



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2023

25th Navajo Nation Council celebrates completion of Navajo Route 71 in Birdsprings community



PHOTO: Speaker Crystalyne Curley cuts the ceremonial ribbon to open N71 to local traffic.

TSIDI TO'II, Ariz. – On Wednesday, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council joined the Birdsprings Chapter in celebrating the historic ribbon cutting for the Navajo Route 71 (N71) road improvement project.

The project paved nearly seven miles of dirt road located south of Indian Route 15 and east of the Birdsprings Chapter and paved an access road to the Little Singer Community School, which serves over 100 local Navajo students. The project was funded by the Federal Highway Administration Tribal Transportation Program in the amount of \$10,528,910.

Before the ribbon cutting, 25th Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyne Curley (Tachee/Blue Gap, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tselani/Cottonwood, Low Mountain) told the chapter officials and community members that road improvements remain one of her top priorities.

“The Nation needs to change its strategy for going after federal funding for road projects. We only get a small amount of funding from the federal government to complete highways and the cost of paving per mile keeps increasing,” Speaker Curley said. “Together with the Resources and Development Committee (RDC), we’re strategizing ways to go after federal funding for Navajo roads.”

25th Navajo Nation Council RDC Vice Chair Casey Allen Johnson (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Birdsprings, Leupp, Tolani Lake) said the road improvement project was a vision of the chapter that came to fruition through the collective efforts of the Navajo Division of Transportation Road Maintenance Department, Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Region Branch of Transportation.

“There are a lot of roads out there that need to be graded, chip sealed, or paved but the process takes a long time. It’s my job to make sure that everyone is doing their part in getting these projects completed. Today, I am honored to be here as a guest of the chapter to see this project completed,” Vice-Chair Johnson said.

The event was hosted by the Birdsprings Chapter and included cultural performances and a blessing for the newly paved roadway by the students of Little Singer Community School.

During the event, former Council Delegate Thomas Walker Jr., who represented the Birdsprings community as a member of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, spoke about early advocacy for N71 and said the ribbon cutting is a historical moment for the community.

“During a chapter meeting, a resolution was proposed that created the Birdsprings Bridge Task Force. On that day, we started a campaign for N71 improvements because we needed a safe passage over the river. We worked closely with the Little Singer Community School Board,” Walker said. “We received a lot of support and I’d like to thank everyone involved.”

Navajo Nation President Dr. Buu Nygren attended the ribbon cutting event and said that he looks forward to the completion of many more road projects in the Western Navajo Agency.

The 25th Navajo Nation Council congratulates the Birdsprings Chapter on the completion of the N71 Road Improvement Project and thanks all the involved departments and agencies.

###