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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mihio Manus, Sr. Public Information Officer
Office of the President and Vice President
The Navajo Nation
Phone: (928)871-7728
Fax: (928)871-4025

TEESTO LEADERS SAY PRESIDENT BEGAYE KEPT HIS WORD



President Russell Begaye signs legislation for \$2.9M to construct a new chapter house in Teesto. President Begaye was joined by Vice President Jonathan Nez along with county, chapter and council representation.

TEESTO-On Sunday, Nov. 8, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye signed a \$2.9 million dollar legislation for the Teesto Chapter Construction Project.

At the signing ceremony, President Begaye told the Teesto Chapter that he had promised leadership and the community that he would sign this legislation.

"I want to keep my promise to you, the Teesto Community," he said. "We want to see a nice building out here."

Vice President Jonathan Nez said the legislation is a token of

appreciation from the Navajo Nation for what local leaders have done for the Nation.

"They probably never wanted anything in return. But today, we're giving back," he said. "Today is a celebration for you. Today is your day."

President of Teesto Chapter, Elmer Clark said he is elated the chapter will finally have a new location. Clark said President Begaye has been very direct in addressing the legislation.

"He told us to go back and do a stand-alone legislation. If it's suc-

“We are very elated and very thankful. I think President Begaye gave us a new vision and a higher level of objective.” - **Teesto Chapter President Elmer Clark**

cessful, I'll sign the legislation," Clark said.

The legislation has been reviewed and put forth before Navajo Nation Council two times without success. Most recently, during the Fall 2015 Session, the Council voted unanimously to approve the

legislation.

"It's the only piece of legislation that was passed through council unanimously," said Council Delegate Seth Damon.

Damon thanked President Begaye for keeping his promise and coming to Teesto for the signing



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Teesto has been without a chapter house for over a year when the previous facility had burned to the ground. In the meanwhile, the community has been running meetings and facilitating programs out of the Veterans Building.

According to Delegate Lee Jack Sr., the chapter house caught fire during the 2014 Navajo Nation Fair.

“It happened on Saturday night at 2 a.m.,” he said. “The local residents noticed the chapter was on fire and they contacted the authorities. However, by the time the police and fire department responded, the chapter house was gone.”

Delegate Jack Sr. said Teesto and the surrounding communities don’t have a fire department in the area, which is another challenge the area faces.

Teesto Chapter President Clark said when the chapter house burned, the community lost a critical reference point. The previous facility housed the Community Healthy Representative, the senior citizen center and the new meal program. It also served as a post office.

“Everything was lost overnight,” Clark said. “I tell my community that I literally lost my direction. That’s how much it impacted the community and myself.”

With President Begaye’s signing of the chapter replacement legislation, Clark said the community looks forward to a better future.

“We are very elated and very thankful,” he said. “I think President Begaye gave us a new vision and a higher level of objective.”

President Begaye said he would like to see a youth center and multipurpose building included in the plans for the new building. He emphasized the need for the community to connect with Teesto youth and feels a youth center would support this need.

Teesto Chapter Vice President LeRoy Thomas expressed his gratitude to the Begaye-Nez administration and said it was a historical day for the community. Thomas noted that the Teesto Community has an extensive veteran community that will benefit from the new building.

“Thank you Honorable President Russell Begaye. You have a good administration,” he said.

Funding for the replacement facility has been a long time coming and with the signing of the legislation, the Teesto community can look forward to a new chapter house.

“The community was really devastated by what happened,” said Delegate Jack Sr. “I really appreciate the President for coming out and keeping his promise. The people are really delighted and happy about it.”

Delegate Jack Sr. said upon President Begaye’s signing of the legislation, chapter leadership would meet with a construction company to start the process of building a new chapter house.

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