

**NAVAJO NATION
PRESIDENT BUU NYGREN**

**STATE OF THE
NAVAJO NATION**





State of the Navajo Nation, October 2026

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren

Yá'át'ééh, my relatives, Speaker Curley, members of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, Vice President Montoya, our judicial leaders, chapter officials, veterans, elders, youth, employees, and those across the Navajo Nation.

It is an honor to report to you on the work of our administration over the past quarter that has moved the Navajo Nation forward.

I begin by recognizing our elders, whose teachings guide us; our veterans, whose service we honor; and our young people, whose futures give this work its purpose. I also recognize the families who have endured loss and hardship, including those affected by recent floodings. We carry them in our prayers.

When we speak about the state of our Nation, we must begin with the people. We must ask whether families have a safe home. Whether an elder can turn on a light, obtain clean water, and receive care closer to home. Whether a school bus can travel safely, and whether an emergency responder can find the household calling for help.

These are the measures that matter. Today, I am pleased to report progress in each of these areas. We have made much progress but I also recognize the work that remains.

Let me begin with housing, because a safe home changes a family's daily life.

For our veterans, the latest September report from the Navajo Nation Veterans Administration shows 65 turnkey homes completed and delivered, with keys in veterans' hands. Another 51 homes are under active construction, while 48 completed homes are awaiting utility connections.

We are continuing to work until these homes have the services necessary for veterans to live in them safely.

The program also reported 101 veteran home improvement cases and 55 surviving-spouse home improvement cases. These efforts are supported by multiple resources, including the \$50 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding dedicated to veterans housing.

Navajo-owned BITCO is helping deliver modular homes designed for accessibility and independence. These homes include wider doorways, accessible bathrooms, heating and cooling systems, and household appliances. In remote locations, solar panels and cistern systems provide alternatives where conventional utilities are unavailable. The Sparrow Group is also constructing 32 veteran homes, with its work supported by a \$10.7 million contract.

Our veterans are feeling the impacts. In July, a Vietnam veteran in Hogback received a new home replacing a deteriorated residence with unsafe electrical wiring and inadequate water and wastewater infrastructure. More recently, veterans in Tohatchi, Tsaile, Twin Lakes, Cottonwood, Chilchinbeto, Black Mesa, and Kayenta received homes connected to water and utilities.

For each of these families, progress became a front door, a roof, and a place to live with greater security.

Our housing work extends to families throughout the Nation.

In Mariano Lake, two families received homes through the Community Housing and Infrastructure Department's ARPA initiative. Bathroom additions and renovations are also improving sanitation and accessibility for households that have lived without adequate indoor facilities.

More than \$100 million has been allocated through CHID and the Housing Improvement Program to expand housing opportunities. Since 2023, more than 4,500 homesite leases have been approved, helping families move forward with homes of their own.

We are also expanding the kinds of housing available.

The completed \$37 million Capital Vue Apartments in Window Rock provide 60 units across 12 residential buildings. These apartments offer new rental options for working families, students, young professionals, and elders, including accessible units. The construction workforce was reported to be entirely Navajo except for electrical work.

Looking ahead, the approved FY2027 Indian Housing Plan establishes priorities for an estimated \$130.6 million in federal Indian Housing Block Grant funding. It includes \$54.46 million for operating, maintaining, and modernizing existing housing and \$52.13 million to address housing needs through construction, rehabilitation, infrastructure, accessibility, and assistance.

These investments must continue moving toward homes our people can occupy and maintain.

A home also needs dependable water and electricity. That brings me to another essential part of our work.

More than 2,000 Navajo families have been connected to electricity during this administration. In Black Mesa, one family received a permanent connection through Light Up Navajo after initially relying on temporary solar power. A bathroom, cistern, and septic system were also installed, with final activation awaiting training and coordination.

That family's experience shows why housing and utility programs must work together.

We have signed ten intergovernmental agreements with New Mexico securing \$24.555 million for water infrastructure in Fort Defiance, Sanostee, Thoreau, Huerfano, Mexican Springs, Coyote Canyon, and Iyanbito.

These agreements support waterline construction, extensions, and system improvements. They include connections associated with the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and the San Juan Lateral, along with regional and community water systems.

