



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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Chapters Receive Full Funding from NM Tribal Infrastructure Fund Board with Council Support



Speaker Seth Damon, left, presents with Chichiltah Chapter Community Services Coordinator Roselyn John, center, on the chapter's waterline construction project June 7 in Santa Fe, N.M.

SANTA FE, N.M. – Three Navajo Chapters, in coordination with 24th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) and Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahí, Whiterock), successfully petitioned the state of New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Fund Board to fund much-needed water and educational infrastructure projects June 7 in Santa Fe, N.M.

Chichiltah Chapter requested money to complete 10 miles of a water pipeline with 26 connections. Roselyn John, chapter community services coordinator, presented with Speaker Damon, explaining that 137 families are without water in their chapter.

"It's hard...it's expensive to haul water from our nearest water source," said John. "It's 39 miles one way. If funded, the 2019 TIF money will be leveraged at 93.8 percent."

Following John's comments, Speaker Damon noted that the Chichiltah project possesses all of its construction funds and 90% of the right-of-way is complete.

“Out in Eastern [agency] it takes a lot of funding to get the ROW completed with the different land statuses,” said Speaker Damon. “To have 90% of the ROW complete is unheard of.”

Navajo Nation Water Resources Branch will serve as the fiscal agent for the \$501,000 the chapter requested and received from the board.

Tse'ii'ahi' Chapter updated the board on their effort to build a new Head Start building. The chapter requested and received \$400,000 to complete the project.

Chapter President Johnny Johnson and Delegate Freeland explained that the project has funding to start construction but needs more funding to complete the first phase of the project.

“This project is regional in nature,” said Delegate Freeland. “The location is ideal; it’s on a highly traveled highway serving 8 chapters. Parents and guardians will be able to drop off their children on their way to work.”

Delegate Freeland also presented with To'hajilee Chapter. Mark Begay, the chapter president, is a Level One Water System Operator and presented the community’s request for funding to improve and repair components of their aging water system.

The chapter is working with the Indian Health Service to drill a new well that will complement the rehabilitation of their water system.

Currently, their water is brown and contains significant amounts of odorous Sulphur. The TIF funding will: 1) refurbish five existing water storage tank sites; 2) replace two booster pump stations and controls; and 3) address three pressure zones having too high or too low pressure with a new booster station and a new pressure reducing valve.

The Navajo Nation Water Management Branch will serve as the lead agent in coordination with the chapter for the \$3 million project. Nine-hundred seventy-five thousand dollars of the \$3 million budget was awarded at the conclusion of the June 7 meeting.

Earlier in the meeting, Smith Lake Chapter was granted a 6-month extension to complete their TIF-funded water project, the Smith Lake Water System.

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