



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Budget and Finance Committee receives update on Administrative Service Centers

WINDOW ROCK—The Budget and Finance Committee received an update from the Executive Branch concerning \$3 million recently released by the Office of the President and Vice President for the decentralization initiative

The initiative began when BFC members allocated \$3 million in August 2013, which was later approved by the Navajo Nation Council in the Nation's FY2014 Comprehensive Budget in an effort to establish 16 Administrative Service Centers to provide direct services to the 110 chapters.

"Now is the time to downsize at the central level and begin to regionalize these services," said BFC chair Council Delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto, Naa'tsis'Áán, Oljato, Ts'ah Bii Kin), pointing out that the initiative was successful in coordinating emergency response efforts in several communities who faced flooding, excessive mud and snow, and impassible roads due to recent weather activity.

Robert Begay, ASC Department Manager II, said 14 of the 16 ASC sites are now open with the exception of two sites in the communities of Baca and Ganado which are in need of staff and possible renovation of the proposed Baca ASC site.

Additionally, Begay reported that overall there remains 12 vacancies, six accountant positions and six planner positions.

Until the OPVP released the \$3 million last week, the Administrative Service Centers were operating on a budget of \$1.2 million which threatened to shut down the operations at each site after March 31.

BFC member Council Delegate Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) thanked the executive branch for moving forward with the funding and requested information to determine if additional funding is being held up by the OPVP.

"This was initiated by the Council and not the Office of the President and Vice President," said Delegate Damon.

BFC member Council Delegate Mel Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Bahastl'a'a') raised concerns over the accounting software MIP, which is used by the Nation's chapters for accounting purposes.

In response, Robert Begay said use of the software has become a major concern, adding that he and his colleagues recognize the problems it causes and has recommended a change in software.

Near the end of the discussion, Delegate Damon also urged his BFC colleagues to bring their chapters together with ASC staff to begin to further advance the decentralization initiative.

“These ASC’s have provided jobs for our young kids, some of which are fresh out of college,” stated Delegate Damon. “It’s our job to move it forward.”

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