

# Navajo Nation Partnership Annual Meeting

October 22, 2015 – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Navajo Division of Transportation Complex, Mentmore, NM

## NOTES

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The annual meeting for the partnership among the Navajo Nation, Navajo Division of Transportation (NDOT), Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Hopi Tribe, Coconino County, Navajo County and Apache County was held to share information about the partnership, share 2015/2016 plans and updates regarding transportation, provide an opportunity for all partners to network and to obtain commitment and direction from leadership in support of the partnership. The notes on the following pages are a summary of the meeting. These notes and the presentations given will be posted on the Arizona Tribal Transportation website:

<http://www.aztribaltransportation.com/nnp/index.asp>

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### Attendees:

Alton Jo Shephard, NN Legislative Branch  
Angelina Barber, NDOT  
Arlando S. Teller, NDOT  
Audra Merrick, ADOT  
Ben Bennett, NN Legislative Branch  
Bonnie Opie, ADOT  
Calvin Castillo, BIA  
Calyan Begay, NDOT  
Carl Slater, NDOT  
Charlie McDermott, Armstrong  
Contrella Dixon, ADOT  
Dallas Hammit, ADOT  
Danny Shurter, Navajo County  
Darryl Bradley, NDOT  
David Silversmith, NDOT  
Davis Filfred, NN Legislative Branch  
Dianne Kresich, ADOT  
Earl Sombrero, Tsah Bii Kim Chapter  
Edith Morgan, NDOT  
Eric Deschene, Navajo Nation  
Eric Oscarson, Navajo Nation  
Evalina Begody, Tsah Bii  
Floyd Roehrich, ADOT  
Garret Silversmith, BIA DOT  
Haymond Cleveland, NDOT  
Herby Larsen, BIA  
Homero Vela, Navajo Nation  
Howard P. Draper, NN Land Dept.  
Jason Yazzie, NDOT  
Jesse Thompson, Navajo County  
Joey Apache, Steamboat Chapter  
Jonah Begay, NDOT  
Julius Tulley, NDOT  
Karen Benally, NDOT  
Karla Petty, Arizona Division, FHWA  
Kee Yazzie, ADOT  
Kendra Tso, Apache County  
Kevin Biesty, ADOT  
Lance Begaye, NDOT  
Larry Joe, NDOT  
LeAnne Roy, NDOT  
Leona John, NDOT  
Lynn Johnson, ADOT  
Marco Sells, NDOT  
Margie Begay, NDOT  
Marlinda Littleman, NDOT  
Marty Ashley, ONTC  
Misty Klann, Federal Lands Highway  
Myra (Rusty) Rothman, ADOT  
Norman Bowman, NDOT  
Paula P. Claw, Apache County  
Ray Russell, NDOT  
Rayelita Haley, NDOT  
Rebecca Benally, San Juan County UT  
Robert Black Jr., Navajo County  
Robert Frazier, BIA DOT  
Romare Truly, Arizona Division FHWA  
Ron Shutiva, NMDOT  
Ruth Greenspan, ADOT  
Scott J. Tkach, Apache County  
Sharon Pinto, BIA  
Sheldon Kipp, BIA/DOT  
Taft Blackhorse, NDOT  
Thomas Bendly, NDOT  
Tim Dalegowski, Coconino County  
Timothy Y. Begay Jr.  
Tom White, Apache County  
Veronica Blackhart, NDOT  
Victoria Lee, NDOT

Facilitator: Michele Crank, ADOT Office of Partnering

Notes: Bonnie Opie, ADOT Office of Partnering

**The next partnership steering committee meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2016**

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Jason Yazzie, Senior Transportation Planner for Navajo DOT, Western Agency was the Master of Ceremonies for this meeting.

### Invocation

The invocation was provided by Margie R.S. Begay, Senior Transportation Planner for NDOT, Fort Defiance Agency.

The facilitator challenged each person to meet others and get business cards from those they meet and the person who gathers the most business cards will be given a prize at the end of the day.

### Introduction of Dignitaries

Jason Yazzie, Senior Transportation Planner for NDOT, Western Agency introduced several key attendees.

### Welcome Address

The welcome address was provided by Darryl Bradley, Acting Division Director for NDOT. Darryl introduced the Resource and Development Oversight Committee Chair, Alton Joe Shepherd. Alton spoke about the importance of partnerships and how much he appreciates everyone who is in attendance. He spoke about the importance of making improvements for the children, especially regarding school bus routes. He believes it is important to continue to collaborate from government to government. He asked the group to consider how to incorporate the nine priorities of the Navajo Nation into the partnership and find ways to get funding to improve school bus routes. NDOT is working on implementing a long-range transportation plan.

