

Diné College awarded \$5M for Shiprock math and science building

Written by By Bernie Dotson For the Sun
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TSAILE, Ariz. — Diné College's Shiprock campus will get a new \$5 million math and science building, thanks to Gov. Susana Martinez signing off March 7 on a bill approving the issuance and sale of more than \$165 million in general obligation bonds.

The bond amount includes statewide projects such as senior citizen facility improvements, libraries, higher education institutions and tribal schools. The dollar figure is part of New Mexico's bigger \$6.3 billion annual budget. Voters go to the polls in November to approve the bonds, which determine if the proposals move ahead.

School officials have been pushing for a new health facility for years, waiting their turn at a share of annual appropriations.

"This is definitely good news," Mark Bauer, Ph.D., and a science professor at the Shiprock campus, said. "This helps in a lot of ways and makes things much more convenient for students and teachers."

Bauer said new labs are something that will be welcomed, noting Diné College's recently established bachelor's degree program in public health. He said the new building could lead to more students and offerings in more courses related to the College's bachelor's of science degree in biology.

Director of Projects Operations at Diné College Delbert Paquin said the proposed building measures about 17,000-square-feet and will be one-story and sit on the South campus directly west of an already existing classroom building. He said a bidding process for construction should start around May 2019.

"It's something that we're looking forward to," Paquin said. "It will be a tremendous addition to our campus."

Of the 112 capital outlay projects OK'd by Martinez for general obligation bonds, 18 are around

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the Navajo Nation and total \$11.9 million. Navajo Technical University, whose main campus is in Crownpoint, received \$3.7 million toward the construction of a new academic building and site improvements.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye lauded state lawmakers and Martinez for supporting big-ticket tribal projects.

“These funds will allow the Navajo Nation to move forward on projects that benefit senior citizens and students,” Begaye said. “Youth and elders are two of our Nation’s priorities, and through the sale of bonds we can ensure brighter futures for both.”

Diné College was started in 1968 as the first tribally-controlled institution of higher learning in the U.S. The College’s main campus is located in Tsaile, with satellite campuses in Chinle, Window Rock, Tuba City — and Crownpoint and Shiprock in New Mexico.

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