

Naat'áji Nahat'á Hane'

Legislative Branch News

24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

SPRING COUNCIL SESSION - APRIL 2019



Navajo Nation Council Honors Wilhelmina Yazzie on Behalf of the Navajo Nation for Contributions to Navajo New Mexico students

On its opening day, the Navajo Nation Council honored Wilhelmina Yazzie, lead plaintiff in the Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico case for her contributions to the education of New Mexico students.

"We want to recognize Ms. Yazzie for her fierceness, for her advocacy for all at-risk students," Delegate Amber Kanazbah

Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tséa'naoz't'l'í) announced to the chamber audience.

According to the N.M. Center on Law and Policy, the lawsuit "challenged the state's failure to provide students—especially low-income, Native American, English language

learner (ELL), and students with disabilities—the programs and services necessary for them to learn and thrive and challenged the state's failure to sufficiently fund these programs and services."

First Judicial District Judge Sarah Singleton ruled on July 20, 2018 that the state was failing to meet its obligation, in violation

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Navajo High School Sports and Academic Teams Honored by Council for Exceptional Winter Results

The 24th Navajo Nation Council recognized three high school groups at its spring session that excelled in several tournaments and competitions this past quarter.

GIRLS BASKETBALL STATE CHAMPIONS

The Page High School girls basketball champions brought their Arizona Interscholastic Association trophy to the historic Navajo Council Chamber April 16 where they were recognized by council delegates for their Conference 3A

championship win this winter.

"You young ladies have brought Page, Ariz., onto the international map," said Delegate Paul Begay (Bodaway/Gap, Coppermine, K'ai'bii'tó, LeChee, Tonalea). "We don't do these recognitions just to highlight you guys because the road does not end with that. We want you to go to the next level."

The No. 2 seed Page Lady Sand Devils defeated No. 4 Holbrook, 46-33, in the Feb. 23rd championship game.



The Page High School girls basketball team is honored by Delegate Paul Begay for their championship victory.

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of the state constitution, to ensure that all New Mexico students are career and college ready.

"All we wanted for our children is to have adequate education opportunities and resources comparable to the bigger schools," Yazzie shared to the Council.

Yazzie explained that teachers are second parents to their pupils. From her sons' experiences, they were not receiving adequate cultural and language learning resources.

"I want to say thank you for this special recognition...I want to extend to the Navajo Nation Council leadership and Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council to continue to support our children and provide for educational opportunities for them. I see our Navajo children abandoning their cultural values and moving into the western philosophy...Protect our children and continue to teach them their culture and language. They are precious and valuable. My late mother passionately taught these values to us," Yazzie shared with the Council.

The next day in Council, Indian Affairs Dept. Sec. Lynn Trujillo said the state did not intend to appeal the case.

"We definitely want to work with the Nation to better understand what are some of the needs of the students," Trujillo said. "We need to work with the Nation and other tribal sovereignties with regards to early childhood education. This is a priority of Gov. Lujan

Grisham."

In closing remarks at Yazzie's recognition, Delegate Daniel Tso (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake) expressed his sincere appreciation for Yazzie's groundbreaking work.

"Again, thank you Ms. Yazzie. We are grateful for setting this precedent for all the Native and Hispanic parents and children. Your name will be long recognized and will be forever remembered historically by our children, parents, and grandparents," Delegate Tso stated.



Left to right: Delegates Nelson BeGaye, Paul Begay, and Kee Allen Begay rise to applaud Wilhelmina Yazzie for her groundbreaking lawsuit on behalf of at-risk New Mexico children.

Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Awareness Walk Enters Fifth Year

At the start of the 2019 Spring Council Session, Council Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta), Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock), Charlaïne Tso (Mexican Water, Aneth, Tecnospos, Tóíkan, Red Mesa), Otto Tso (Tó Nanees Dizí), and Wilson Stewart, Jr. (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill), and Speaker Seth Damon (Bááháálí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Tsé Lichíí', Rock Springs, Tsayatoh) took part in the annual Sexual Assault Awareness Month walk in Window Rock.

Joining leadership, Navajo programs, coalitions, and community advocates participated in the walk that concluded at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. Nationally, April is recognized as the Sexual Assault Awareness Month and the 2019 theme is entitled "I Ask," which champions the message that asking for consent is a healthy, normal, and necessary

part of everyday interactions.

Delegate Crotty said the goal of the awareness walk was to promote awareness of sexual assault issues and to kick-off a Navajo Nation-wide campaign entitled "Start by Believing," which encourages Navajo communities to positively respond to sexual assault claims and support survivors who were victims of sexual violence.