I thank the State of New Mexico, Secretary Josett Monette, the Indian Affairs Department, the Legislature, our Council, and the chapter leaders and employees who helped secure these resources. The Division of Community Development will administer the projects as they move through design and construction.

We are also addressing infrastructure that has waited far too long.

After nearly two decades of delays, the Many Mules Water System is advancing toward operation for families in Hard Rock, Forest Lake, and Black Mesa. Partners finalized a plan for transferring operations from Peabody to NTUA, and the beneficial-use permit has been signed.

Operating agreements, rights-of-way, transfer documents, and monitoring improvements remain part of the work ahead. We will continue following those steps so that progress results in dependable water service.

Completed improvements are also moving into long-term local operation. The Nation approved transfers of the Kaibeto Low Pressure Zone Upgrade, NW Benally Waterline Extension, and Square Butte Waterline Extension, Phase Two. Together, these facilities represent approximately \$889,300 in investment, with NTUA assuming operations and maintenance.

Across our rural communities, the Division of Natural Resources reported rehabilitating more than 3,500 windmills, installing 51 stock tanks, restoring 118 earthen dams, constructing 26 miles of livestock waterlines, and drilling ten new wells since 2023.

Repairs have returned windmills in Dennehotso and LeChee to service. In Leupp, a solar-powered water station was confirmed to be operational on September 17 after equipment replacement and coordinated repairs.

We have also repaired 38 miles of irrigation systems along the San Juan River and improved the Hogback Tse'Daa'Kaan Agricultural Pump Station. These projects support farmers and help sustain our agricultural traditions.

Renewed leases preserve access to more than 18,800 acres of Arizona State Trust grazing lands through March 2036. Our partnership with Navajo Agricultural Products Industry has also helped distribute more than 49,000 food boxes to families.

Water infrastructure supports our homes, our livestock, our crops, and our ability to remain on our homeland. Protecting that homeland requires us to address environmental damage as well.

At Northeast Church Rock, a \$62 million cleanup project is preparing to relocate nearly one million cubic yards of radioactive mine waste into an engineered repository. General Electric will fund approximately 70 percent of the project.

This is wonderful progress for the Navajo Nation and reflects years of advocacy by those families that are affected and work between the Navajo Nation, federal, and state partners. We must continue listening to community concerns, including calls for waste to be removed from the Nation entirely, as we pursue protection for our people and groundwater.

Reliable water and safe homes must be connected by roads people can travel.

More than \$400 million has been approved for roads and transportation projects across the Navajo Nation. Navajo DOT reports maintenance increasing to more than 30 miles per chapter annually, more than 6,000 potholes repaired, and 74 employees hired over two years.

In Alamo, the \$7.3 million rehabilitation of 8.26 miles of N55 was completed June 19, several weeks ahead of schedule. The project reused existing pavement materials to strengthen the roadway and installed a new asphalt surface.

In Red Valley, we signed a \$17.2 million contract to rehabilitate approximately 10.83 miles of N13 toward U.S. Highway 491. The project includes pavement, bridge, culvert, and safety improvements.

Phase One of N9402 advanced through contract award and construction preparations. Supported by \$23 million in Arizona and Sihasin funding, the 8.52-mile project improves the route from Sanders toward Allentown, with a second phase planned toward Lupton.

At Greyhills Academy, a signed agreement advances \$2.2 million for the school access road and student drop-off area. This resolves an important step in a transportation issue that has affected the school and surrounding community for decades.

In Piñon, a \$627,000.60 contract advances N8030 road and drainage improvements. In Black Mesa and Forest Lake, an agreement with Navajo County provides up to \$55,000 in gravel for a targeted improvement on N8065.

We also approved a \$167.36 million Federal Highway Administration funding agreement supporting roads, bridges, planning, and infrastructure. These funds include FY2025 and FY2026 resources and approximately \$7.3 million for bridge improvements.

To strengthen maintenance capacity, Navajo DOT processed a \$962,574.68 purchase order for two six-wheel-drive graders for Pinon and Breadsprings, its first transaction under the \$120 million Síhasin transportation allocation.

A \$1.92 million federal appropriation secured through Congressman Eli Crane advances pavement improvements at Chinle airport, an important facility for medical transportation. The new Navajo Aviation Unit is also bringing air transportation and airport management into a coordinated structure.

