



The Navajo Nation  
Yideeskáądi Nitsáhákees

DR. BUU NYGREN *PRESIDENT*  
RICHELLE MONTOYA *VICE PRESIDENT*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 16, 2024  
CONTACT: George Hardeen, Public Relations Director  
Email: george.hardeen@navajo-nsn.gov  
Cell: 928-810-9174

## Navajo President Buu Nygren presents Spring 2024 State of Navajo Nation Address to 25<sup>th</sup> Council

*Spotlights rise in tax revenue, increases in revenue generation, stop uranium transport*

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Tribal revenue increases, protection against uranium contamination and potholes figured prominently in Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren’s State of the Navajo Nation address on Monday.

using ARPA funds, the rise in tribal tax revenue by 42% in 2023, and the filling of 2,500 potholes by the Navajo Department of Transportation.

He opened his address by welcoming 176 electrical workers and linemen from 26 utilities from around the country.



*Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren and Navajo Nation Vice President Richelle Montoya present to spring 2024 State of the Navajo Nation address to the 25<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council on Monday*

They arrived on the Nation April 6 with trucks and equipment for “Light Up Navajo 5,” a mutual-aid program of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and the American Public Power Association.

This year, the program expects to extend powerlines to wire and electrify 300 Navajo homes for the first time.

In his quarterly report to the Navajo Nation Council, the President cited the purchase of the historic Goulding’s Lodge in Monument Valley, the summer completion of the Shonto La Quinta Hotel

Regarding Navajo Nation tax revenue, the President reported that the Navajo Tax Commission collected \$66.7 million, 59% of the commission’s projection for the fiscal year that began last Oct. 1.

“This is good considering we haven’t entered the high-spending summer season.” President Nygren said. “I remain optimistic that with more Americans traveling again, our sales tax will out-perform FY2023. In the second quarter of FY24, we collected \$28,399,648 in tax revenue.”

In 2023, he said, tribal tax revenue rose 42% to \$143.2 million.

The President said more tribal revenue will come through last year’s purchase of Goulding’s Lodge in iconic Monument Valley. He reported the Nation will close on the resort’s sale on April 23, and thanked the Council for its foresight and dedication to ensure the Nation’s future.

Goulding’s “is expected to bring an annual net income of over \$7.3 million to the Nation,” he said. “With Monument Valley as its backdrop, Goulding’s is a world-class property with 152 guest rooms, RV grounds, campsites and a restaurant.

This purchase ensures the retention of 280 local jobs and local purchasing from the area artists.”

He said he expects this major property to grow to take advantage of the ever-expanding Southwest and Navajo Nation tourism industry.

The President asked the Council to work with his office to develop position statements to call for the cleanup of the Nation’s 523 abandoned uranium mines and to address renewed uranium mining at the Pinon Plain Mine south of the Grand Canyon and within the newly-designated *Baaj Nwaavjo I’tah Kukveni* Grand Canyon National Monument.

“My concern is the transport of uranium ore on public highways across the Navajo Nation,” President Nygren said. “Navajo EPA is working with

the Coconino County Board of Supervisors and the U.S. Forest Service to receive advanced warning of any uranium ore shipments from the mine.”

In March, President Nygren and Navajo Nation Council Speaker Crystalyn Curley wrote to

***“My concern is the transport of uranium ore across the Navajo Nation. Navajo EPA is working with the Coconino County Board of Supervisors and the U.S. Forest Service to receive advanced warning of any uranium ore shipments.”***

**– Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren**

President Biden to ask for his support to halt uranium transports across Navajo lands, citing it as an “unacceptable risk to the wellbeing of our people and the sanctity of our land.”

Just before presenting his address, the President learned that Council Delegate Casey Johnson sponsored legislation to make a similar request to President Biden, Congress and relevant federal agencies.

On veterans, the President thanked the Council’s Health, Education & Human Services and Budget & Finance committees for their guidance of the Navajo Veterans Administration to identify a company, Eagle Sun, to help speed processing of veterans’ checks.

He reported that Veterans Affairs Director Bobbie Ann Baldwin launched Talking Circles in Fort Defiance, Chinle and Tuba City where veterans can gather with other vets to talk about their military experiences that they don’t talk about with others.

“This provides a safe space for our veterans come together, talk, heal and process their wartime experiences with those who have had similar experiences,” President Nygren said. “Between eight to 30 veterans usually attend the Talking Circles.”

Last Thursday, he said, the Navajo Nation became the first tribe in the country to apply for a U.S.

Veterans Administration grant of \$54.2 million to complete the Chinle Warriors Nursing Home for elderly Navajo veterans.

When finished, it will be a two-story, 45,850-square-foot, 60-bed nursing facility. Its central building will represent a traditional hogan in shape and function.

For two years, the President said, the Nation has been without a director to lead the Navajo Veterinary Management Program. That ended in February when the Division of Natural Resources hired Dr. David Manuelito.

“Under Dr. Manuelito's leadership, and with our MOU with the University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine, I look forward to young veterinarians returning home for their first two or three years after graduation to hone their veterinary skills,” President Nygren said.

He also thanked New Mexico Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez for securing \$1 million to help build a new Crownpoint animal shelter to replace the former one that was condemned and closed.

The President reported that on March 14 and 15 officials from U.S. EPA Region 9 and Washington visited Cove Chapter to announce that the Lukachukai Mountain Mining District would be listed on the National Priority Listed to become the Navajo Nation's first Superfund site for uranium mine cleanup.

“This will give our people the protection against radiation exposure they have begged for over the decades with little response until now,” he said.

He said the Navajo Nation Washington Office continues to advocate congressional representatives to extend the bipartisan support of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Reauthorization Act earlier passed by the U.S. Senate to soon be considered in the House.

Building roads and making road improvements has been a top Nygren-Montoya Administration priority since taking office in January 2023. The President said the Navajo Department of Transportation's conservative estimate is that it's filled 2,500 potholes in the last two months.

In addition, NDOT donated four pallets of pothole material to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Fort Defiance to help its roads department address the universal problem.

Closing his address, he reported that the Navajo Department of Justice Water Rights Teams are nearing completion of two water rights settlements and asked for the Council's unanimous approval as a sign of unity.

One settlement is for Arizona water rights and the second is for rights to the Rio San Jose and Rio Puerco Basins in New Mexico.

“Securing water is not for us but it is for the generations of Navajos yet to be born,” he said.

###