abandoned Homes Clean Up:

Due to safety concerns for the public and environment, planning is taking place to demolish the abandoned homes located in Black Rock and Rio Puerco Acres. The project is being done in partnership with Navajo EPA, Navajo Land Department and many other. Estimated cost to demolish 30 homes and properly dispose of the waste is expected to be around \$2.5 million dollars. There have been meetings to construct new homes in place of the abandoned ones to allow for people to rent the space. Project funding is being secured through the Navajo Nation Sihasin Funds.



Abandoned home located in Rio Puerto Acres/Black Rock Acres. (Photo courtesy by Timothy Y. Begay, Jr.)

Major Council Delegate Legislations

Navajo Nation Washington Office:

In 2020, the Navajo Nation purchased an office building near the Washington Mall to serve as the permanent workspace for the Navajo Nation Washington Office (NNWO). In previous years, NN would rent an office space for \$300,000 per year. To offset future rental charges, the Council decided to purchase a building instead. After a cost benefit analysis report, the building was determined to be a positive investment in the long term. NNWO staff will continue to work with state congressmen/senators and US Departments to advocate for federal funds for public safety, workforce, social services, head start, and many other programs.

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Project:

Recently, legislation sponsored by Delegate Wilson Stewart, Jr. and co-sponsored by Mark Freeland and Speaker Seth Damon was developed to appropriate \$4 million to all 110 chapters to use for the purchase of hay, grain, and livestock feed for community members. The legislation was passed in early 2021 and the funds are to help alleviate the financial hardships caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Navajo Nation Road Fund Plan:

Delegate Wilson is currently sponsoring a legislation to fund reservation wide projects to improve the Navajo Nation road conditions in conjunction with Navajo DOT, BIA and chapter leadership. The legislation is to allocate approximately \$17.8 million in funds to help in road grading, constructing/repairing bridges, and road restriping for communities in Sawmill, Shiprock, Chinle and many others. Project construction dates for each community may vary.

Navajo Nation Covid-19 Contingency Plan:

Legislation for Indian Health Services (IHS), Navajo Division of Health, and the Health, Education and Human Services Committee (HEHSC) of NN Council was developed to create and implement a contingency plan for all Navajo Nation employees returning to work. Passed in November 2020, Legislation Number 0273-20, the purpose of the legislation is to work closely with Navajo Department of Personnel Management to ensure that Navajo Nation employees are able to return to work safely in accordance with CDC and NN Health Department guidelines for Covid-19 mitigation.

Future Proposals

Navajo Nation Animal Control:

In conjunction with the NN Animal Control and many other departments, Delegate Wilson plans to sponsor legislation to better control the feral and domestic dog population on the Navajo Nation. The intent is to establish a humane society nonprofit within the community and to seek outside funding from the state of New Mexico and other private entities for this program. With additional fundings identified, the NN Animal Control Department can increase their workforce.

Hotel and Restaurant Development in Fort Defiance Area:

There are plans to create a hotel, restaurant and office complex in the Fort Defiance community to attract tourism and employ community members.

Upcoming Events

Regular Chapter Meetings:

Sawmill Chapter: July 12, 2021
 Red Lake #18 Chapter: July 21, 2021
 Crystal Chapter: July 11, 2021
 Fort Defiance Chapter: July 13, 2021
 Contact your local chapter
 for more information.



Annual Horse Riding for NN Council Summer Session:

Dates: July 15-19, 2021

For more information, contact your local chapter.



NN Council Summer Session:

Dates: July 19-23, 2021

Location: Session will be live
 streamed on Vimeo, Youtube and
 Facebook.

Contact Information



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Prepared by Fort Defiance Chapter
 Summer Youth Employment