



Tsídii To'í celebrates SÍhásin Fund heavy equipment motor grader delivery under Nation-wide investment in local needs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 13, 2021



PHOTO: Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. joined Tsídii To'í chapter representatives and community members to accept their new heavy equipment allocation from Resolution No. CJA-01-21.

TSÍDII TO'Í (BIRDSPRINGS), Ariz. — On Friday, Council Delegate Thomas Walker, Jr. (Birdsprings, Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake) of the 24th Navajo Nation Council joined community members to receive the delivery of a motor grader on behalf of the Tsídii To'í community.

The chapter's heavy equipment purchase was one of over 300 pieces of equipment supported by the Navajo Nation's approval of Resolution No. CJA-01-21, which includes the SÍhásin Fund Chapter Heavy Equipment Expenditure Plan.

"We are excited to equip the Tsídii To'í Chapter with this motor grader to be able to respond immediately when others cannot due to our community's remote location and weather," said Walker. "We are also looking forward to using this piece of equipment to build up our other chapter communities in this part of the southwest region of the Navajo Nation through collaborative partnerships."

Walker also thanked the local community members for their input on the purchase and the staff

of the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development (DCD) for providing their expertise and guidance through the process of purchasing chapter heavy equipment.

The purchase will assist the chapter with maintenance and periodic improvement of Navajo Routes 71 and 2, which lead to the new Tsídii To'í school and Highway 60 to Winslow and are dirt roads. The chapter previously used donated road grader equipment that has since stopped working.

During discussions on the legislation, Council delegates noted the dangerous and sometimes impassable road conditions in many Navajo chapter communities that create barriers for public safety and emergency vehicles to respond to emergency calls.

The chapter's heavy equipment request was previously made under the Navajo Nation Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Fund chapter support appropriation. However, due to time constraints, heavy equipment purchases were not approved under the Navajo Nation CARES Fund.

The Council used the Navajo Nation SÍhásin Fund to address the need for chapter heavy equipment in response to the ongoing coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

James Adakai, Capital Projects Management Department (CPMD) manager, was also present and said, "I want to thank the Council's leadership in passing CJA-01-21 and for paying attention to the equipment needed at the chapter level and for implementing community-wide initiatives."

Adakai noted the delivery marks the halfway point for the department's 255+ deliveries of heavy equipment to all 110 chapters under the expenditure plan.

Heavy equipment company Caterpillar representative Greg Smith attended the distribution reception and expressed his confidence in the machine's ability to maintain the chapter's dirt roads. He described the motor grader's capabilities with its power-ripper and moldboard attachments included in the purchase.

Smith said: "[The motor grader] is freshly serviced and ready to do everything you need to do with fixing wash boards for the next 25-30 years. Some of these machines still work well up to 40 years."

Tsídii To'í Chapter Manager Marjorie Sangster applauded the coordination and advocacy of the Council and Walker to ensure the heavy equipment was available to meet the needs of the chapter's constituents.

Sangster said, recently, she has had to make decisions regarding water delivery to remote chapter residents. "I've had to tell the water truck driver 'do not take the water truck on these roads' because it breaks down every other day," said Sangster. A majority of chapter residents haul water regularly for domestic and livestock use, with some who have relied on the chapter's existing heavy equipment at greater rates during the pandemic.

"I want the new Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to come out and drive some of these roads to see how our constituents manage without water and electricity," added Sangster.

Following the ceremony, Caterpillar representatives began operation and safety training for three Tsídii To'í Chapter staff who will be capable of operating the motor grader, as needed by the

chapter and local residents.

In the district, other chapters will be receiving four backhoes, towing trailers and other equipment. A full list of approved chapter heavy equipment purchases is available as an exhibit to CJA-01-21 through the Diné Bibeeshaz'áanii Binaaltsoos (DiBB) online legislative tracking system at: <http://dibb.nnols.org/>.

Chapter heavy equipment deliveries also continued Friday with the delivery of a new back hoe to the Chilchinbeto Chapter.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Byron C. Shorty, Communications Director, bcshorty@navajo-nsn.gov, (928) 287-2085

Timothy E. Benally, Public Information Officer, timothybenally@navajo-nsn.gov, (928) 380-6121