Our roads carry families to school and work. They also carry the responders we depend on during emergencies.

In Shiprock, we celebrated the opening of the \$20.25 million first responders building. The 25,500-square-foot facility brings police, fire, EMS, and emergency management together, with operational space and twelve sleeping quarters for sustained response. Final inspections, compliance work, and highway access improvements remain.

The Shiprock temporary holding facility is also nearing completion. Once operational, it will reduce lengthy transports to Crownpoint and keep more officers available in the community. Our \$35 million Rural Addressing and Next Generation 911 initiative is modernizing emergency communications. The Kayenta Regional Communications Center reached its ribbon-cutting milestone, and the project is consolidating seven dispatch centers into two regional facilities in Kayenta and Shiprock.

Addressing teams covered all 110 chapters and collected 72,490 address points. Accurate addresses give dispatchers and responders better information to locate a home when every minute matters.

Resolution CJY-33-26 also designates \$162.7 million for the Shiprock Judicial Public Safety Complex and Dilkon Public Safety Building, with funding to become available through financing proceeds.

We are also investing in people alongside these facilities.

Seven officers graduated with Academy Class 62 in August. Navajo Police reported more than thirty new officers joining since this administration began. The department implemented an External Fund Salary Schedule and requested federal authorization for additional salary support.

Traffic Enforcement and K-9 Patrol have been merged into a Highway Patrol Unit focused on roadway safety and criminal activity along major routes.

A \$1.8 million automated license plate reader initiative is being deployed to support investigations and missing-person cases. The Department of Corrections is also advancing a body-worn camera system to strengthen accountability and documentation.

A signed mutual aid agreement with San Juan County establishes a framework for emergency law enforcement assistance while preserving Navajo jurisdiction and sovereignty. It awaits the New Mexico governor's approval before taking effect.

Recent flooding has shown how much we depend on coordinated response.

Our Navajo Chapters, Navajo DOT, NTUA, emergency management, health providers, housing programs, counties, and volunteers have worked to repair roads, restore water, deliver supplies, distribute sandbags, and assess damaged homes.

Six million dollars in chapter emergency preparedness and response funding supports local action. Housing teams have identified repair and relocation needs, including those of elders and residents with disabilities. We will continue following up with affected families as recovery proceeds.

The same commitment to reaching people guides our healthcare work.

The new \$170 million Echo Cliffs Health Center brings outpatient care closer to Western Navajo and neighboring communities. Its 123,000 square feet provide space for primary care, pediatrics, pharmacy, women's health, physical therapy, eye care, and specialty services.

Developed by Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation through tribal self-governance and funded by IHS, the project demonstrates what communities can achieve when they help shape their own healthcare. Ninety-two staff housing units are expected to be completed in December to support recruitment and retention.

A three-year, \$2.39 million public health nursing contract will also strengthen staffing and continuity of community-based care.

For our elders, \$7,954,605 has been designated for one-time \$250 hardship payments to eligible enrolled citizens who were at least 75 on May 31, 2026. Outreach, telephone assistance, and accessible application services must help that funding reach those it is intended to serve.

We are investing in young people's health as well. Wings of America and the Navajo Department of Health partnered to offer ten running and fitness camps combining exercise, nutrition, mentorship, and Native running traditions.

Our young people also deserve schools and connections that prepare them for the future.

The new \$68 million Tohatchi High School opened in July, replacing a campus that had served students since 1971. Modern classrooms, career and technical education spaces, science facilities, and an innovation hub expand learning opportunities.

Navajo Preparatory School broke ground on a \$30 million Indigenous STEAM facility integrating science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics with Diné language and culture.

This year, we recognized a record 183 Chief Manuelito Scholars from 81 high schools, preparing to attend 66 colleges and universities. The scholarship provides \$7,000 per academic year and recognizes both academic achievement and connection to our language and government.

To support learning and opportunity beyond the classroom, Resolution CJY-33-26 advances a four-year, \$244.6 million broadband plan. Together with its public safety allocations, the legislation represents \$407.3 million in planned investment.

The broadband plan includes 45 new tower sites, existing tower upgrades, and more than 700 miles of fiber, with a goal of reaching 88 percent of the Nation with 5G service by 2028. It also provides matching resources for approximately \$287 million in previously awarded BEAD grants.

