

# FORMER BENNETT FREEZE AREA RECOMMENDATIONS & NATIVE BUILDERS' RESPONSE

Addressing the Recommendations Developed by the Naabik'iyati' Committee

Grey Hills Academy ~ High School Tuba City

September 24, 2015

How the goals of the Navajo Nation Council can successfully be met

*"We Want To Help You Right Now!" -Navajo Nation Council*



**Native Builders LLC**

[www.NavajoRenaissance.com](http://www.NavajoRenaissance.com)

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About the Meeting	About Native Builders
<p>The Naabik'iyati' Committee met at the Grey Hills Academy on Thursday, September 24 to receive reports and make recommendations related to improving the lives of the people of the Former Bennett Freeze Area. The Honorable Speaker LoRenzo Bates ensured that all of the recommendations were listed throughout the meeting on an overhead screen for everyone to see. The 38 recommendations are listed below.</p> <p>Also below is a high-level response related to how Native Builders LLC, if selected for the NHLCO Economic Development Project, would work to help implement these recommendations.</p>	<p>Native Builders LLC is a 100%-owned Navajo Priority 1 company dedicated to improving the lives of the Navajo people, with a special focus on the Former Bennett Freeze Area.</p>

Recommendation	How Native Builders Would Help
<p><b>1. Technical amendments (needs) to trust fund</b></p>	<p>Work to develop the Chapter-based plans and regional plan along with support to expend the Housing Escrow Funds will undoubtedly yield a list of needed changes to the Trust Fund. <b>The list will be developed as the project proceeds.</b></p>
<p><b>2. Empowerment/Promise Zone</b></p>	<p>Navajo Nation has an opportunity to resubmit a Promise Zone application—the previous application was “close.” <b>Native Builders can offer two specific credentials currently unknown to Navajo Nation that will significantly increase its resubmission competitiveness.</b> First, in early 2015, USDA Rural Development designated the Former Bennett Freeze Area as a Community Economic Development region. Second, Navajo Nation benefits with Preferred Sustainability Status from work previously completed by Building Communities (a subcontractor to Native Builders) for HUD in 2011-2013. Both of these designations will improve the odds of a successful resubmission.</p>
<p><b>3. Inter-agency collaboration</b></p>	<p>Native Builders proposes to establish the <b>FBFA Advisory Committee which would be comprised of key stakeholders</b> including Navajo Nation Divisions, Departments, Office and Enterprises as well as external advisors such as aides to state and federal representatives, key state agencies, Congresswoman Kirkpatrick's office, federal agency state directors and others. The purpose of the Advisory Committee would be to broadcast updates of progress being made, and receive information about technical and financial resources to benefit the FBFA. It is anticipated that quarterly meetings would be held.</p>
<p><b>4. Education of federal officials through technology</b></p>	<p>Native Builders has already established the <a href="http://www.NavajoRenaissance.com">www.NavajoRenaissance.com</a> website. <b>The website will be used to inform all audiences</b>, including federal agencies of the purpose and progress of the FBFA rehabilitation. The website will be expanded, including a password-protected page that provides</p>

