



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

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January 28, 2008

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**



The 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council convened for its Winter Session on Monday, January 28, 2008 in Window Rock, Ariz. In right photo, Steve Owens, Director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, gives an oral report to the Council regarding ADEQ activity with the Navajo Nation, while Frank Seanez with the Office of Legislative Counsel and Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan look on. (Photo by Joshua Lavar Butler)

### **Day One: 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council Winter session**

*Council appropriates emergency funding in the amount of \$8,535,000*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Day one of the 21<sup>st</sup> Navajo Nation Council winter session convened today amidst a morning snowfall that blanketed the nation's capitol in Window Rock, Ariz.

The day's session began with an introduction of guests and visiting officials to the Navajo Nation. In attendance were several members from Apache County, they included County Treasurer Katherine Arviso, County Attorney Chris Canderia, County Superintendent Dr. Pauline Begay, Apache County Supervisor Tom White, and a couple of representatives from Apache County Recorder Lenora Johnson's office.

Other acknowledged attendees included Cal Curly with Tom Udall's office; Mary Kim Titla, Congressional District 1 candidate; Steve Owens, Director of the Arizona Department of Environment Quality (ADEQ); Matt Capalby, Director of the ADEQ Northern Regional Office; and Walter Phelps from Congressman Rick Renzi's office.

The Council received the State of the Nation address from President Joe Shirley, Jr., an oral report from the BIA Regional Director, an oral report from the Director of the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, written reports from

Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale), Chief Justice Herb Yazzie, the 12 standing committees, the boards and commissions, and from the Honorable Congressman Rick Renzi (R-Ariz.).

Item A under New Business was Legislation No. 0032-08 that was sponsored by Omer Begay, Jr. (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins), which relates to an emergency and amends the Navajo Nation 2008 fiscal year budget by approving a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$8,535,000. Navajo Nation Chapters will receive \$2,750,000 at \$25,000 per Chapter to address the conditions caused by the inclement winter weather conditions on the reservation.

In addition, the Office of the Speaker will receive \$1,560,000, the Office of the President and Vice President will receive \$50,000. The Division of Public Safety will receive \$550,000 for the Shiprock District -Department of Law Enforcement for a heavy duty mobile command unit.

The Utah Navajo Commission will receive \$125,000 from the Unreserved-Undesignated Fund Balance and the Public Employment Program (PEP) will receive funding in the amount of \$3,500,000 to be used at an allocation of 50 percent for equal distribution and 50 percent to registered voters to the 110 Chapters.

The initial supplemental appropriation was for \$2,750,000, but increased to \$8,535,000 after legislation sponsored by Young Jeff Tom (Mariano Lake/Smith Lake) was added as an amendment.

Tom explained that this additional request for money constitutes an emergency, because it will be used for direct services to our Navajo People. The Public Employment Program (PEP) for example will help families that participate in the program to continue their employment. This in turn will provide some security to PEP participants to continue to provide for their families, this will be extremely helpful during this winter season with increased heating costs and a need for other essentials.

Speaker Morgan noted that these appropriations are to be used for emergency funding to the Navajo people and Chapters should do everything they possibly can to assist their Chapter residents with these funds.

“Chapter officials should be available to the Navajo people at all times. Chapter and community services should not only be rendered between the hours of eight to five, Chapter officials should be available after hours as well in order to assist our people with emergency services, especially during this time,” Speaker Morgan said.

The Navajo Nation found that conditions in the Navajo Nation Chapters caused a recent inclement Winter weather condition, which constituted an emergency and required that the Navajo Nation appropriate funds to the Chapters for disaster relief services that are associated with the inclement Winter weather conditions.

A full copy of the 2007 Fall Session agenda is available on-line at [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org).

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