

NEWS RELEASE

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September 14, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navajo Nation and State of Arizona Renew \$17.5 million compact for Next 10 Years for Diné College

WINDOW ROCK – Arizona Governor Jan Brewer and Navajo Nation President Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr., with Diné College President Ferlin Clark and former Senator Jack C. Jackson, Sr. as witnesses, signed a compact which renews a \$17.75 million agreement for another ten-year period which provide \$1.75 million per year for construction of facilities and maintenance at the College’s main campus at Tsaille and its five Arizona centers.

“This is a great achievement for Diné College and the Navajo people,” said Diné College President, Dr. Ferlin Clark. “This partnership between the state and the nation for education benefits everyone.”

On Friday, September 11th, The Navajo Nation Council's Intergovernmental Relations Committee unanimously approved the compact, which was signed at a ceremony on Saturday, September 12th at the 63rd Annual Navajo Nation Fair.

“People often talk about the value of education, but too often they stop short of what is necessary to protect and advance it,” said Governor Brewer. “Diné College has done a wonderful job of advancing education for communities that might not otherwise have access. Its success over the past 10 years should be commended, and I am excited to continue the partnership between the State and the Navajo Nation for the funding of Diné College.”

Governor Brewer also thanked former state Senator Jack Jackson, Sr. “for his years of service to the People of Arizona and the generations of Navajo students and families who will be forever enriched by the educational options that your political courage and fortitude helped to make possible.” Prior to signing the compact, Governor Brewer asked those attending the signing to join her in the ongoing fight for education. “Continue to urge your elected leaders to follow the example of those like Senator Jackson,”

Governor Brewer said, “He knew how to put politics aside and work for the benefit of his constituents— all of you. This is how we can protect the seed corn of our future.”

Before attending the signing ceremony, Governor Brewer participated in the parade at the Navajo Nation Fair wearing a Diné College T-shirt accompanied by President Clark and Senator Jackson. The formal signing ceremony took place at the completion of the parade at the Navajo Nation Fair food pavilion. Speakers included Governor Brewer, Navajo President Shirley, Diné College President Clark, Delegate Larry Noble and closing comments from former Arizona Senator Jack C. Jackson, Sr..

“Education is the means to getting back to standing on our own two feet, as individuals, as families, as communities and as a nation,” President Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr., said at the signing ceremony at the fairgrounds. “That’s why it needs to continue to be number one in our priorities. As a sovereign nation, we need to be independent again. I really believe the only way to be is to complement each other, especially when it comes to our youth. Working together, we can’t go wrong,” President Shirley concluded.

Navajo Nation Council Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan said, “I know there were many of my colleagues who have contributed greatly to bringing this signing to fruition. Furthermore, I’d like to extend my sincere praise to the President of Diné College, Dr. Ferlin Clark, and his administration for their outstanding service to Diné College over the past 10 years. I also want to note that Diné College over a ten year period reported a flawless audit for the use of these funds provided by the state of Arizona.”

“The compact represents \$17.75 Million for Diné College for another ten years, at \$1.75 million per year to build new facilities, renew current facilities, infrastructure, and augment our overall budget from the Navajo Nation and the federal government which does not necessarily fund maintenance of facilities,” said President Clark.

“We envision new facilities, additions to current Arizona campuses and sites and repairs are needed for our aging buildings,” Dr. Clark continued. The main campus in Tsaile was constructed in 1971.

The effort began over a decade ago, said President Clark. On May 6, 1999, then Arizona Gov. Jane Dee Hull signed House Bill 2676 which amended Arizona's tax code to allow a portion of Transaction Privilege Tax revenues collected on the Navajo Nation to Diné College.

In addition, the College achieved accreditation for its two-year academic programs, and approval of a first bachelor's degree program in elementary education; paving the way for additional degree programs.

Council Delegate Larry Nobel, speaking on behalf of the 21st Navajo Nation Council, said, "Its very fitting that this signing occur today at the Navajo Nation fair and parade amongst our people so that many of you can see the doors of educational opportunity open and be invited to walk through these doors and become our next leaders. Higher education plays an important role in moving our people forward. The funding through the compact has allowed our students to acquire a Western education as well as build on the traditional knowledge base we have always possessed as Diné."

"These are milestones that are historic," said President Clark. "This has been a team effort. The challenges and obstacles have been great. As you know the State of Arizona and the country has been in a budget crunch, and for us to achieve and secure this funding is incredible and great for our college. I am elated and proud of this accomplishment. This could not have happened without prayers and the support of administration, faculty, students, the Board of Regents, and Navajo Nation and state leaders."

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