Darryl told the group that transportation initiatives and legislation all fall under the authority of the Resource and Development Committee.

### Partnership Updates

#### **Navajo Division of Transportation (NDOT)**

- Darryl Bradley, Acting Division Director for NDOT provided updates from his office. Key points made were:
  - MAP-21 is very data driven. NDOT is playing catch up in meeting the requirements of MAP-21.
  - NDOT is developing its own Highway Safety Plan. It will be reaching out to partners for input.
  - The US 89 landslide really showed how important this partnership is. Because of the partnership, this road was repaired in record time.
  - NDOT really appreciates the help from partners with gravel for roads and other improvements.
  - Three applications for TIGER grants were submitted this year. This effort was a success due to help from partners.
  - We all need to look for ways to collaborate and stretch funding to be more effective.

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- Reports for the various departments in the NDOT were also given. Those departments and key points were:
  - Arlando Teller, Department Manager for Airports Department spoke about the accomplishments of his group. In 2013, they were able to have state statutes amended to allow funding for tribal airports. This was completed with support from ADOT and FAA. ADOT provided a \$2 million grant for the Tuba City airport, which was the first grant to a tribal airport. Arlando then gave a presentation that included airport information such as the mission statement, maps, background, features and on-going projects for the Navajo Nation Airports. This presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).
  - Taft Blackhorse, Department Manager for Project Management Department spoke about how large the Navajo Nation is, how many roads it has and the fact that his group is responsible for compliance to Navajo and Federal laws regarding these roads such as historic preservation, engineering and planning. The group he leads includes equivalents to SHPO, EPA, Fish and Wildlife. They are working on a programmatic agreement with FHWA in regard to Section 106 compliance. The Navajo Nation has sacred sites everywhere and his staff is responsible for relocating human remains. Even though traditionally they don't believe they should touch human remains, they know this is part of their job and they do this with respect. A Project Assessment is in progress with Fish and Wildlife that will allow NDOT to complete road activities in areas where there are threatened and endangered species and follow all required regulations.
  - Ray Russell, Department Manager for the Department of Roads spoke about their role to provide transportation services to the Navajo Nation. During the time of the Navajo Nation fair, the BIA told the NDOT that responsibility for monitoring the yellow water pollution coming down the river would be given to NDOT. This meant 16 hour days for employees but they took on the job. They also took over responsibility for gravel pits. This group has created close to 10,000 miles of dirt roads, of those, 8,000 miles are under federal funding. It has installed 23 culverts.
  - Karen Benally, Department Manager for the Planning Department, gave a presentation about the NDOT restructuring and the implementation of processes to make planning for transportation successful. This group is federally funded through FHWA. This presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#). Tom White, Supervisor for Apache County suggested that the county could help with planning efforts.
  - Norma Bowman, Program Manager for the Highway Safety Program, gave a presentation highlighting how this group is responsible for promoting and educating about highway safety. The focus is on education and, in particular, for the young people to protect their future. The Highway Safety Program efforts all lead to the four E's: Engineering, Education, Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services. This presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).
  - Darryl Bradley, Acting Division Director, spoke about what wonderful staff the Division has and the important job they have. The Division is growing and improving and it is learning from partners. Darryl appreciates the willingness of the partners to help NDOT learn, in particular about funding options. Darryl spoke about the value of the relationships in the room and knowing each other.

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### Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT):

Dallas Hammit, Deputy Director for Transportation and State Engineer, provided updates on behalf of the ADOT Director's Office. His presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).

- Key points were:
  - The importance of meeting people and building relationships. The relationships that have been built through this partnership allowed the successful rebuilding of US 89 and N20.
  - ADOT is changing. Equipment is being modernized and computerized.
  - ADOT has reorganized to be more efficient and to better serve the state.
- Audra Merrick, ADOT District Engineer for the Northcentral District (formerly Flagstaff District), gave a presentation about completed, under construction and future projects for her District. Her presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).
- Lynn Johnson, ADOT District Engineer for the Northeast District (formerly Holbrook District), gave a presentation about the completed, under construction and future projects for his District. He mentioned that his definition of success is getting something done on the ground for the public. His presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).