	information for Chapter and internal use. The website will be updated daily to provide meeting notices, meeting minutes, draft and final plans and other information relevant to internal and external stakeholders.
<b>5. New market tax credit, economic development</b>	The subcontractor to Native Builders, Building Communities, is an economic development consulting company with expertise in financial resources for both community and economic development. Building Communities has <b>internal expertise to utilize the New Market Tax Credits program</b> , as well as dozens of other state and federal financial resources.
<b>6. Incentives-private sector investments</b>	Funding is set aside as a part of the Economic Development Project to create <b>Individual Development Accounts, as well as to showcase the existing loan, grants and tax credit resources available</b> to the private sector in Navajo Nation. Business development and entrepreneurship training will be provided if a pending USDA Rural Development RCDI grant is approved (see below).
<b>7. Fund critical needs-housing, infrastructure, power lines/solar, etc.</b>	Most of the funding needed for basic needs by the FBFA Chapters is available internally through Navajo Nation. The \$554 million settlement plus the \$400 million NHA Housing “accumulation” is ample funding to address such needs. A recommendation made by Delegate Tsosie to <b>redirect \$100 million of the NHA’s \$400 million to the FBFA—and thereby eliminate the risk of “refunding” the money to HUD—is a brilliant solution</b> for Navajo Nation, HUD and the FBFA. Building Communities has unique contacts within HUD due to three years of strategic planning funded by HUD on the Navajo Nation. These contacts are eager to help.
<b>8. Funding for water that has been contaminated</b>	Building Communities has contacts within the Environmental Protection Agency that manage funding programs to address water infrastructure. <b>Special grant applications can and will be developed</b> by Native Builders to access such funding.
<b>9. Development of Master Plans</b>	The Economic Development Project has funding to complete Chapter-based plans for all of the FBFA Chapters, a Regional Plan for the entire FBFA and feasibility studies to implement the top-priority Economic Development Projects. <b>All of these will be developed into an overall master plan for the FBFA.</b>
<b>10. Put all plans on the table</b>	Native Builders subcontractor Building Communities was the lead planning firm in Western North Dakota from 2012-2014 to compile a Regional Plan that <b>summarized 80 plans</b> that described the impacts and needs of the Bakken Oil Fields. With this expertise, similar work will be performed for the FBFA.
<b>11. Recommend cluster housing</b>	Native Builders is familiar with work prepared by <b>Swaback Partners which recommends cluster housing</b> on Navajo Nation in order to maximize the impact of housing funding and to utilize existing infrastructure. Native Builders is also familiar with an existing project proposed in the FBFA that would “mobilize” this concept, as many of the permits and land requirements are already in place.
<b>12. Renewable energy development for locations not near infrastructure</b>	Native Builders recognizes that many Navajo families live a good distance from existing power, water and paved roads. Many solar applications have already been put to use on Navajo Nation, but much work remains to be done. <b>Such renewable energy options can be integrated into the Housing Needs Assessment Study.</b> Grant applications to state and federal agencies can be completed to leverage Navajo funding for this purpose. Building Communities has Washington D.C.-based connections to the largest solar manufacturing

