



## The Navajo Nation Council - Office of the Speaker

Contact: Joshua Lavar Butler, Communications Director

Phone: (928) 871-7160

Cell: (928) 255-2946

Fax: (928) 871-7255

[joshualavarbutler@navajo.org](mailto:joshualavarbutler@navajo.org)

[joshualavarbutler@yahoo.com](mailto:joshualavarbutler@yahoo.com)

[www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org)

February 13, 2008

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**



A Navajo delegation consisting of Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan, Navajo Nation Council Delegates, and Legislative staff attended the Indian Day festivities at the New Mexico State Legislature on Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2008 in Santa Fe, N.M. Pictured in left photo is Council Delegate Tommy Tsosie, New Mexico Lt. Gov. Diane Denish, Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan, Young Jeff Tom, Sandra Jeff-Ruiz, Herman Morris, and Dr. James J. Davis, Jr. In right photo, Speaker Morgan is pictured with Alvin Warren, Secretary of Indian Affairs. (Photos by Joshua Lavar Butler)

### **Speaker Morgan and Council Delegates attend Indian Day in Santa Fe**

*Navajo issues discussed with Lt. Gov. Diane Denish*

**SANTA FE, N.M.** – The Honorable Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan (Iyanbito/Pinedale) and a Navajo delegation consisting of Navajo Nation Council Delegates, Legislative staff, and Vice President Ben Shelly attended Indian Day festivities at the New Mexico State Legislature on Wednesday, Feb. 13 in Santa Fe.

Speaker Morgan addressed Navajo issues to Lt. Gov. Diane Denish and Alvin Warren, Secretary of Indian Affairs, during a breakfast meeting held for tribal leaders at the state capitol. Later in the day, Morgan also addressed the New Mexico State Senate.

Speaker Morgan was welcomed to Santa Fe as the leader of the Navajo Nation and as the head of the Navajo Nation Council, the tribe's governing body.

Issues such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, public safety, economic development, and tribal sovereignty were discussed, in hopes that they will be high priorities for the upcoming year in the New Mexico State Legislature.

Speaker Morgan thanked the New Mexico State Legislature for including the Navajo Nation in their decision-making process and said that "the Navajo Nation wishes

to improve communication with the state and to strengthen its working relationship.”

“Tribal nations need to be unified when dealing with issues regarding water, our resources, education, and healthcare,” Speaker Morgan explained to Lt. Gov. Denish. “We have many common issues and that is the reason why we should work together to help each other to improve the quality of life for our Native people.”

“We need to create strong partnerships,” Speaker Morgan said. “It is through these partnerships that we create a strong sovereign-to-sovereign relationship between the state and the tribes.”

Speaker Morgan also mentioned that the New Mexico Council Delegates should make capital outlay requests their main priority when working with the state of New Mexico.

Secretary Warren thanked Lt. Gov. Denish for hosting the breakfast meeting and also recognized the tribal leaders for their continued efforts to build and strengthen relationships with the state of New Mexico.

Secretary Warren said that the “Lt. Governor is interested in issues effecting New Mexico’s tribes.”

Denish has been heavily involved in various initiatives that will eventually benefit the Navajo Nation. Programs such as the pre-kindergarten initiative and the Children’s Cabinet are programs that will eventually benefit education on the Navajo Nation.

The Lieutenant Governor reported to Speaker Morgan that the state has approved \$1.5 million for capital improvement projects for the areas on the Navajo Nation. Denish explained that this is extremely significant, especially during a year when budget revenues are low.

“The battle for dollars has been intense,” Lt. Gov. Denish explained to Speaker Morgan. “We have made sure to pay attention to projects that are already in place on the Navajo Nation – a new capital outlay listing should be available within 24 hours.”

Lt. Governor and Secretary Warren encouraged the tribes to learn how the state system works and to utilize all resources to help their tribes.

Morgan further explained that the Navajo Nation has set up a matching funds system, in which the tribe puts \$2 million aside to match state funds. This system has been successful thus far and has recently resulted in the construction of the new Head Start building in Pinedale, N.M.

“We need to push these Navajo issues forward,” Speaker Morgan said. “Our state-tribal relationship with the state of New Mexico is growing stronger and we need to continue to engage with one another.”

“As Native Americans, we have a lot of common issues,” Speaker Morgan said to the Pueblo governors and other tribal leaders in attendance. “We should face these issues together as a unified force – we all have to work together.”

Speaker Morgan explained that the Navajo Nation has taken a leading role in advocating for issues that affect all Native Americans. Morgan referenced the advocacy that the Navajo Nation has undertaken at the national and international levels.

Speaker Morgan and Lt. Gov. Denish are looking forward to strengthening their working relationship. Morgan thanked the Lt. Governor for all the work she has done on behalf of New Mexico’s tribes and encourages her to schedule more visits to the Navajo Nation to see the tribe’s needs first hand.

For more information, contact Joshua Lavar Butler with the Navajo Nation – Office of the Speaker at 928-871-6384.