"In Crownpoint, we kicked-off a Start by Believing campaign. We need to recognize the traumas and the pain within communities, and how we can help each other so that we do not inflict lateral violence on each other. When we put down a prayer this morning, it was a foundation for us to bring this to life and put it into motion. You don't need to be an elected leader—you are a leader in your home and a leader in your communities. It starts by believing our survivors," said

Delegate Crotty.

"I want to thank the leadership, but most importantly I want to thank you all on the front lines. Our law enforcement officers, social workers, and those working with out elders," stated Speaker Damon.

Council leadership thanked participants for taking part in the awareness walk. Delegate Crotty said that in the last five years the Navajo Nation Council was able to pass key legislations that addressed human trafficking, AMBER Alert, cyberbullying, and revenge porn.

She also stressed that moving forward, the Council would need to begin developing and supporting projects such as a proposed database center that would house data and research relating to Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives, sexual and domestic violence, and other crucial steps that would aid the Nation in understanding problem areas and to aid with effective policy development.

The proposed database center would be a collaborative effort between the Navajo programs such as the Epidemiology Center, Social Services, and academic institutions such as Diné College and Northern Arizona University. Delegate Crotty stated that conversations have begun to start planning for a database center and is seeking support from Navajo leadership.

Delegate Otto Tso stated that prevention work starts at home.

"It starts in the home. Whether you're a mother, father, uncle, or aunt, it's your responsibility to teach these things," Delegate Tso stated.

Also in attendance at the SAAM awareness event were President Jonathan Nez, the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, the Navajo Nation Strengthening Families Program, the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services, Casey Family Programs, and Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition.

More information may be found at startbybelieving.org.



Delegate Charlaïne Tso addresses the walk participants before the start of the spring session on Monday, April 15, 2019

National Indian Gaming Association Chairman Ernie Stevens Presents Before Navajo Nation Council

National Indian Gaming Association Chairman and National Spokesman Ernie Stevens presented before the Council Tuesday morning on the current state of Indian gaming and the Navajo Nation's contribution to the national gaming landscape.

Chairman Stevens is in his ninth two-year term leading NIGA.

In his opening remarks, Chairman Stevens highlighted how his father worked on the Navajo Nation in several stints.

"He told me of the power that emanates from this building and its leadership," Chairman Stevens stated to the Council.

At the Reservation Economic Summit, Speaker Damon invited Chairman Stevens to introduce himself to the 24th Council and meet the newly elected Navajo legislators.

During his leadership of NIGA, Indian gaming has grown to eclipse commercial gaming in the United States, rising from \$11 billion in 2000 to over \$37.7 billion last year.

In his speech, the chairman cited the immense contributions Indian gaming has made to tribal governments, state governments, and the national economy.

Overall, Indian gaming is the 13th largest employer in the United States and employs 308,000 persons, 74 percent of whom are non-Indian.

Though, Chairman Stevens noted, on the Navajo Nation the statistics are reversed.



National Indian Gaming Association Chairman and National Spokeman Ernie Stevens (center) presents before the Navajo Nation Council on Tuesday, April 16, 2019. Deena Jackson (left), managing partner of Zion Enterprises, which works with NIGA, and NIGA Executive Director Jason Giles (right) joined Chairman Stevens in his presentation

The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise employs approximately 1,200 employees. Eighty-four percent of NNGE's employees are Navajo and 72 percent of the NNGE's managers are Navajo.

"In a very short period of time, the Navajo Nation has progressed to the top of the industry," Chairman Stevens shared with the Council.

Tribal government gaming's contributions to economic development in Indian Country has made tribal governments solvent and supported the expansion of tribal government services.

The chairman acknowledged how his father, who is in a tribal nursing home, would not be able to receive the care he requires without a tribal government subsidy funded by gaming revenues.

Jason Giles, the NIGA executive director, provided a legislative update to the Council, focusing on the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act (H.R. 779, S. 226).

"The [National Labor Relations Board] cannot come out to Window Rock and tell you how to treat your employees," Giles said. "We've always held up the Navajo Nation as an example of how a tribe can have strong labor laws, protect its workers, and look out for people who come to the reservation."

In February, Speaker Damon spoke with Bloomberg News on the need to pass the labor act.

"How tribal governments operate and deliver the critical services of government are the business of tribal members and their leadership," Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon told Bloomberg. "Whether tribal governments deliver such services via tribally owned enterprises, public agencies, or through other structures, is a matter that only tribes are capable of determining."



