



Council Delegate Charlaine Tso attends Westwater Electrification Celebration

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PHOTO: Hon. Council Delegate Charlaine Tso stands besides Utah Lt. Gov. Deidre Henderson at the Westwater Electrification Celebration at Utah State University overlooking the Westwater Subdivision.

BLANDING, Utah — Last week, Hon. Council Delegate Charlaine Tso (Mexican Water, Tółikan, Teec Nos Pos, Aneth, Red Mesa) attended the Westwater Electrification Celebration held at the Utah State University Blanding campus to celebrate the Westwater Subdivision receiving electricity for the first time.

On September 1, 2022, electricity was delivered to Westwater residents for the first time utilizing Blanding’s power grid as a “pass-through” for power lines installed by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) to the community.

To celebrate this collaborative effort between local, state, federal, and tribal governments, an appreciation dinner was held. Community members and project stakeholders made remarks on their experiences as well as their gratitude.

“Today has been a memorable and emotional day as many have put forth great effort and dedication to connect homes to electricity for our Westwater relatives,” said Delegate Tso. “This project has been a goal of mine to see through since the beginning of my term. When I saw homes light up, it brought joyful tears as I remembered that great things can happen when people work together for the betterment of our community.”

During the dinner, NTUA presented to the audience the project's history, challenges, and successes while highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the project's completion.

Also in attendance was Utah Lt. Governor Deidre Henderson, Utah State Representative Phil Lyman, Blanding City Mayor Logan Monson, Utah Navajo Development Council CEO, Curtis Yanito; and General Authority for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf.

"I would like to offer my deepest gratitude towards our Utah State leadership — especially Lt. Gov. Diedre Henderson — the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources Hydrologist; Ryan Barton, NTUA, the City of Blanding, and all who have put in time and effort to make this possible," added Delegate Tso.

In 1986, the Navajo Nation purchased 120 acres of land west of and adjacent to the City of Blanding in order to promote a cooperative water project which would be known as the Westwater Subdivision. The Navajo tribal members who lived in this subdivision have had no access to basic necessities and infrastructure since its creation.

"I commend Delegate Tso and the Resources & Development Committee for working tirelessly with our Utah Leaders and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to provide electricity to our Navajo families," said Speaker Seth Damon (Bááhaalí, Chichiltah, Manuelito, Red Rock, Rock Springs, Tséyatoh). "The 24th Navajo Nation Council will continue to work quickly to provide running water to the Westwater Subdivision."

In July, a Memorandum of Understanding was made between key stakeholders to fund construction for new public drinking water facilities which will provide safe and reliable potable water.

The collaborative efforts between the Navajo Nation, the State of Utah, NTUA, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the City of Blanding have made great progress to bring electricity to the Westwater Subdivision.

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