



# NAVAJO DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION

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## **Navajo DOT / ADOT Partnership Synopsis APRIL – JUNE 2013**

### **I. MAJOR ISSUES A. Challenges**

1. Closure of US 89 south of Page severely impacts communities for residents in Bitter Springs, Cedar Ridge, Marble Canyon and Navajo Springs.
2. US 89T/N20 Paving Project: Following the approval of Federal Highway Administration \$35 million of highway emergency relief funds to begin repairs of US 89 and the construction of 89T/N20, ADOT and FNF Contractor started the construction project on May 28, 2013.
3. ADOT is proposing an IGA with Navajo Nation for a new \$35 million road project improvement on Cameron US 89.
4. Tonalea Chapter: Chapter roads meeting on June 3 addressed heavy traffic concerns due the closure of US 89. Chapter to request ADOT to conduct a Road Safety Assessment beginning at Junction N21 and US 160, MP 341 to 344.
5. Shonto N6310: Final preliminary alignment meeting and walk through on N6310 preliminary design of 7 mile section conducted on April 30, 2013.
6. Coconino County has requested meeting with BIA & NDOT to discuss IGA that currently provides road maintenance services on 213 miles of BIA roads. This agreement has been funded by the Navajo Nation at \$167,420 with Coconino County contributing \$130,000 of SAFETEA\_LU funds.



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### B. Proposed Solutions

1. The Bitter Springs residents face tough times resorting to traveling 72 miles one way to Page instead of only 23 before the Big Cut Land Slide damaging approximately 500 ft of roadway. Traveling alternative roads for employment, school and emergency purposes means extra expenses for fuel, auto wear & tear, self employed arts/crafts vendors income loss from roadside vending. Residents are requesting ADOT for local access thru the Big Cut but due safety and liability issue, the request was denied. The Navajo Nation declared the State of Emergency on Sunday, February 24, 2013 at the Bodaway Gap Chapter and followed by the State of Arizona. The US 89 will remain closed for immediate future. ADOT has been granted \$2 million in immediate federal aid to investigate the cause of the land slide.
2. US 89T/N20 Paving Project. ADOT facilitated the paving project partnering workshop on June 5, 2013 with team partners including ADOT, FHWA, NDOT, BIA, FNF Contractor, and Rummel Construction, Inc. The main focus to partnering mtg is to establish and maintaining a trusting and cooperative team to restore essential traffic on or before August 15, 2013. Items included;
  - Incorporating FHWA for potential funding implication
  - Safety Program Administration: Implement & follow FNF's Safety Plan
  - Communicate Distribution: Establish project office at Bodaway Gap Chapter
  - Media Request Information: Proactive communication
  - Communication Point of Contact: Amy Rosar, Project Point of Contact
  - Bus Stops and Pullover: Incorporation design change to include turnaround and 9 potential bus stops
  - US 89/N20 Intersection: Aztec to evaluate for District determine of Intersection improvement need.
  - Grading work between Cattleguards/Gates & Roadway: Aztec to provide list of incidents



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- Livestock Congregation at Watering points, Windmill inside ROW: Owner to help assist contractor in keeping animals away prior to establishing fencing
  - Subcontracting on Navajo Preference: Encourage to utilize Navajo Contractors
  - Local Access only Adherence: Need enforcement by authorities to monitor local resident traffic only. Daily traffic is increasing and hard to work with.
  - Messages on 89: Change to remove N20 reference
  - NDOT Message Board: Pull message board
  - Develop action plan for environmental compliance: ADOT staff to utilize online actions necessary during weekly meetings
  - Role of Law Enforcement: DPS to work with ADOT/FNF to ensure safety of project area.
3. Cameron Project Construction plans include a roundabout interchange at Intersection SR 64 and US 89, multiple driveways with three pedestrian underpasses and a new bridge structure at the Little Colorado River. Under the terms of the IGA, NDOT will assume maintenance responsibility for sidewalks and lighting maintenance for three pedestrian underpasses.
  4. NDOT will assist Tonalea Chapter to request ADOT for RSA to improve safety and decrease potential motor vehicle crashes at Junction N21 and US 160. Previous RSA has been conducted which provided lighting system and additional signage. In addition, long range transportation study has been previously conducted for US 160 through ADOT's Planning Assistance for Rural Areas (PARA) program.
  5. Completed the preliminary design scoping meeting and project walk through on April 30, 2013 with iina ba consulting engineers, BIA Navajo Region, WNA Roads and NDOT. The project will be redesign in several areas as recommended by BIA.
  6. NDOT and BIA will set up meeting with Coconino and San Juan County in June 2013 to discuss how to fund the road maintenance program.