	company in the world, and believes the FBFA may be a viable location for large-scale renewable energy development.
<b>13. Tour the Bennett Freeze Area</b>	Native Builders would assist Delegates in their upcoming <b>October tour</b> to ensure that a full understanding of the FBFA is presented.
<b>14. Addressing 1434 homes (50% of homes using TDHE focusing on Bennett Freeze homes)</b>	Native Builders is familiar with the findings of the W & H Pacific study in 2008 documenting the magnitude of the housing problem. Native Builders will assist Chapters to <b>prioritize projects and create an equitable distribution of funding for housing improvements.</b>
<b>15. Data for home site leases and –power/water</b>	Native Builders desires to submit a proposal should Navajo Nation issue a Request for Proposals for the Housing Needs Assessment Study. Native Builders has <b>already designed the methodology and identified the technology to conduct the housing study project</b> in order to meet the very short timeframe now faced by NHA due to a one-year delay of the project.
<b>16. Create line item for Bennett Freeze Area (and BIA Budget formulation)</b>	Funding needs resulting from the Chapter-based plans, the Regional Plan and the feasibility studies may yield a need for line-item funding from the Navajo Nation (and BIA) budget. Only after all potential matching funds sources are exhausted will <b>such line-item recommendations be made.</b>
<b>17. Take TDHE back</b>	Native Builders understand that this is a political problem that needs a political solution. Nonetheless, <b>Native Builders could help articulate the benefit of such a change.</b>
<b>18. Creation of Advisory Team</b>	The project design of the Economic Development Project by Native Builders calls for the <b>formation of the FBFA Roundtable and the FBFA Advisory Committee.</b> This creates an internal and external advisory group ensuring progress and accountability.
<b>19. Need training and orientation</b>	Native Builders has assisted Navajo Nation to submit a grant application to the USDA Rural Development <a href="#">Rural Community Development Initiative</a> (RCDI) grant program. The application was submitted in September 2015. Results on the \$250,000 request are expected in December. <b>The funding would be utilized for training and orientation.</b>
<b>20. Use Escrow Funding to connect power lines to nearby homes (within the next six months)</b>	Native Builders is prepared to assist each of the nine Chapters to <b>utilize their specific allocation of the \$3.6 million to develop homes and to extend power lines.</b> Native Builders' staff has already assisted some existing Chapters to submit their Housing Plan in order to access such escrow funding.
<b>21. Need running list of progress and homes served (inventory)</b>	Native Builders will <b>develop and maintain the list (on a Chapter-by-Chapter basis)</b> of homes needing support, homes selected for benefits, construction projects underway and construction projects completed. Data will be updated related to total dollars invested and a description of the specific improvements made.
<b>22. Redevelopment plan map showing community and economic development</b>	Native Builders and Building Communities have <b>in-house mapping capabilities</b> that will show every project in progress in its geographic context.
<b>23. OPVP to declare state of emergency for the Former Bennett Freeze Area</b>	Native Builders will assist the OPVP to develop that legal language needed for such a declaration. Native Builders will assist the OPVP to <b>publicize the declaration</b> and through direct communications with the federal delegation and relevant federal and state agencies.
<b>24. Three Branch Chiefs to give directives to make Bennett Freeze a priority</b>	The FBFA Advisory Committee will include a representative from <b>all three branches.</b>

<b>25. \$17.5 million emergency funds to be used as seed for Bennett Freeze</b>	Native Builders would <b>assist in the coordination of such investments</b> and the reporting to relevant funders.
<b>26. Involve former leaders</b>	The FBFA Advisory Committee <b>would include all of the former leaders</b> as identified by the Navajo Nation Council and the OPVP.
<b>27. Establish Bennett Freeze Area development office</b>	If invited, Native Builders would be pleased to <b>share office space</b> with the new office.
<b>28. Matching funds to CDBG</b>	Building Communities, the subcontractor to Native Builders, has <b>successful experience developing CDBG grant applications</b> . The provision of matching funds will make future ICDBG applications more competitive. Building Communities has been indirect contact with Arizona’s HUD office managing the CDBG funding.
<b>29. Need inventory of land</b>	Native Builders proposes to <b>coordinate with the IRMP process</b> (if it is moving forward) to help develop the land inventory.
<b>30. Involvement of all programs</b>	<b>All Navajo Nation Departments, Divisions, Offices and Enterprises will be connected to the project.</b> In addition, Building Communities has already inventoried virtually all state, federal and foundation funding available for FBFA Chapters.
<b>31. Involve community in development of plan</b>	The Building Communities methodology to create Chapter-based strategic plans requires the formation of a <b>Chapter Steering Committee</b> comprised of a minimum of eight individuals. There is no maximum limit to Chapter involvement. The strategic plan already completed for the Bodaway-Gap Chapter engaged a 15-member steering committee.
<b>32. Water, power-line assessment (initial phases of approval by Chapters; right-of-ways, archaeological clearances, etc.)</b>	Native Builders has the in-house and contracting capability to conduct this work. Some of this work may be <b>completed through the feasibility studies</b> element of the project.
<b>33. Identify strengths and weaknesses from previous plans</b>	The aforementioned review of existing plans will include an assessment of strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the <b>strengths and weaknesses of all FBFA Chapters will be identified</b> in the Chapter-based Economic Development Strategic Plans.
<b>34. Develop high-level advisory committee</b>	As noted above, <b>two committees will be formed</b> : an FBFA Advisory Committee (external), and an FBFA Roundtable (internal).
<b>35. Develop impacted community-based coalition level task force committee</b>	The <b>FBFA Roundtable</b> would serve this function.
<b>36. Develop Research and Analysis Committee</b>	The work to complete the Chapter plans, regional plan and feasibility studies will <b>complete such research and analysis</b> .
<b>37. Develop a fiscal and oversight committee/taskforce</b>	The <b>FBFA Roundtable and FBFA Advisory Committee</b> will serve this function.
<b>38. Restructure Navajo-Hopi Land Commission</b>	Native Builders will be responsive to any such recommendations for reorganization. Building Communities has <b>in-house expertise in Native American organizational development</b> .

