



Navajo Nation meets with Red Lake Nation on Criminal Justice Complex

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Earlier this month, the Law and Order Committee (LOC) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council (NNC) joined in a teleconference meeting with Red Lake Nation on their successful lease of a criminal justice complex. Carlyle W. Begay, the Federal and State Government Affairs Advisor to the NNC, requested an informal conference call with Red Lake Nation regarding lease agreements with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

The Navajo Nation is seeking to request BIA to cover Operations and Maintenance Costs for facilities needing replacement. The Navajo Nation is in the initial phases of a section 105(I)-lease negotiation with the Department of Interior (DOI) for the following:

- Window Rock Police Department – Window Rock, Ariz.
 - Estimated cost: \$72,800,000.00
 - Size: 85,622 sq. ft.
- Shiprock Police Department – Shiprock, NM
 - Estimated cost: \$83,811,000.00
 - Size: 97,759 sq. ft.
- Police substations in the following communities
 - New Mexico: Alamo, Pueblo Pintado, Ramah, Sheep Springs, Shiprock, Tohajiilee, and Tohatchi
 - Arizona: Burnside, Cameron, Inscription House, Le Chee, Red Mesa, Rough Rock, and Tsaille
 - Utah: Aneth

Along with the proposed facilities, the location of two additional dispatch centers will be determined after feasibility studies are completed.

“Our Navajo leadership wanted an opportunity to learn from Red Lake Nation’s own experience on your 105(I)-negotiation process with DOI, which may help guide our interest in following a similar path to fund much needed public safety facilities on the Navajo Nation,” stated Begay. “We understand Red Lake Nation was one of the first few tribes in the US to fully execute a 105(I) agreement with DOI for the operation and maintenance of your criminal justice complex.”

Red Lake Nation has insight on the section 105(I)-lease process, as they have undergone the lengthy process and faced many challenges to complete their criminal justice complex.

The Navajo Nation was made aware of the challenges they will face as they enter negotiations with DOI and Red Lake Nation's prior knowledge will act as a guide to help the Navajo Nation build their own criminal justice complexes.

Honorable Chairman, Darrel G. Seki of Red Lake Nation, was excited to share their experiences, especially the challenges and longevity of the process, "We went back and forth with BIA, we also received grants from Indian Country Grant Program. If you decide to build a new facility, you cannot use federal funds, you may proceed with obtaining a structure loan, in which BIA may qualify you for principal and interest payments for twenty years. For Red Lake Nation that was an important concept, BIA accepted the principal loan payments, it's doable. You essentially share the plan, involvement, and negotiate with BIA until building is completed, with a certificate of occupancy in place, for existing buildings, you can still qualify for OM. Good luck, it's not going to be easy."

Prior to the meeting with Red Lake Nation, LOC met with Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs, Bryan Newland in Crownpoint, NM. The purpose of the meeting was to request Newland's participation on the appropriate process of negotiating and entering a section 105(I)-lease agreement under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, and covering Operations and Maintenance costs for new facilities built by BIA.

The Navajo Nation plans to utilize American Rescue Plan Act funds to construct new public safety buildings and requests BIA's involvement in the design and construction phases of planning to ensure the buildings will be appropriate for the Nation to negotiate future section 105(I) leases.

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