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### II. GOALS

#### A. Projects and Meetings

1. Navajo Agency NDOT forwarded the 15 mile Regional Transportation Plan to NDOT managers which established priority roads for road maintenance and construction activities for road projects.
2. Navajo Agency Council Meeting: NDOT will attend the all scheduled Agency Council meeting at all Agencies to provide overview and NN transportation activity update. NDOT will provide an update on the US 89T/N20 paving project which officially started on May 28, 2013.
3. New TTP Draft Regulations and Funding Opportunities: Requesting to have all NDOT Planners to participate in the workshop on the impacts of MAP-21 on the Federal Register in relation to the "National Tribal Transportation Program Facility Inventory", Proposed roads and Access roads, Tribal Funding phased plan for the RNDP and MAP-21's TTP Funding Formula and significant changes to Maintenance and Safety Funding.
4. NDOT continues to attend the Red Dog Gravel Update Meetings and collaborate with the team. Efforts are geared towards planning which roads to gravel during FY 2013 including review of archaeological and environmental clearance requirements.

### III. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### A. Executive

1. Construction of US 89T/N20 Paving Project: On April 7, 2013, the State Transportation Board approved funding of \$28 million to begin construction and paving on US 89T/N20.
  - a. Feb 22, Geological engineers begin assessing and determine the cause of the roadway to shift.
  - b. Feb 23, Coppermine Chapter resolution supporting FHWA, ADOT, BIA, NDOT and Coconino Co. to begin repairing US 89 and pave BIA N20 as a detour route to restore essential



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- traffic. Bodaway Gap and LeChee have also approved resolution to pave N20 as detour route for US 89.
- c. Feb 24, Bodaway Gap Chapter meeting, Navajo Nation President declares NN State of Emergency to assist the impact communities with medical emergency, transportation of school children and daily commuters for business.
  - d. Feb 27, BIA, NDOT, Federal Highway, Arizona DOT and Coconino Co. convened in ADOT Flagstaff District Office to discussed the US 89 closure.
  - e. Mar 5, US Dept of Transportation granted \$2 million as an immediate federal aid to be used to continue investigating the cause of the landslide. These funds were requested by ADOT and Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick.
  - f. Mar 7, following AZ Governor Jan Brewer's State emergency declaration, ADOT asked Federal Highway Administration for quick release of highway emergency relief funds and submitted an initial estimate to complete repairs of \$35 million
  - g. Mar 7, Federal Highway, ADOT, NDOT and BIA met at NDOT Complex to plan the detour route of N20 to restore essential traffic immediately. BIA and NDOT to maintain the 28 miles dirt road and while ADOT to work on US 89 repairs and the consensus of paving N20.
  - h. Mar 15, ADOT is allowing first responders including law enforcements DPS, County & Navajo Police, emergency responders/ambulance and fire departments to utilize bypass road section adjacent to the collapse area near the US 89 Big Cut.
  - i. April 1, 2013 Joint meeting hosted by three area chapters (Bodaway Gap, Coppermine and LeChee) convened at the Gap to update the community on paving N20 as a detour route to restore essential traffic immediately. Concerns from the community included ADOT to share more information on the design plans for the route, cattle guards, gates and livestock underpass.



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- j. FNF Construction progress on N20 Paving Project as of June 13, 2013: Road preparation is 6 miles; 4-inch Road base gravel material at 3 miles and 4-inch asphalt at 1.5 miles so far.
  2. NDOT received RDC approval of ADOT Easement for US 89T/N20: RDC approved a temporary construction easement for ADOT on April 30, 2013. The approval will allow ADOT to proceed with paving construction of N20 as interim detour route and restore essential traffic. RDC also waived surface compensation because the roadway will benefit Navajo communities.
  3. ADOT and FNF Contractor received Bodaway Gap Chapter approval on May 13, 2013 granting temporary easement and irrevocable Permit for Right of Way to establish a hot mix asphalt plant adjacent to US 89 MP 494.5 that is convenient location for paving N20.
  4. US 89T/N20 Ground Breaking Ceremony: The historic ground breaking ceremony was held in Bodaway Gap Community on Sunday, June 9, 2013. Dignitaries from FHWA, ADOT, Navajo Nation, Coconino County converged to commemorate the collaboration between the transportation agencies in paving N20 of 28 miles of dirt road for use as an emergency detour route.
  5. Dennehotso Deseret Meadows, on March 29, 2013 the chapter hosted a meeting for stakeholders for the proposed Desert Meadows Convenient Store, Housing, Clinic and other development. Updates on land clearance & land withdrawal, project funding source, infrastructure
  6. NDOT Partnership Steering Committee on April 16, 2013 in Flagstaff, AZ to increase highway partnership on improvements and maintenance of roads on Navajo lands. Transportation agencies agreed to maintain collaboration and partnership on road prioritization, assist in developing highway safety development plans and continue work session with ADOT, NDOT, FHWA and BIA on ROW issues.