Left to right: NNGE consultant Harold Wauneka, CFO Richard Williamson, Speaker Seth Damon, NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Delegate Otto Tso, and NNGE CEO Brian D. Parrish pose in front of the Council Chamber after Stevens' remarks to the Council on April 16, 2019.

Speaker Damon Highlights Council's Advocacy and Community Engagement in Report Delivered First Day of Spring Session

On Monday, Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon presented the Speaker's Report to his colleagues on the Navajo Nation Council. They voted to accept the report as a written report 12-6.

In his report, Speaker Damon highlighted how the Council began orientations on their respective oversight jurisdictional entities, advanced out of committee executive and legislative branch nominations, advocated before county, state, and federal partners, and introduced new and innovative legislations — all while working on the issues related to the potential closure or acquisition of the Navajo Generating Station (NGS) and Peabody Kayenta Mine.

Speaker Damon also noted several of the initiatives spurred by his colleagues over the last quarter.

In March, Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/

Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood) brought forth an orientation for his colleagues on FirstNet implementation. The orientation explained the timeline for implementing the first responders' telecommunications network and also provided an opportunity for delegates to advocate for the needs of their communities.

On March 28, the Council passed NABIMA-20-19 which creates the Plan of Operations for the Navajo Nation Complete Count Commission for the 2020 Census.

The report also highlights the work of the Legislative Branch's programs. Over the past two months, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission (NNHRC), a unit of the Legislative Branch, held nine public hearings to assess mistreatment toward Navajo and Native American students in border towns and regional cities.

Delegate Jamie Henio (Alamo, Ramah, Tóhajiilee) attended the Gallup hearing and



Navajo Nation Council Speaker Seth Damon

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"A lot of the girls in our region are able to play at the next level," Head Coach Ryan Whitehorse told delegates. He added that the 14 girls on the team have an average 3.45 GPA, with four girls each having a 4.0 GPA.

Delegate Begay also told the council the Page boys wrestling team sent three students to the state tournament, and all three returned home as Conference D4 champions.

Zachery Ruiz won the 113 lb. weight division state championship, as did Kimball Begay in the 195 lb. division, and Cheyenne Richardson in the 285 lb. division. Overall, the school placed 4th out of 46 in team scores.

DECA TEAM HEADING TO INTERNATIONALS

Window Rock High School students belonging to the school's DECA program recently scored very high in a statewide competition. They will be competing on the international stage against students from nine other countries and all 50 U.S. states this weekend.

The 11 students and their advisor were introduced to the council April 16 by Delegate Wilson C. Stewart, Jr. (Crystal, Fort Defiance, Red Lake, Sawmill).

"We encourage our young people to go out and get an education. We encourage them to go out and do the best that they can then come back to be a part of our nation, to work within our nation," Delegate Stewart said. "We need to do the best that we can to encourage them and to mentor them."

DECA is an extracurricular activity where students learn a hands-on approach to understanding business in an economic environment. Students who aspire to become business leaders gain experience in marketing and commerce in the club, faculty advisor Tyrell Harvey told council delegates.

"We competed in 12 events, and we won six of them," Harvey said. "More than 2,600 students compete at these events, of which we had 11 win. Only 240 students get to compete at the international level."

Students will travel to compete in Orlando, Fla. at the International Career Development Conference this weekend.

NEWCOMB BOYS BASKETBALL

The Newcomb High School boys basketball team was recognized by the Council on the third day of the spring session for reaching the Class 2A state championship game.

Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty invited the team to be recognized in conjunction with Rickie Nez (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T'iis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland).

No. 3 seed Newcomb advanced to the March 16 championship game after a nail-biting semi-finals game where they squeaked by with a 50-48 win against Mesilla Valley Christian School. In the championship game, Newcomb succumbed to No. 1 seed Pecos with a 58-37 loss.

"This year was very magical. They know I don't take credit for the wins. They take care of the wins, and the coaches take care of the losses," Head Coach Dominique Richardson told Council. "They had 29 wins this year. The most in school history by far. It's all about their dedication and to their families who support them."

COWBOYS

Two young cowboys, Hanson King and Kellen Yellowhair, left their ponies at home and came to the council chambers to be recognized for winning state and national titles in multiple rodeo events from Birdsprings, Ariz., to Amarillo, Texas. Delegates Nelson BeGaye, Wilson Stewart, Jr., and Jimmy Yellowhair presented the honors.

Confirmation of Executive Agency Appointments Approved, Agency Concerns Brought Forth by Council Delegates

The 24th Navajo Nation Council kick-started its first council session with 13 legislations for consideration with most of them executive appointment confirmations. While those seeking confirmation had time to address the council, many responses were promised in email form.