### Federal Highway Administration (FHWA):

- Karla Petty, Arizona Division Director, provided updates on behalf of FHWA. Key points were:
  - Karla expressed her appreciation for the partnership, seeing how many people are in attendance and hearing from Navajo DOT staff on the progress they are making.
  - Last year the partnership celebrated the completion of N20. This year we are celebrating the opening of US 89.
  - Reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Program is in progress. Proposals are in progress. However, it is doubtful that they will pass before the previous authorization expires. In that case, an extension will be granted and hopefully the new authorization will pass soon.
  - FHWA is always working on doing things faster, better and smarter.
  - Karla talked about Norma's presentation and how Norma and her staff bring two more E's: enthusiasm and energy. They have also been instrumental in gathering data to help develop safety plans.
  - Karla talked about the Project Assessment for Section 106 that they are working on that is statewide and encouraged participation.
  - She spoke about the NDOT planning department and encouraged them to participate in the planning process through NACOG.
  - Karla closed with a safety message. We all want our families to make it home safely every day. In addition to what we all do professionally, in our personal lives we all need to do our part to remind everyone about safety.

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### Federal Lands Highway:

- Misty Klann, Tribal Transportation Coordinator, provided updates on behalf of Federal Lands Highway. Key points were:
  - The tribal transportation program is a major part of transportation funding for the tribes. Misty is part of the team that administers these funds. There are several ways these funds can be administered. Her group provides oversight for the tribal transportation program.
  - The Navajo Nation has entered into an agreement with FHWA. She asked that they remember the program is for the tribes and they need to seek input for the people in completing their long-range plans to determine how best to allocate the funds.

### Navajo Nation President's Office:

- Eric Deschene, Staff Assistant, spoke on behalf of the Navajo Nation President. He told the group how important this partnership is to the Navajo Nation. Partnerships are critical to meeting the goals the President has of creating jobs and infrastructure. Regardless of who you are or what you do, we all need transportation. He thanked the group for everything they do to support transportation.

### Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA):

- Sharon Pinto, Regional Director, provided updates on behalf of the BIA. Key points were:
  - It is important that we continue to work together and involve the archaeology, biology and Army Corps of Engineers staff in projects to ensure the NEPA process is being followed.
  - It takes a good amount of time to get from planning to construction. The planning process NDOT is beginning to use in conjunction with FHWA will make a difference.
  - Sharon introduced the BIA staff that was present.
  - She thanked ADOT for taking the lead in establishing this partnership and helping the Navajo Nation find ways to fund transportation projects.

### Navajo County:

- Jesse Thompson, Supervisor for District II, gave a presentation about the current projects in Navajo County and the various things they are working on. There was substantial coordination between Navajo County, NDOT and the other partners to get these projects completed. Jesse introduced the Navajo County staff that was present. His presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).
- Robert Black, Jr., Supervisor for District 1, spoke about the Red Dog gravel partnership. This partnership involved hauling and placing approximately 40,000 tons of gravel to improve 25 miles of road. The project should be completed by April.

### San Juan County, Utah:

- Rebecca Benally, Commissioner, spoke about the dirt roads in Utah on the Navajo Nation and what they are like before and after rain, snow and wind storms. The goal is to improve the standards of these roads. This can be accomplished much quicker through partnerships.

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### Apache County:

- Tom White, Supervisor for District II, gave a presentation about Apache County. This presentation covered the mission of Apache County and the areas it covers on Navajo Nation. He introduced the staff that was present. His presentation is available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).

### Coconino County:

- Scott Tkach, County Engineer, provided updates on behalf of Coconino County. Key points were:
  - Coconino County passed a sales tax that is allowing levels of maintenance to be increased on Navajo Nation lands.
  - It has also committed funds to allow capital improvement projects.
  - The County is working on a contract with the Nation that will allow funds to be transferred from the County to the Nation. It would like to work together on developing a 5-year program.

### Hopi Department of Transportation:

- Michael Lomayaktewa, Director, was unable to attend but provided updates that are available on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).

The Navajo Department of Transportation presented information about several topics. The five presentations can be found on this webpage: <http://www.aztribaltransportation.com>

- Karen Benally, Department Manager, gave a presentation about the Navajo Department of Transportation Long-range Transportation Plan and Tribal Transportation Improvement Plan.
- Darryl Bradley, Acting Division Director, gave a presentation with further information about the Tribal Transportation Improvement Program.
- Ray Russell, Department Manager, gave a presentation about the Navajo Nation Funding and Budget Plan. A couple of questions were asked:
  - Question: Is the \$.18 tax collected by Navajo collected in lieu of the State excise tax?
    - Response: Yes.
  - Question: Can the money be used for any purpose as long as it is transportation related?
    - Response: Yes, except for parking lots.
  - Questions: Would it be good to have a discussion about the different funding options?
    - Response: Yes.
- Ray Russell, Department Manager, provided a handout about the Gravel Pit Study.
- Darryl Bradley, Acting Division Director gave a presentation about the Navajo Nation Fuel Excise Tax Program.