Reported progress includes seven new towers, fiber construction for 30 additional chapters beyond fifty-two already connected, and approximately 560 homes connected in Ramah.

In Alamo, Western New Mexico Communications broke ground on a four-tower network that complements BEAD-funded plans to connect 393 households.

A separate \$446,874.90 contract will provide a new desktop computer system at each of our 110 chapter library locations. These investments support students, patients, workers, and entrepreneurs who need dependable access close to home.

That access also strengthens our economy.

The completed \$16.78 million Shonto Hotel provides 83 rooms and 28 jobs for Navajo people. It gives visitors another reason to stay and spend within our communities, while creating lease revenue and a future share of net income for the Nation.

At Four Corners Monument, more than \$3.57 million in improvements delivered an accessible restroom facility, utility extensions, and site work at a destination receiving approximately 250,000 visitors annually. Further planning will support vendors and future development.

A \$617,615 design and engineering contract advances improvements at Wheatfields Lake, including recreation amenities and fish habitat planning.

The \$16 million NTUA Red Mesa District Office brings utility assistance closer to Utah Navajo residents. The 72-megawatt Red Mesa Tapaha Solar Farm also represents an important renewable energy development on Navajo land.

Energy and workforce partnerships are helping prepare for future opportunities. Federal Energy Innovators and technical assistance are strengthening our capacity to evaluate projects and negotiate agreements. Workforce Development supports more than 1,200 participants in construction, technology, natural resources, transportation, and skilled trades.

A first ever agreement among the Navajo Nation, State of Arizona, and Hopi Tribe provides a framework for coordinating economic and workforce planning as the region transitions from coal dependence.

Local government facilities are part of that future. A \$13.88 million grant agreement advances the Shonto Government Services Complex. A new \$1 million federal appropriation supports the proposed Red Lake Chapter Complex, where additional funding is still needed. In Crownpoint, site preparation is complete for a modular facility that will replace five existing offices.

To complete these projects, our government must work together, follow through on its commitments, and deliver the services our people are counting on.

The enacted FY2027 operating budget provides \$585.06 million for government operations and essential services. Priorities include higher education, veterans assistance, employee staffing needs, and \$5 million for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women initiatives, victim services, data, and search and rescue.

Some Executive Branch funding needs remain unresolved. I ask the Council to provide funding so programs can fulfill their responsibilities. We also approved \$351,200 for election administration and accessibility, supporting preparation and accommodations that help eligible voters participate.

During the Buu 250 – a 250-mile trek through and across the Navajo Nation – our Navajo Nation employees and division directors brought resource fairs directly to the people and to our communities. Families spoke with staff about homesite leases, wells, and other services. That direct connection must continue beyond any single event.

As this Administration and the 25th Navajo Nation Council approach the end of our terms, I want to recognize everyone who has answered the call to serve our Nation. We have not always agreed, but we share a responsibility to the people who entrusted us with these offices. As I have said before, our remaining time must be spent moving projects forward, resolving unfinished business, and honoring our commitments to our communities. Our responsibility to serve continues until the final day in office.

I also encourage every eligible Navajo voter to participate in the upcoming elections. Our people deserve to be heard, and voting is one way we help shape the decisions that affect our homes, schools, healthcare, lands, and future. Make a plan to vote, confirm where and how you can cast your ballot, and help elders and family members access the information and assistance they need.

To our young people, especially those voting for the first time – your voice matters. The future of the Navajo Nation will be shaped by your participation, your ideas, and your willingness to carry our Nation forward.

I am honored to share these accomplishments. They belong to the Navajo people, the chapters that identified its needs, the Council members who helped secure funding, the employees who processed agreements, the partners who brought expertise, and the crews who carried out the work.

They belong to families who remained patient and continued advocating for their communities.

We have had many homes delivered, miles of roads repaired, healthcare facilities have opened, water systems have advanced, among many other accomplishments. We also have unfinished projects that demand continued attention. Our responsibility is to keep following through and keep showing up. We need to continue connecting the homes that are still awaiting utilities, complete the projects awaiting construction, support the employees serving our people, and make sure funding produces services families can use.

I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Navajo Nation President. I will continue working with our chapters, Council, employees, and partners to deliver for our people.

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