Legislation 0009-19, Confirmation of Dr. Rudy Shebala as Division of Natural Resources executive director

Dr. Shebala earned his degrees from the University of Idaho with a B.S. in Animal Science, and a M.S. and Ph.D. in environmental science with a concentration in Horses and Grazing.

On the council floor, Delegate Raymond Smith, Jr. (Houck, Klagetoh, Nahat'a Dziil, Tsé Si'áni, Wide Ruins) emphasized Navajo Nation rangers needed to be recognized with the same distinction as Navajo Nation Police and that his department needs to work on getting right-of-ways by collaborating with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and the Bureau of Indian

Affairs to install more power lines.

Delegate Otto Tso had concerns with revamping Title 3, the code mainly dealing with agriculture laws, and the need to allow the sale of agricultural products direct from Navajo farmers to local grocery stores.

"We don't export anything. The only thing that goes to the markets are from the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry," Delegate Tso said. "We should be bringing USDA inspectors so our local farmers can sell to supermarkets like Bashas' and other local supermarkets."

Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty had concerns with feral horses on the Nation and the need to deal with the issue in a sensible way.

"Horses are not the issue; we are the issue," Delegate Crotty said.

The council confirmed Dr. Shebala by unanimous consent.

Legislation 0011-19, Confirmation of Mr. Garret Silversmith as Division Director for Navajo Division of Transportation

Mr. Silversmith was the incumbent director seeking confirmation by the council. Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch'izhí) asked Mr. Silversmith what the council can leverage to assist the NDOT.

"We need to think outside the box. What to leverage? Whether it's bonding, the Permanent Trust Fund, the Sihasin Fund...that is the only way we are going to put a dent on the roads," Delegate BeGaye said.

"Could the council put together some kind of stimulus package to address roads across the Navajo Nation?" said Delegate Kee Allen Begay, Jr. (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Blue Gap/Tachee, Tselani/Cottonwood).

Mr. Silversmith was confirmed by unanimous consent.

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Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority Pays Dividend

The first day of the Spring Session was all green thanks to a \$500,000 dividend check presented to the Navajo Nation by the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority.

NECA, as the company is commonly called, employs 254 people on the Navajo Nation and has been in operation since 1972. When it was established, the Council's only investment consisted of a few pieces of used equipment. Since then NECA has constructed over \$1.2 billion worth of projects.

Including the \$500,000, NECA has contributed \$18.3 million to the Navajo Nation Government in dividend payments, much of it directed to scholarships. NECA has also awarded \$567K in scholarships through its internal scholarship program.

"We do contribute and we are an integral part of the Navajo Nation," NECA board president Stanley Yazzie stated to the audience in the council chamber.

NECA primarily performs road construction, water line, and sewer line projects for Navajo Nation residents.



Left to right: Wallace McGilbert (Board), Ernest Hubbell (Board), Ronson Chee (Board), Buu Van Nygren (Director of Business Development), President Jonathan Nez, Miss Ganado Penelope Joe, Speaker Seth Damon, Stanley Yazzie (Board President), Derrick Zahne (CFO), Terrill Harvey (Board), Cary Patterson (CEO).

Delegate Jamie Henio (Alamo, Ramah, Tóhajiilee), chair of the Council's Budget and Finance Committee, thanked NECA for their continued contributions to the nation's

finances. "At this time of decreasing revenues, NECA's steady pace of contributions is greatly appreciated," stated Delegate Henio.

Legislation 0018-19, Confirmation of Mr. Lomardo Aseret as executive director of the Division of General Services

Mr. Lomardo Aseret has many years experience working with Salt River Project / Navajo Generating Station and was seeking confirmation with the Dept. of General Services, which provides support services to the Nation that include programs like fleet management, facilities maintenance, Navajo Transit System, and records management.



Delegate Edmund Yazzie questions NN EPA appointmtee Oliver Whaley during his confirmation hearing before the full council

Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahí, Whiterock) asked Mr. Aseret what his plan is to bring more funding to Navajo Transit from the states that the Navajo Nation is in to re-establish bus service to communities on the Nation.

"There's no more services from Window Rock to Crownpoint. If you have a CDL, you can get better pay somewhere else," Delegate Freeland said.

Delegate Herman Daniels (Shonto, Naa'tsis'áán, Oljato, Ts'áh Bii Kin) asked more oversight for the transit system and that more routes should be planned to heavy traffic areas such as to Diné College.

Mr. Aseret was confirmed by the council by unanimous consent.

Legislation 0012-19, Confirmation of Dr. Pearl Yellowman as Division of Community Development director

Dr. Yellowman brings educational experience from the University of Montana with an M.A. in counseling education, and an M.Ed. and Ed.D. in educational leadership.

