



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo veteran receives new home through Council action



PHOTO: Council Delegates Nelson S. BeGaye and Alton Joe Shepherd, along with Speaker LoRenzo Bates celebrate the new home of Woodrow Jim Wagner Sr., in Round Rock, Ariz. on April 23, 2016.

ROUND ROCK, Ariz. – Members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council were invited to a house warming celebration for Woodrow Jim Wagner Sr., one of the first Navajo veterans to receive a new home through legislation that was passed by the Council in September 2013.

On April 23, Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Council Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye, and Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd joined Wagner, a U.S. Army veteran who served in World War II and the Korean War, as he and his family celebrated the completion of the two-bedroom home, which also includes a living room, kitchen, and bathroom amenities. The home, built in the small community of Round Rock, also includes the installation of plumbing and electricity.

Council Delegate Nelson S. BeGaye (Lukachukai, Rock Point, Round Rock, Tsaile/Wheatfields, Tsé Ch' izhi) thanked the family for the invitation and for supporting Wagner, adding that he felt honored to be a part of the creation of the veteran's housing project.

"I would like to show my appreciation to the Wagner family for hosting such an amazing event. It is extraordinary to see the young people supporting and showing love for their grandfather. This is how we should celebrate every veteran," stated Delegate BeGaye.

In 2013, the Council approved legislation sponsored by Delegate Shepherd to amend the Navajo Nation Veterans Trust Fund, to provide funding for the construction of 75 homes annually over a period of five years in each of Nation's five agencies.

"Our veterans need homes to return to when they serve our country. They are our protectors and we need to protect them when they return home. Thus, as leaders we work hard to thank and support our veterans," stated Delegate Shepherd.

Delegate Shepherd also sponsored legislation that was approved by the Council in April 2015, which provided funding for power line projects for over 60 families throughout the Navajo Nation. Delegate BeGaye sponsored an amendment to the bill that approved approximately \$33,000 for a power line and water line for Wagner and his family.

"I am thankful to be a part of this success today. Council has work very hard to make this happen and it's amazing to see it come to life today," added Delegate BeGaye.

Speaker Bates pointed out that Navajo veterans remain a high priority for the Council as stated in the "One Nation, One Voice" agreement signed by the three branches of government.

"How can we support our veterans? That was the question my colleagues and I asked ourselves when we heard the pleas from our veterans. Therefore, Delegate Shepherd decided to make a policy change to build homes for our warriors. We want to provide the basic needs for our veterans, which includes a home with infrastructure," stated Speaker Bates.

The Council members present the family with a plaque and a Navajo Nation flag to display in their new home, while thanking Wagner for his commitment to serving and protecting the Navajo Nation and the United States.

"Our father will enjoy his new home. The Wagner family would like to thank the Navajo Nation Council on addressing the needs of the veterans. This is a day we will never forget as a family," stated Wanda Clark, daughter of Woodrow Jim Wagner Sr.

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