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### Closing Comments

Darryl Bradley thanked everyone for their participation. He recognized all of the connections that are made through the partnership and how valuable those connections are in times of emergencies. He told the group that seeing the processes the partners have in place helped NDOT to know what processes it needed to implement to improve the way it does business.

A BIA representative asked about the ADOT District changes and how the changes will affect the National Bridge Registry. This was listed as an action item and Lynn Johnson will find out.

An attendee recommended that the partnership discuss internal processes regarding how grants are processed and contracts awarded to determine ways to streamline processes to ensure funding is not lost.

Another attendee suggested that crash data reporting would be another good topic for these meetings.

A list of all attendees was requested. The list has been provided on the first page of these notes and contact information has been posted separately on the Arizona Tribal Transportation [webpage](#).

### Benediction

The benediction was provided by Marco Sells, Senior Transportation Planner from the Chinle Agency.

### Recognition

Thank you to the planning group: Arlando Teller, Karen Benally, Alberto Peshlakai, Myra Rothman, Jaime Torres and NDOT staff.

Thank you to the Navajo Division of Transportation Planning Department for providing refreshments, lunch and use of the NDOT business center.

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The table below is a summary of the suggested actions from the meeting. These suggested actions will be discussed at the next steering committee meeting. If a responsible person is not listed, the steering committee will determine who will be responsible.

Suggested Action	Responsible Person
Identify if the changes to the ADOT District boundaries will affect the National Bridge Registry	Lynn Johnson
Discuss internal processes regarding how grants are processed and contracts awarded to determine ways to streamline processes to ensure funding is not lost	
Crash data reporting would be another good topic for these meetings.	

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### Participant Meeting Evaluation Summary

Scores are based on 29 evaluations. Comments are taken from the evaluation forms exactly as written.

#### 1. How valuable was this meeting for you?

Average Rating 4.16 out of 5

##### What about this meeting was most valuable to you?

- The information presented from various DOT entities.
- Meeting people and learning the issues from a different perspective.
- Networking with the various Partners. Meeting new participants to the Partnership. Reconnecting with Partnership members, learning what others are doing, planning to do and have completed.
- Networking opportunities.
- Hearing what other Agencies are doing to assist Partnership.
- Sharing of information from various partner groups, willingness to partner, and networking opportunities between all groups.
- What projects are being proposed for the Navajo Nation by the partners.
- Networking with individuals from other organizations.
- Interaction with other Agencies and professionals.
- Collaborating with other DOT Agencies.
- To learn that there is still a Partnership effort in place, and that Navajo DOT is still active in. Navajo DOT was established on Partnership without it we would not be in this beautiful Senator Pinto Conference Center.
- Further understanding the processes and project scope for work for work being done in my Community's and in the future.
- Attendance by the various entities was the most valuable, representation of the collaboration existing within Navajo DOT Partnership. AZDOT seems to be very much engaged with the efforts by the Organizations.
- Networking and touching basis on progress.
- Meet new people.
- Networking and meeting new people. Re-connecting with members.
- Personnel from Government Agencies, ADOT, Apaches, Navajo, FHWA, Chapter representatives were present.
- Connecting with other Partners in the roads business.
- Valuable to plan for the future doing business on Navajo Nation.
- Meeting Partners from the Coconino, valuable information from FHWA.
- To meet other stakeholders and partnership.
- Presentations, meeting other Partners with ADOT. I'm a new employee with NDOT so information was very informative.
- Updating from the NDOT Departments, especially the funding and budget plans.
- Giving information of successes and challenges for all the Partners. This will help in outlooks for future collaboration.

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- Hearing reports from all Partners on what they have done and what will be done in near future.
- Breaks-It is amazing on how much work gets done. There is a lot of horse power in these meeting.
- Networking, NNDOT-goals and processes, other County reports, Division reports.

### 2. What would have improved this meeting?

- Maybe have some door prizes? Raffle?
- Nothing! Great meeting!
- For the public to hear how the partners are making roads safe for the people.
- Have partnership meeting twice a year instead of annually.
- Adding a session where the Steering Committee facilitated a discussion on specific issues they should address at Quarterly meetings.
- Break-out sessions to strategize on project agreement.
- The meeting needs to be two hours shorter.
- More time for presenters.
- One day is adequate, however more time is needed for the amount of attendees.
- Networking.
- Time.
- Suggest not changing the agenda time mid-stream.
- No improvement, length of time and information presented was just right.
- NDOT Division Director-what is NDOT Vision? What does ADTO, FHWA, BIA, and Counties need from us to enhance Partnership? Overview of accomplishments is good, but good to know-where do we go from here?
- More open space in back of the room. People walking in and out was disruptive.
- Opportunity for **WMDOT** to present a summary of our departments activity with NNDOT.
- None noted-but some type of meeting need to be held with the Local Chapters.
- Detailed report on how much funding's for each State, Counties, Chapters form NNDOT.