The question of chapters mismanaging money was brought forth by Delegate Nathaniel Brown.

"There were chapter officials in

Dennehotso that were mismanaging money, and their predecessor felt they were the judge, jury and prosecutor, and didn't continue prosecution," Delegate Brown said. "How will you make sure that justice is there for Navajo people?"

Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) conveyed to Dr. Yellowman that local governmental support centers were replaced as a part of decentralization. The idea was to have each chapter stand on its own two feet, and that they wanted to be self-sustainable, he said.

The council confirmed Dr. Yellowman by unanimous consent.

Legislation 0013-19, Confirmation of Jesse Delmar as Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety

Mr. Delmar has served in this position since May 2015. Delegate Otto Tso pointed out that DPS has progressed since the Ben Shelley presidential administration.

"For 20 years Navajo Nation did not have a chief of police; it was always acting chief," Delegate Tso said. "I cannot vote against you. If I do, what's going to be at risk is the safety of the people. You're an asset to the Navajo people."

Delegate Smith asked about 638 contracts and getting more funding from Washington to get more officers. He said there is bootlegging happening on the Nation and having a drug enforcement team is vital.

The council voted 18-2 to confirm Mr. Delmar.

Legislation 0017-19, Confirmation of Ms. Doreen N. McPaul as Navajo Nation Attorney General

Ms. McPaul earned her Juris Doctorate from Arizona State University College of Law and has been the assistant attorney general for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe in Tucson, Ariz. since August 2017.

Delegate Crotty wanted questions answered about receiving reports from the FBI, a Diné action plan, and how she felt that the Nation was "very lean on victims' rights."

The council confirmed Ms. McPaul by unanimous consent.

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spoke before the commission and attendees. He emphasized how important the NNHRC's hearings and findings are and that he would work to amplify the work of the commission.

In the second quarter report, the speaker underscored how two communities benefited from the advocacy of returning delegates. Both Dennehotso and Nahata' Dziil celebrated the opening of two economic development enterprises, led by Delegates Nathaniel Brown and Raymond Smith, Jr. respectively.

At the Dennehotso convenience store opening, Delegate Brown documented his community's struggle to obtain a place to buy basic necessities. At the Nahata' Dziil Bashas' and shopping center opening, Delegate Smith linked the development of the commerce center to broadening economic opportunity along I-40 and within Nahata' Dziil.

As a part of the report, the speaker sought to allay fears on the FY 2020 budget, emphasizing that there is projected to be a \$5.4 million increase in revenue, according to the Office of the Controller.

Though, during the floor discussion on Monday, Delegate Herman Daniels noted that in his community and the areas surrounding NGS and Kayenta Mine there will be serious economic hardship for Navajo citizens who may have to leave to find work elsewhere.

As a response to this concern, the Speaker Damon stressed the need to be good relatives in this upcoming time of need for some Navajo families.

"The impending closure of NGS and Kayenta Mine brings forth many deep concerns for hundreds, if not thousands, of Navajo families. During this transition period, I ask that all Navajo citizens exercise K'é and extend their compassion and warmth to those who may be facing serious need soon," Speaker Damon said in his report.

Before accepting the report as a written report, Delegate Otto Tso extended his appreciation for the Speaker's first quarter of leadership.

"He works with us each individually and we know that speaker has been fighting on Navajo's behalf. That's key," Delegate Tso stated before voting to accept the Speaker's Report.

N.M. State Indian Affairs Secretary Outlines Priorities before Council

The Navajo Nation Council received a report from the N.M. Indian Affairs cabinet secretary on the state's plan to work collaboratively on several priority issues with the Nation.

Lynn Trujillo, Indian Affairs cabinet secretary for Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, spoke to council delegates April 16, laying out the state's plan to assist the Nation in capital outlay, human rights, economic development, and most recently the state's follow-up to the Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico case.

The cabinet secretary said the state did not intend to appeal the case and that a lot of work and questions are being asked within the state's public education department.

Trujillo told delegates the 2019 legislative session was a successful, historic session with respect to the amount of capital outlay all tribal communities received.

She said the Navajo Nation is expected to receive \$21.6 million and 65 capital outlay projects are in the works for the Nation's New Mexico communities that will improve water issues, road projects, schools, and refurbishing chapter houses.

"We are very excited and committed in working with the Nation in relation to capital

outlay projects. We had recon meetings with many chapter officials," Trujillo said.

