

SEPTEMBER 6, 2023

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS MUSEUM
FOR THE NEW MEXICO MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



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In October of 2022 I was privileged to present to this Committee a report of the Navajo Code Talkers Museum with respect to the SB 365, AWARDING CAPITAL OUTLAY FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1,054,000, for a Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center. A concluding Call to Action was offered, seeking to engage both the New Mexico Legislature and the Navajo Nation government.

Today, again at invitation of the New Mexico Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, the Navajo Code Talkers Museum Board of Directors enjoys the opportunity to provide current mileposts and approaching benchmarks.

I am the Son of Navajo Code Talker Roy Hawthorne; my father served the original Navajo Code Talkers Association as both President and Vice-President. My father also served as a paratrooper during the Korean war, with the 11th Airborne Division, ultimately retiring medically from wounds sustained in combat against the Chinese. I served in the United States Army as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division, and with the 2nd Infantry Division in South Korea. I ended my military career with the Army Reserve in Albuquerque as radio section chief for a MASH unit.

For this Committee, my mission today is two-fold; I am to provide a concise informational update for the Museum efforts, that I might validate the trust shown in the overall legislative confidence in financially endorsing a Navajo Code Talkers Museum, and I am to guarantee your confidence in me, and the Board of Directors, that we may continue on this mutually agreed upon vision.

The outline provided shall equip our conversation this morning.

CHALLENGE

- IGA #609-19-D2594; original award of \$1.05M
- Conflicts arising out of intra-agency oversight of funds; process,
 - ✓ Ownership issue; NM Constitution, Article IX, Section XIV
 - ✓ Previous contractual award; NDOT
- NCT(M) inclusive voice by previous Navajo Administration
 - ✓ Initially relegated to spectator
 - ✓ Identity crisis; dissolved NCTA, new NCTM
- Capacity and resource development
 - ✓ Corporate staff
 - ✓ Administrative presence

PROGRESS:

- Successful reauthorization of SB 365;
 - ✓ NM MVAC October 2022
 - ✓ Navajo Administration change; January 2023
 - ✓ Eighty percent expenditure deadline; December 2022
 - ✓ Fund Reversion date; June 2023
- Negotiating land contract with Navajo Nation; favors anti-donation restrictions.
- Engaged Project management team; JackRabbit, Ltd

OPPORTUNITY:

- HB 505
 - ✓ \$6.4 M additional investment
- Bureau of Reclamation ROW and gate valve construction
- Proposed land contract with Navajo EPA
- Preliminary negotiations with Blackstreak Holdings, Page, Arizona for Hotel/Conference Center
- Navajo Nation Administration vision
- University Of New Mexico Graduate School Architecture Studio

Presented in this narrative and discussion are observations and intentions necessary to the continued progress of the Navajo Code Talkers Museum. Through intergovernmental approaches and cooperation such historical and cultural institutions can be realized. The constituent-based partnership of the entire New Mexico legislative assembly benefits when initiatives are mutually planted and cultivated.

The Navajo Code Talkers Museum Board of Directors again extends gratitude to the New Mexico legislative assembly.