



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School celebrates groundbreaking for new gymnasium

THOREAU, N.M. – Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau) had the honor of joining students, teachers, and school administrators in Thoreau on Wednesday, as the St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School broke ground on the construction of a new 18,000 square-foot gymnasium that will be open to students and local community members.

In his opening remarks, Delegate Edmund Yazzie congratulated administrators and local chapter officials that devoted years of hard work to withdraw land and secure monetary donations for the project.

“Through the efforts of the Navajo Land Department, Resources and Development Committee, former Chapter president Lester Emerson, and many others we are here today to celebrate and give thanks that our prayers were answered,” said Delegate Yazzie.



PHOTO: Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie congratulates students and community members at St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School in Thoreau, N.M. on Aug. 15, 2018.

In July 2017, Navajo Land Department executive director Mike Halona notified the school that the Navajo Nation had approved the withdrawal of approximately five acres of land next to the school for the new gymnasium. In December, Delegate Yazzie successfully advocated for a 25-year lease for the school gymnasium, which was approved by the Resources and Development Committee through resolution RDCD-125-17.

The school’s executive director Christopher Halter, announced during the ceremony that the new multi-purpose sports gymnasium would be dedicated to the Navajo Code Talkers in honor and

remembrance of their honorable service and sacrifices. He added that the new facility would not only benefit the students, but that it would be open to the local community members as well.

St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School is located in Thoreau, N.M., which located approximately 32-miles east of Gallup, N.M., and serves 186 students from preschool through eighth grade. According to Halter, 95-percent of the students are members of the Navajo Nation.

President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez also spoke at the event and congratulated the students, teachers, and administrators in attendance.

Delegate Yazzie stated that the groundbreaking is an example of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council's continued support and partnership with the school. In February, the Navajo Nation Council approved nearly \$300,000 in funding for the purchase of three new school buses to provide safer and reliable transportation for the students.



PHOTO: St. Bonaventure Indian Mission and School students, teachers, and administrators at the groundbreaking ceremony in Thoreau, N.M. on Aug. 15, 2018.

“To the students, I ask you to continue saying your prayers and helping one another so that we continue to move forward and make our communities better for all us,” added Delegate Yazzie.

School officials said they anticipate the new school gymnasium to be completed within one year.

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