Another state fund available to the Nation is the Tribal Infrastructure Fund (TIF), which is used to fund critical infrastructure needs. About \$14 million is available to all tribal nations in the state but there is currently no Navajo representation on the TIF board. Trujillo told delegates the governor is expected to make appointments to the TIF board to fill all vacancies by the end of the month.

The secretary briefly talked about protecting natural resources and sacred sites like Chaco Canyon. The department is also working in collaboration with the NMDOT secretary to address the needs of the Nation's roads.

Economic development is a big part of the department's plan to work with Navajo Nation. Plans are in the works to help with viable economic development options near the Four Corners Generating Plant and its impending closure.

On the human rights front, Trujillo said HB 278 was signed into law directing the state Indian Affairs Department to form a taskforce to address the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women epidemic and the crisis



Delegate Mark Freeland (pictured) initially reached out to Secretary Trujillo on a potential presentation to the Council.

that is impacting tribal communities.

"We will need to identify task force members and submit those names to the governor for appointment," Trujillo said. "We look forward to working with the Nation; I know that Council Delegate Crotty has been very vocal and active with respect to this issue."

Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'í'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í'i) has sponsored several resolutions in council committees supporting HB 278, and Arizona HB 2570, which would establish a study committee on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The last issue brought up was the governor signing the hemp bill into law, which provides for another means of economic development options for tribal nations in New Mexico.

Trujillo said she is excited that her department will work with the Nation to address these priorities before the start of the next legislative session, which is a short 30-day session in January 2020. She said her department looks forward to an invitation to Navajo communities and for guidance on how Indian Affairs can better serve the Navajo Nation.

"I think this is a very important day because our relationship as government to government is getting much more stronger," said Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Crownpoint, Huerfano, Lake Valley, Nageezi, Nahodishgish, Tse'ii'ahí, Whiterock). "I think it's good to set a precedence. New Mexico Indian Affairs is going to be a very important partner to the Navajo Nation."



N.M. Indian Affairs Dept. Secretary Lynn Trujillo speaks before the Council on Tuesday, April 16, 2019. She was joined by Deputy Secretary Nadine Padilla, who is a Navajo citizen.

Picture Highlights of the 2019 Spring Council Session



Dzilth-Na-O-Dith-Hle Community Grant School is recognized for 50 years of operations by Delegate Mark Freeland



The Department of Aging and Long Term Care Services Foster Grandparent Program was honored on the first day of the spring session.



Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Awareness walk participants raise their signs in front of the Council Chamber Monday, April 15, 2019.



Delegates Amber Kanazbah Crotty and Rickie Nez congratulate the Newcomb High School boys basketball team for their accomplishments in the state tournament. The team advanced to the championship game.



Delegate Jimmy Yellowhair (top left) and Speaker Seth Damon (top right) pose with youth cowboys Kellen Yellowhair (bottom left) and Hanson King (bottom right). Delegates Yellowhair and Nelson BeGaye invited the cowboys to be honored for their rodeo achievements.



Miss Navajo Autumn June Montoya presents to the council on Wednesday, April 17, 2019. She focused her presentation on the priorities of her office, how to modernize her office, and funding support.

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Legislation 0022-19, Confirmation of Mr. JT J. Willie as Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development executive director

Mr. Willie earned a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Masters of Public Administration from the University of New Mexico. His last position was working as director of marketing for Tsehootsooi Medical Center in Fort Defiance, Ariz.

Delegate Rickie Nez (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T'iis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) spoke about Mr. Willie's character.

"Here you are, a well-minded and goal-oriented individual. That's good. You have to have a focus; your vision has to be clear. And I see that in you from when you were at RDC and here," Delegate Nez said.

Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton presented the need to bring jobs back to the Nation and that tourism promotion is important. She said a generation ago Shiprock had a hotel, a cinema and more places to attract tourism.

The council confirmed Mr. Willie by unanimous consent.



Delegate Kee Allen Begay highlighted the FirstNet system and a host of public safety issues while questioning executive branch appointees during the spring session.

Legislation 0025-19, Confirmation of Dr. Jill Jim as health director of the Navajo Nation Dept. of Health

Dr. Jim earned her degrees from the University of Utah with a Masters in Public Health from the School of Medicine and School of Business, a Masters in Healthcare Administration, and a Ph.D. in Public Health. Dr. Jim was confirmed by unanimous consent with no debate.

Legislation 0026-19, Confirmation of Dr. Perphelia Fowler as executive director of the Division of Human Resources

Dr. Fowler received her doctorate

degree in Educational Leadership for Change from Fielding Graduate University. Her recent position was human resource director at Navajo Technical University.

