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New Mexico Makes Historic Investment in Tribal Communities

SANTA FE -- New Mexico Indian Affairs Department Cabinet Secretary Lynn Trujillo on Friday credited state lawmakers and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham for a “historical investment” in tribal communities this year. The Indian Affairs Department has received \$75 million in direct capital outlay funds and an additional \$30.7 million will be invested in tribes through other state agencies such as the Departments of Transportation, Aging and Long-Term Services, and Education.

The \$75 million will fund over 140 projects in tribal communities, including improvements to drinking water and sewer systems, renovating chapter houses and tribal buildings, and extending broadband services.

“Under Governor Lujan Grisham’s leadership, the amount of this year’s capital outlay funding is more than the past 10 years combined,” said Secretary Trujillo, a member of Sandia Pueblo. “Tribal communities in New Mexico have gone through some very lean years and this year’s appropriation for capital projects is an incredible opportunity for tribal communities.”

"The robust capital investment in tribal communities is many years overdue," says Governor Lujan Grisham. "When communities have been neglected, we must reach out, collaborate, and begin at the beginning. Starting this year, we will begin rebuilding -- not only these crucial capital projects but also our essential government-to-government relationships."

In 2018, the Indian Affairs Department received just \$3.7 million, and in 2017, the Department received \$893,000. Secretary Trujillo pointed out that the state surplus means dollars will be available to tribes starting July 1.

Governor Brian D. Vallo of Acoma Pueblo notes that the bill includes funds for a long-awaited initiative for a central community Main Street project in Acoma designed to foster entrepreneurship among tribal members. “For the first time in the Pueblo’s history, all capital outlay projects have received full funding, offering our tribe the opportunity to implement projects that may not otherwise be realized without the support of the state,” says Governor Vallo.

Governor Richard Aspenwind of Taos Pueblo pointed out that his community is a UNESCO World Heritage Site which draws thousands of visitors a year. Capital outlay funds will go towards public

safety and health projects as well as restoration work. “While plastering and general maintenance have served the village for many years. It is time Taos Pueblo considers the structural integrity of the village buildings to ensure that the whole old village remain strong for the next 1,000 years,” says Governor Aspenwind.

For the Navajo Nation, President Jonathan Nez says the money allocated to the Navajo Nation will be used for a criminal justice center as well as infrastructure and renewable energy projects. “As the Navajo Nation and State of New Mexico move forward, it’s also important that we pursue new energy development that includes clean renewable energy projects. With the passage of the Energy Transition Act, we look forward to further developing solar projects on the Navajo Nation,” says President Nez.

Among the projects included for capital outlay are:

- \$1 million to build a multi-use facility in Cochiti Pueblo
- \$1.2 million to build a teen center facility in Nambe
- \$1.2 million for constructing water system improvements in Jicarilla Apache Nation
- \$1.9 million for a child development center, including a head start and native language learning facility, at Zia Pueblo
- \$2 million for a head start and early childhood learning center in Jemez Pueblo
- \$1.2 million for water line replacement in San Felipe Pueblo
- \$2 million for an irrigation system in San Ildefonso Pueblo

For a complete list of projects see [Senate Bill 280](#).

The money also authorizes two long-planned projects that will help tribes preserve their cultural heritage and generate tourism dollars. San Ildefonso Pueblo will receive money to start planning the construction of a cultural center and McKinley County has been allocated over \$1 million to begin work on Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center.

Secretary Trujillo says these projects are an example of how capital money can be invested in tribal communities and lead to stable employment and economic development.

“Some of the projects,” says Secretary Trujillo, “will be phased in and need additional federal, state or local money to be completed. But the Indian Affairs Department is committed to collaborate with tribal leaders to make sure they are aware of when state funds are available and to ensure that dollars are spent on these important projects.”

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