## About Native Builders

Native Builders LLC is a 100% Navajo-owned company committed to economic development and quality of life improvement for the Former Bennett Freeze Area, Navajo Nation and tribal communities in general.

Native Builders was established in 2015 in order to bring together the talent and aspirations of tribal members in western Navajo Nation to plan and implement activities designed to create jobs and improve the area's quality of life.

The members of Native Builders have worked consistently over the past year to advocate for resources from the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office (NHLCO) to remedy the severe impacts of the Former Bennett Freeze.

Throughout 2014, the members of Native Builders have worked closely with Building Communities, Inc. to develop a team that possesses all of the connections and abilities to successfully implement planning and development projects.

With respect to its initial goal of implementing the NHLCO Economic Development Project, Native Builders and Building Communities envision a fully integrated planning effort whereby the time, talent and efforts of both entities collaborate to achieve the following goals:

1. Complete and successful implementation of the Economic Development Project
2. Capacity building for Native Builders in order that Native Builders can conduct similar planning processes on Navajo Nation and other tribal communities.
3. Fulfillment of commitment by Building Communities to create community and economic development capacity on Navajo Nation.

Building upon the success of leading the Economic Development Project, Native Builders looks to utilize a broad set of talents and abilities to serve native communities.

### Native Builders Personnel

Native Builders has two principals: Thomas Tso and Revaline Tate.

**Thomas Tso.** Thomas co-chairs board meetings, reviews and approves agendas, and provides overall leadership for the company.

Thomas brings many years of experience in the natural resources field as a former employee of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Thomas will focus his time and expertise on natural resource and community development projects.

**Revaline Tate.** Revaline "Rae" Tate also co-chairs board meetings, reviews and approves agendas, and provides overall leadership for the company. Holding a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and a Master of Legal Studies, Revaline brings legal and managerial experience to Native Builders. Revaline has direct experience managing Chapter government and working with the Navajo Nation legal system.

Revaline will bring her analytical skills to use in a variety of ways to complete projects for Native Builders.

## Native Builders Skills and Services

The list below summarizes the types of skills and services Native Builders intends to offer.

<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<b>Capacity Building</b>	<b>Collaboration Facilitation</b>
<b>Communications Strategy</b>	<b>Community Development</b>	<b>Community Land-use Plans</b>
<b>Creation of Webinars</b>	<b>Database Development</b>	<b>Development Code Review</b>
<b>Downtown Redevelopment</b>	<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>Entrepreneurship</b>
<b>Financial Management</b>	<b>Grant Administration</b>	<b>Grant Writing</b>
<b>Newsletter Production</b>	<b>Non-profit Management</b>	<b>Organization Development</b>
<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Project Management</b>	<b>Public Information Campaigns</b>
<b>Public Outreach</b>	<b>Public Policy Development</b>	<b>Public Relations</b>
<b>Public Speaking</b>	<b>Regional Planning</b>	<b>Research</b>
<b>Business Retention/Expansion</b>	<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<b>Survey Design</b>
<b>Website Design</b>	<b>Website Production</b>	<b>Website Management</b>

## Native Builders LLC

P.O. Box 2082  
Kayenta, AZ 86033

*Dedicated to improving the lives of the Navajo people,  
with a special focus on the Former Bennett Freeze Area*

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# Navajo-Hopi Land Commission *Economic Development Project* Work Plan