### 3. How do you rate the Facilitator?

**Average Rating: 4.33 out of 5**

- Facilitator Michele Crank did an awesome job.
- Meeting discussions flowed at the right pace.
- Michele did an excellent job in developing the agenda and keeping us on track (particularly doing the morning session).
- Good work getting needed resources, both people and places/things together to put this meeting on. Excellent job keeping meeting going.
- The meeting was well organized and executed. Nice job Michele.
- Very good job at bringing many participants from many different agencies together. Good job with organizing many aspects of the meeting and keeping everyone on schedule.
- She is very assertive and keeps you moving forward.
- Michele did a good job working with NDOT in scheduling partnership meeting. She and her staff did good in having presenters stay in their allotted time.
- Awesome!

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- Well-spoken and intelligent.
- The facilitation was well monitored to attempt to keep the event on track. Jason should have told more jokes!
- Keep it timely.
- Ms. Crank runs a fantastic meeting and her ability to communicate with NDOT/ADOT Partnerships is worth a lot to the Partnership.
- Team Partners are doing well.
- Very good facilitation, Mr. Jason Yazzie kept everyone on schedule.
- Who was the facilitator? M.C. and facilitator is the same thing. But both did good.
- The facilitator did a good job.
- Ms. Crank did awesome in keeping folks on track.
- Should give WIFI password.
- Michele you're great facilitator-respectful of people's time.

#### 4. How do you rate the effectiveness of this team?

**Average Rating: 3.38 out of 5**

- Seems to have individual priorities and objectives for each entity, perhaps need to have unified goal-Navajo Nation LRTP.
- Well done! Mr. Yazzie was a great MC!
- This Partnership and the relationships established over the years was critical to the successful recover and completion of US89. The Partnership is as strong as ever and the willingness to continue the Partnership will serve the area for years to come. "Together we are able to deliver"
- Great help in developing conduits to each group which are a great help in times of need.
- Team is very effective. Encouraging to see the original Partnership grow substantially over the past several years.
- Outstanding, focused on improving reservation roads.
- All presenters are professional with a common goal-Transportation, improvement on Navajo Nation. Thank you!
- Everyone seems to be working well together and proactive in prioritizing work.
- Great group!
- A lot of new ideas.
- The Navajo DOT/ADOT Partnership is an important relationship for all involved. It allows open dialogue and connectivity of information sharing.
- Most of the issue are Federal Regulations issues, that can't be waived, but trying to streamline.
- Didn't know about the Steering Committee, an update from managers would be good.
- Good.
- Great working relationship and collaboration with the different agencies.
- From today's session, a lot of planning has been given this partnership meeting.
- Information using data, for Data-Driven decision.

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### 5. What other comments or suggestions do you have?

- Food was great.
- This is my first Navajo Nation Partnership meeting, I look forward to next year.
- Keep the momentum going with the Partnership through relationships and leveraging resources and working together, transportation improvements will be a reality. “Best Navajo Partnership meeting ever. The level of participation was wonderful. Thank you Michele.
- Great turnout!
- Looking forward to implementing projects on Navajo.
- Very good meeting.
- All the partners need to stay in contact with each other and should have Partnership meetings twice a year instead on annual basis.
- All aspects of the Transportation System was covered-planning, funding, construction, maintenance, safety to get from point A to point B; however, we need directions or guide to get there. Rural addressing should also be a part of this Partnership. The addressable location are based on route 6 mileage.
- It was nice to see the high level commitment from the Organization.
- Good job! NECA should be present at this meeting.
- Provide map in advance for facility location. Good job Jason Yazzie!
- Keep it going!
- Awesome coordination Michele!
- I was under the impression that this meeting was between ADOT and NDOT, but other Counties were invited. It is good, but the meeting should have a narrow focus on NDOT/ADOT.
- Comment short for each presenter. Card of presentations on table would be good. Posters on attending departments participants.
- As mention, no Chapters (not many) were here today.
- Good job.
- A Tri-State DOT meeting with NNDOT facilitating meetings for Partnership and collaboration, so we do not have to re-invent the wheel. 1 day is good.