



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nov. 14, 2007

CONTACT: GEORGE HARDEEN
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
OFFICE – 928-871-7917
CELL – 928-309-8532
pressoffice@opvp.org

Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., Navajo Vice President Ben Shelly pleased U.S. 491 improvement project to start moving forward

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., said Thursday that he appreciates New Mexico Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught's correspondence to the Navajo Nation, and that, like her, he is pleased with the progress that's been made to get the improvements to U.S. Highway 491 underway.

"No one person or entity can do it all by themselves," President Shirley said. "All of us use this important road, and, by working together, I'm pleased we'll see the needed improvements to it."

On Nov. 2, Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly met with Secretary Faught in her office to present the Navajo Nation proposal to resolve issues that had held up progress on the road improvements from Shiprock to Ya-Ta-Hay, N.M. The Nation has proposed contributing \$8 million over four years to the project, in addition to \$2 million in in-kind services.

"We've done our part from the executive branch," Vice President Shelly said. "We went leader-to-leader, government-to-government. Now it's up to our Navajo lawmakers, our oversight committees, to approve the process. The ball's in their court now."

Secretary Faught told the Vice President she was pleased with the proposal. On Friday, she sent a letter to

*"I am very pleased
that we have successfully
resolved negotiations
for this project."*

– N.M. Transportation Secretary Rhonda Faught

the President and Vice President to reiterate the Transportation Dept.'s satisfaction.

"I am very pleased that we have successfully resolved negotiations for this project and look forward to working with you further so that improvements to U.S. 491 can be constructed and the highway made safer for the traveling public," she wrote.

Next week, the Navajo Nation Council Resources Committee will consider the terms and conditions for approval and, when approved, the \$100 million project will be able to begin.

###