Delegate Vince R. James (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Łichíí, Steamboat) mentioned that he hopes the Dept. of Personnel Management streamlines its Personnel Action Form format to a common template so it can be uniform and quicker to update the personnel database.

Delegate Charles-Newton expressed her concern with Navajo police officers being vetted and going through the same DPM hiring process which is taking a lot more time to process when there is a shortage of officers on the force.

"We need to get officers hired right away. Sitting on these applications and not getting them through affects the whole Nation and the safety of people. Hiring of officers need to be a Dept. of Public Safety decision," Delegate Charles-Newton said.

The council confirmed Dr. Fowler by unanimous consent.

Legislation 0027-19, Confirmation of Christopher Becenti as the executive director of the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

The primary questions asked in Mr. Becenti's hearing were E911, FirstNet deployment and continuing to add cellular towers.

"We have a lot of Navajo families that live right there on the corridor between Crownpoint and Farmington (N.M.). God forbid that no accident happens there. There is no cell service for a large part of that service area," Delegate Freeland said.

Another concern Delegate Kee Allen Begay had is that one of the chapters he represents has no Internet access. He told Mr. Becenti, Navajo President Jonathan Nez, and Vice President Myron Lizer that they had to continue discussing telecommunications with the council.

The council confirmed Mr. Becenti by unanimous consent.

Legislation 0040-19, Confirmation of Santee Lewis as the Navajo Nation Washington Office director

Santee Lewis earned an MBA and Juris Doctorate from the University of New Mexico. Her last position was deputy superintendant



Delegate Jamie Henio submitted several questions to executive appointees related to advancing the Nation's economic development and protecting the environment and natural resources during the spring session confirmation hearings.

of Eastern Navajo Agency.

The council confirmed Lewis by unanimous consent with no debate

Legislation 0074-19, Confirmation of the nominations of the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, and the Navajo Nation President to the Eastern Navajo Land Commission

This legislation called for nominations from the Speaker and the President. Delegates representing the "checkerboard" area of the Nation make up the ENLC. Nominations didn't have to be made for delegates, as they were automatically inserted into the legislation because of their representation of "checkerboard" lands. Those are Delegates Freeland, Daniel Tso (Baca/Prewitt, Casamero Lake, Counselor, Littlewater, Ojo Encino, Pueblo Pintado, Torreon, Whitehorse Lake), Edmund Yazzie (Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau), Jamie Henio (Alamo, Ramah, Tóhajiilee), and Speaker Seth Damon.

President Nez nominated former delegate Danny Simpson. The measure passed 16-4.

Legislation 0082-19, Confirmation of Mr. Oliver B. Whaley as the director of Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency

Mr. Whaley was not present in council chambers April 18 because he was tending to a family emergency.

He entered his confirmation hearing on the last day of the spring session. He faced key concerns such as uranium mine reclamation and contamination, fracking in Eastern Agency, methane venting and flaring, and the Gold King Mine Spill into the San Juan River, among other issues. The council confirmed Mr. Whaley by a 16-6 vote.

2019 Spring Council Session

Legislation Results

*Chaired the discussion - Only votes in the event of a tie. **Excused by the Speaker.

LEGISLATION 0009-19

An action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Rudy Shebala as Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources Executive Director

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Herman Daniels

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (18):

Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Jimmy Yellowhair

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Nelson S. BeGaye
Elmer Begay
Vince James
**Charlaine Tso
**Edison Wauneka

LEGISLATION 0011-19

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and The Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Garret Silversmith as Division Director for the Navajo Division of Transportation

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Mark Freeland

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (21):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edmund Yazzie
Jimmy Yellowhair

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (3):

*Speaker Seth Damon
**Charlaine Tso
**Edison Wauneka

LEGISLATION 0018-19

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Lomardo Aseret as Executive Director of the Division of General Services.

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Edmund Yazzie

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (20):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
**Charlaine Tso
**Edison Wauneka
Jimmy Yellowhair

LEGISLATION 0012-16

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Dr. Pearl Yellowman as the Division of Community Development Director for the Navajo Nation

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Mark Freeland

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (20):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
**Charlaine Tso
**Edison Wauneka
Jimmy Yellowhair

LEGISLATION 0013-19

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Consenting to Jesse Delmar as Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety Executive Director

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Herman Daniels

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (18):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (2):

Raymond Smith, Jr.
Daniel Tso

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
**Charlaine Tso
**Edison Wauneka
Jimmy Yellowhair

LEGISLATION 0017-19

An Action Relating to Law and Order: Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Doreen N. McPaul as The Navajo Nation Attorney General

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Edmund Yazzie

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (17):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (1):

Amber Kanazbah Crotty

NOT VOTING (6):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Eugenia Charles-Newton
**Charlaine Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
**Edison Wauneka
Jimmy Yellowhair

2019 Spring Council Session

Legislation Results

*Chaired the discussion - Only votes in the event of a tie. **Excused by the Speaker.