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7. Western Navajo Agency Council Meeting in Tonalea Chapter: March , 2013, Mr. Paulson Chaco, NDOT Division Director and Ms. Jennifer Toth, ADOT Deputy Director for Transportation/State Engineer provided a brief overview of the US 89 Land Slide occurred near Bitter Springs-Echo Cliffs area on Feb. 20. Efforts to pave N20 roadway has spearheaded by ADOT, NDOT, BIA and FHWA and construction has started on May 28, 2013.
  8. SB1317 – Tribal Airports Qualify for ADOT –Aviation Fund Program
    1. On June 14, 2013, AZ House of Representatives passed SB1317 56-0-1
    2. On June 14, 2013, SB1317 was transmitted to the Governor for review and, anticipated, signature.

### B. Road Maintenance

1. The NDOT under the P.L. 93-638 Contract is maintaining 393 miles of BIA roads in the WNA and the agreement was amended to 6-months extension, expiring on June 30, 2013. NDOT has resorted to assist in daily road maintenance of increase traffic on N20 due to emergency and safety purposes. Providing road maintenance for other areas has been minimized.
2. IGA Agreement between BIA and Coconino County - The County also minimized its road maintenance services due to budget shortfalls but are working with BIA and NDOT in addressing road maintenance on the Navajo Nation's bus routes within Coconino County.
3. The WNA BIA Transportation Dept oversees the road maintenance program of 179 miles of asphalt roadways, 13.5 miles of gravel, and 1,402 miles of dirt roads.

### C. Road Construction

1. The BIA is administering the two road construction projects within the WNA including the N16 Navajo Mountain and N21 Red Lake to Kaibeto.



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- b. N16 Navajo Mountain: Project is approximately 9 miles from AZ- UT Stateline to the NM School campus. The alignment survey and ROW clearance is in process. Mobilized heavy equipment to the site, road construction is scheduled to begin in April 2013.
  - c. N21 (3)2&4 Red Lake to Kaibeto: The paving of 4.8 miles project is schedule to begin later part of June 2013. All base materials are in place but waiting to mobilize hot mix plan to the project site from Pine Springs project.
2. NDOT and BIA complete final field inspection of Twin Arrows Access Road in January 2013. Public Grand Opening of Twin Arrows Casino was on May 24, 2013.

### D. Projects and Meetings

1. Regional Transportation Plan Meetings: Successfully conducted meetings were held for all five agencies represented by the Navajo Nation Council. At each of these regional meetings chapters assisted in identifying the bus routes and public facilities project priorities for the Regional Road Improvement and Maintenance Plans. NDOT, with close coordination with the BIA DOT and counties, will begin prioritizing and rating to determine the routes for regular maintenance and road projects to be considered for improvement.
2. Western Navajo Agency LGSC Meet & Greet Newly Elected Chapter Officials: February 19, 2013, NDOT Deputy Director Mr. Ben Bennett, provided overview of NDOT functions responsibilities on transportation issues and challenges on Navajoland, federal requirements on updating TTIP priority road construction, improvements, bridges and road maintenance with BIA.

### E. Traffic Studies

1. Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) were set on BIA N20 following the US 89 roadway collapse. Traffic recorder was set approximately 150 ft. south of end of pavement of N20. The traffic volume study conducted resulted in significant volume





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increase of 365 ADT after road closure on Feb 20, from 122 ADT to 487 ADT.

#### IV. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN ROAD IMPROVEMENT AND MAINTENANCE MEETINGS

1. Agency Planning Meetings all completed and finalized chapters priority roads and submitted the document to NDOT Central Office.
2. Agency Office is sorting all dirt roads identified in the priority road maintenance into three system category including roads maintained by Navajo DOT 638, Counties and BIA.

#### V. CHAPTER ASSISTANCE

1. Agency Staff continues to collaborate and assist Chapters as needed as a liaison between NDOT and Chapters.

#### VI. BIA NAVAJO AGENCY

1. NDOT Planning Office is assisting Navajo Region BIA Roads Dept to update ADT on high priority and high project roads.

#### VII. COUNTIES

- A. Navajo County: continue collaboration with the Red Dog Gravel Projects in Kayenta, Chilchinbeto and Shonto communities and attend monthly scheduled meetings.
- B. NDOT has approved the transfer of SAFETEA\_LU funds in Navajo County to the Kayenta and Pinon Unified School Districts previously submitted to NDOT to fund road maintenance activities on school bus routes. Each school district will receive \$25,000 annually to maintain school bus routes using their own forces.

#### VIII. PROJECT UPDATES

1. Red Dog Gravel Project:
  - a. 5 Chapters in Navajo County
  - b. Placement of Red Dog Stockpiles for spot graveling
  - c. Navajo DOT Compliance Staff will be monitoring the project during preparation and gravel placement.