

Nygren signs \$1.5 million tourism legislation

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WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ. — To stimulate tourism, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed \$1.5 million legislation allowing revenue in the Hotel Occupancy Tax and Tourism Fund to be used by all Navajo Nation programs for tourism-related purposes May 8.

Nygren called tourism an “untapped market.”

“So, anytime there’s legislation related to tourism, I think that’s a great investment into our nation, into our communities,” Nygren said of the legislation sponsored by Navajo Nation Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton. “I also want to thank the sponsor for sponsoring legislation to make \$1.5 million available.”

The funding pays for a study along Interstate 40, which is expected to cost \$400,000. The interstate runs across the southern borders of the Navajo Nation in Arizona and New Mexico.

The legislation also funds the Chuska Mountains Recreation Corridor and the Shiprock Pinnacle Project, as well as provides money for a Dinosaur Tracks Project. Some funding would go toward the Explore Navajo Interactive Museum in Tuba City, Ariz.

“I’ve always said I supported tourism. It’s one of those avenues to expand on the needs of the Navajo people truly,” Nygren said.

The President anticipates that the injection of funds into the Navajo Nation tourism industry, that’s been underfunded for the last three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will create a thriving Navajo tourism business.

“I am energized by the opportunities presented with this funding,” Nygren said. “We’ve got so many people that own trails, walking companies, and into the different aspects of bed and breakfast across the Navajo Nation.”

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Despite the negative financial impacts, the Navajo Tourism Department said they continue to work with chapters that request their assistance on projects by promoting their destination through collaboration with Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico State Tourism Offices.

Arval T. McCabe, the Navajo Nation Tourism Department's Manager, who attended the signing ceremony, said one of the projects the department is working on is creating a park at the Shiprock pinnacle.

McCabe said the Cudei, Shiprock, and Red Valley Chapters had given their support.

The funding would also help improve an eight-acre area around the dinosaur tracks in Coal Mine Chapter, east of Tuba City, along State Highway 264.

McCabe thanked the President for approving Charles-Newton's legislation.

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