



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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137 homes connected to the electric grid after NTUA Light Up Navajo III officially concludes

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Speaker Seth Damon was joined by the 24th Navajo Nation Council and the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) to announce the successful conclusion of the Light Up Navajo III initiative that began this Spring to provide electricity to over 137 homes across the Navajo Nation as part of an extensive nine-week project.

In other parts of the country, when a region gets hit with a natural disaster and the power is out, utility companies send electric crews to the affected region to restore power. Using the same multi-aid platform, Light Up Navajo sent crews to the Navajo Nation to help connect rural homes to the electric power grid for the first time. Through these professional teams, Light Up Navajo has come to be known as an initiative behind the people.

“Turning on a light bulb or the television for the first time in your home is a privilege for many in the Navajo Nation. We are working to ensure every Navajo family has electricity and access to broadband internet. We appreciate the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority for its leadership and service. The Light Up Navajo Initiative has been here behind us to make this all a reality,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

The American Public Power Association (APPA) has been lending support to organize the event. This year, NTUA welcomed 14 utility teams from 10 states who traveled to the Navajo Nation to work alongside tribal electric crews to connect homes to the electric grid. The teams assembled and connected electricity to over 137 homes for the very first time.

“The Navajo people are resilient and have lived without electricity or running water for generations. We are working to change that narrative and to hold the United States accountable for its obligation to provide broadband internet service, water lines, electricity lines, and more to the Navajo Nation during this pandemic. That is what I have been advocating for. We greatly appreciate the Light Up Navajo Initiative for standing behind our communities,” said Council Delegate Kee Allen Begay Jr. (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain).

The Light Up Navajo team traveled from Greenville, North Carolina, and is the last team to depart the Navajo Nation this week. Working in the Shonto and Navajo Mountain areas on shovel-ready projects, the last project they ended was a homestead for a 97-year-old elder.

When the crews finished extending electricity to her two-room home, she shared her heartfelt gratitude and shed tears as each lineman respectfully shook her hand and hugged her before departing.

“Our elders need our support, and we must do what we can to ensure they are safe during this pandemic. In partnership with organizations like the Light Up Navajo Initiative, we express our appreciation for being here during this critical time in history. We are grateful to our NTUA

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journeymen who are selfless and have been on the frontlines serving our communities,” said Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Dennehotso, Kayenta, Chííłchinbii’tó).

First executed in 2019, the Light Up Navajo Project represents an unprecedented partnership between a tribal utility company and the American Public Power Association (APPA), which has more than 2,000 community-owned electric utility companies in the United States.

“Access to the internet and basic electric power is necessary for our Diné students to grow and be prepared for college. This pandemic has taught us to be prepared and to take nothing for granted. Utility service and lighting up the homes of our families is important, and we are committed to making sure every Navajo home has electricity,” said Council Delegate Mark Freeland (Becenti, Lake Valley, Náhodishgish, Standing Rock, Whiterock, Huerfano, Nageezi, Crownpoint).

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