



The 24TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL
Office of the Speaker

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Construction complete for \$18.1 Million Bridge for the Nahata Dził Community

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PHOTO: Budget and Finance Committee Vice Chairman Raymond Smith Jr. addressing community members at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

NAHATA DZIL, Ariz. — Budget and Finance Committee Vice Chairman Raymond Smith Jr. of the 24th Navajo Nation Council was joined by President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Navajo Division of Transportation Director Garret Silversmith, Navajo Area Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Gregory Mehojah and local leaders from the Nahat’á Dził community for a ribbon-cutting dedication ceremony for the new two-lane Rio Puerco Bridge N2007 near Chambers, Ariz.

Located by Interstate 40 on Kerr McGee Road by the Navajo Travel Center, the new bridge replaces the old RT2015 bridge constructed in 1942. Around \$18,161,651 million has been allocated by the Federal Highway Administration’s Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) for the project.

“It was through our nation-to-nation relationship with the federal government that we obtained over \$18 million to complete this bridge for our Navajo families. The Nahat’á Dził community is grateful for the leadership of Navajo DOT, NECA, the BIA, and all the stakeholders that made this day a reality”, said Vice Chairman Raymond Smith Jr. (Klagetoh, Wide Ruins, Houck, Lupton,

Nahat'á Dził). “We also appreciate our former leaders for investing time to build this bridge-to-nowhere. It was because of Congress and President Biden that over \$11 billion for new infrastructure projects across Indian Country was invested so construction of broadband internet lines, roads, bridges, and water pipelines can begin.”

Nahat'á Dził Commission Governance President Darryl Ahasteen provided opening remarks and shared that construction began in April 2017. A concrete structure with nine support piers and three reinforced joint stakes, the N2007 bridge has a single pedestrian walkway for safety.

“It has taken over five years for this state-of-the-art bridge to be constructed for the community of Nahat'á Dził, Arizona. Now our families, farmers, livestock trailers, and school buses can safely travel through this area. We commend the leadership at the Navajo Division of Transportation and the Navajo Engineering Construction Authority for working during this pandemic and this time of inflation to complete this infrastructure project,” said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh).

According to the Navajo Division of Transportation, the N20007 bridge was completed under a 638 contract delivered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and created 50+ jobs with the Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority (NECA).

Vice Chairman Smith expresses his appreciation to Senator Theresa Hatathlie, Representative Jasmine Blackwater-Nygren, and Representative Myron Tsosie for working across the aisle to push forward \$55 million for the Navajo Nation in Legislative District 7. This includes \$10 million for N9402 road improvements for the communities of Lupton and Houck, Ariz.

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