



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Council members partner with Navajo-owned company to provide renewable solar energy for Navajo elder



PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Big Navajo Energy president Dory Peters (right), and homeowner Modesta Jones plug in a lamp following the installation of a solar/wind battery based power system in Cameron, Arizona on Dec. 28, 2016.

CAMERON, Ariz. – On Wednesday, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) visited the home of Modesta Jones, a lifelong resident of the community of Cameron, as a Navajo-owned business known as Big Navajo Energy installed a solar/wind battery based power system that will provide electricity for Jones and her family for the first time in decades.

Council Delegate Walter Phelps (Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Leupp, Tolani Lake, Tsidi To ii) who represents the Cameron community, along with Speaker Bates arranged for the company to donate the equipment to provide electricity for the homeowner who has lived in the Former Bennett Freeze Area community her entire life without electricity and running water.

“Solar voltaic installations for families off the grid are the next best thing for access to power and this is a great gift for the family. I know they are truly grateful for it,” stated Delegate Phelps, who added that he wanted to help an elderly community member when explaining how he selected the family to receive the donated equipment.

Big Navajo Energy, a 100-percent Navajo owned renewable energy company, is in the process of donating solar/wind-battery based power systems and Solar Heaters systems provided by SolarThermiX to families living in the FBFA in cooperation with the Navajo Nation Council. The system is intended to provide basic amenities such as lighting and heating for the winter season.

Big Navajo Energy president Dory Peters said that access to renewable technology will be one of the solutions to bring electricity to more than 18,000 families on the Navajo Nation that do not have electricity.

"It is very difficult to access power of any sort on parts of our reservation. The renewable energy generators that we offer will provide a welcomed solution for our people," said Peters.

Three families who reside the FBFA were selected by Council members to receive renewable energy generators and heaters as a way of addressing one of the Council's top priorities – to bring clean and renewable energy to the Navajo Nation.

Speaker Bates said he was honored to join the family as their home became the first to receive a new energy system, also noting that the Office of the Speaker has also invested in the system that provide renewable energy and heating for the office.

“Basic infrastructure remains a tremendous need for families living in the Former Bennett Freeze Area and this provides a solution for families to consider,” said Speaker Bates.

Cameron Chapter president Milton Tso, also joined the family on Wednesday and said he hopes that more families take advantage of the technology. He added that he looks forward to partnering with the company to train local community members to learn more about the energy system and to provide maintenance for the systems.

Although the family lives approximately half a mile from the nearest electrical line, the chapter estimates that it would cost over \$40,000 to extend the power line to the homesite. Peters said the energy system provides a more affordable solution. Peters added that the company is in the process of adding more renewable generators this year in the Former Bennett Freeze Area.

Big Navajo Energy has access to portable renewable energy generators that are military grade and commercial industrial 1 to 200 megawatt size solutions that only require wind, solar, biomass or geothermal to power them. For more information on the energy generators or the direct, emissions free solar thermal heating units, please visit bignavajoenergy.com.

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