LEGISLATION 0022-19

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of JT J. Willie as Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development Executive Director

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Edmund Yazzie

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (22):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edison Wauneka
Edmund Yazzie
Jimmy Yellowhair

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (2):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Eugene Tso

LEGISLATION 0025-19

An Action Relating to Health, Education and Human Services Committee, Naabik'iyati' Committees and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Dr. Jill Jim as the Health Director of the Navajo Nation Department of Health

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Charlaine Tso

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (19):

Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edison Wauneka
Edmund Yazzie
Jimmy Yellowhair

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (5):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Elmer Begay
Vince James
Wilson Stewart
Otto Tso

LEGISLATION 0026-19

An Action Relating to Health, Education and Human Services Committee, Naabik'iyati' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Dr. Perphelia Fowler as the Executive Director of the Division of Human Resources

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Nelson BeGaye

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (22):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edison Wauneka
Edmund Yazzie
Jimmy Yellowhair

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (1):

Speaker Seth Damon
*Rickie Nez

LEGISLATION 0027-19

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyati' Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Christopher Becenti as the Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Telecommunication Regulatory Commission

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Nelson BeGaye

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (20):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Vince James
Edison Wauneka
Jimmy Yellowhair

LEGISLATION 0040-19

An Action Relating to Naabik'iyáti' Committee and The Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Appointment of Santee Lewis as The Navajo Nation Washington Office Director

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Amber Kanazbah Crotty

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (20):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Otto Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edison Wauneka
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (0):

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Eugene Tso
Vince James
Jimmy Yellowhair

LEGISLATION 0074-19

An Act Relating to Naabik'iyáti Committee and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the Nominations of the Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council and the Navajo Nation President to the Eastern Navajo Land Commission

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Seth Damon

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (16):

Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Rickie Nez
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edison Wauneka
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (4):

Eugenia Charles-Newton
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Otto Tso

NOT VOTING (4):

*Speaker Seth Damon
Vince James
Eugene Tso
Jimmy Yellowhair

2019 Spring Council Session

Legislation Results (cont'd.)

24th Navajo Nation Council

Standing Committees and Commissions

*Chaired the discussion - Only votes in the event of a tie. **Excused by the Speaker.

LEGISLATION 0082-19

An Action Relating to the Resources and Development Committee, Naabik'iyati' Committee, and the Navajo Nation Council; Confirming the appointment of Oliver B. Whaley as the Director of the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency

PRIMARY SPONSOR
Thomas Walker, Jr.

ACTION: PASSED

YEA (16):
Kee Allen Begay
Paul Begay
Nelson BeGaye
Nathaniel Brown
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Pernell Halona
Jamie Henio
Vince James
Rickie Nez
Raymond Smith, Jr.
Wilson Stewart, Jr.
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Edison Wauneka
Edmund Yazzie

NAY (6):
Elmer Begay
Eugenia Charles-Newton
Charlaine Tso
Daniel Tso
Eugene Tso
Otto Tso

NOT VOTING (2):
*Speaker Seth Damon
Jimmy Yellowhair

Council Standing Committees

Budget and Finance Committee

Jamie Henio (Chair)
Raymond Smith, Jr. (Vice Chair)
Elmer Begay
Nathaniel Brown
Amber Kanazbah Crotty
Jimmy Yellowhair

Health, Education, and Human Services Committee

Daniel Tso (Chair)
Charlaine Tso (Vice Chair)
Paul Begay
Nelson S. BeGaye
Pernell Halona
Edison Wauneka

Law and Order Committee

Eugenia Charles-Newton (Chair)
Otto Tso (Vice Chair)
Vince James
Eugene Tso
Edmund Yazzie

Resources and Development Committee

Rickie Nez (Chair)
Thomas Walker, Jr. (Vice Chair)
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Herman Daniels
Mark Freeland
Wilson Stewart, Jr.

Commissions

Eastern Navajo Land Commission

Seth Damon
Mark Freeland
Jamie Henio
Daniel Tso
Edmund Yazzie

Navajo-Hopi Land Commission

Otto Tso (chair)
Raymond Smith, Jr. (vice chair)
Elmer Begay
Kee Allen Begay, Jr.
Herman Daniels
Vince James
Thomas Walker, Jr.
Jimmy Yellowhair

Utah Navajo Commission (resolution forthcoming)

Nathaniel Brown
Herman Daniels
Charlaine Tso