





WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - The “Buy Authentic Navajo” brand cuts to the heart of Navajo business. Navajo Arts and Crafts Enterprise has a unique business model that was established by the Advisory Committee of the Navajo Tribal Council.

The Advisory Committee enacted a resolution titled, “Approving the Navajo Arts and Crafts Enterprise Payroll Deduction Plan for the Navajo Tribal Employees,” by a vote of 7-5 on Nov. 14, 1979.

Resolution No. CAN-112-79 planted the seed for economic development that continues to grow

today. Elijah Muskett, NACE CEO, said the payroll deduction program has flourished over the decades, and now includes customers from tribal enterprises, schools, private businesses, hospitals and other entities. “The payroll deduction customers are our most important shoppers,” he said.

Through this process, the tribal enterprise has fostered a cottage industry of individual Navajo artisans, numbering more than 300, who sell their crafts to NACE for the company to sell to customers.

Beyond this pro-Navajo business aspect, NACE also buys from 10 Navajo-owned companies that also provide products to fill store shelves. “When you look at NACE from a business perspective, we are truly one of the only Navajo companies that is actually buying and selling authentic Navajo items,” Muskett said.

At the present time, the company is an enrolling new customers and re-engaging previous clients with the payroll deduction program. The program is based on employee salary, which workers can charge against at NACE store locations and have the payment deducted from their payroll.

Many people have said the program is very convenient for the purchase of finished goods, which are handcrafted items such as jewelry, traditional and ceremonial items, moccasins, pottery and Navajo rugs, cradleboards and peyote fans to name a few. Customers often shop at NACE when preparing for puberty ceremonies or for traditional Navajo weddings.

Most recently, the enterprise worked with the 24th Navajo Nation Council for the blessing of traditional Navajo shields that were returned to the possession of the Navajo Nation from the Field Museum in Chicago decades ago.

Whatever the scenario, customers shop at NACE to Buy Authentic Navajo.

“NACE maintains high standards to ensure the quality and origin of the items,” Muskett said. “Everything that is offered is authentic Navajo.”

The Horned Moon Apparel has also grown alongside the enterprise, affording Navajo families to purchase clothing and shoes. Horned Moon Apparel has expanded over the years since its initial clothing and footwear offerings in the early 1990s. Previously, the apparel arm of the enterprise focused on western attire and boots.

Today, name brands such as Levi's, Skechers, Timberland, Doc Martins and Carhartt are being sold because of customer demand. Standards such as Wranglers, Ariat, Pan Handle and other vendors also continue to remain popular with customers.

Muskett said NACE is planning on selling Nike products in their stores in the near future.

"By offering Nike products, we can further help Navajo families who have children who participate in school athletics. This would also be a chance to address the burgeoning healthy and active lifestyle that has inspired many families across the Navajo Nation," he said.

Parents have said the payroll deduction program is a tremendous help when it comes to shopping for school clothes for their kids.

If you have not taken advantage of the payroll deduction program at NACE, now is your chance to sign up and shop at eight store locations across the Navajo Nation. NACE has locations at Cameron, Chinle, Kayenta, Navajo National Monument, Tuba City, Window Rock, all in Ariz.; and Crownpoint and Shiprock, in N.M.

Over the past several weeks, customer accounts representative Kesha Anagal has been traveling to various tribal entities to provide information on the payroll program to employees and to recruit new customers. "I enjoy working with our entities, especially the opportunity to meet the individual employees who are our everyday customers," she said.

While retail costs are often a concern, Anagal said customers have commented that the payroll deduction program comes in handy in providing for family needs and unexpected occasions

such as birthdays, ceremonies, graduations and the holiday season.

Anagal has also been providing customer satisfaction surveys to receive feedback on how NACE can improve customer service or bolster new product offerings. “The face-to-face interactions will benefit us and our customers. We’ll have firsthand input to help us grow and meet their needs,” she said.

One customer, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, has been a great opportunity, she said, adding that the commensurate business relationship is entirely based on the work of Navajo artisans.

Tribal entities and departments interested in getting an update on the payroll deduction program can contact Anagal to set up a time and date for an onsite visit.

Call (928) 871-4090 ext. 299 or email kanagal@ navajoartscrafts.com.