

SENIOR CENTERS ON TRIBAL LANDS

BEST PRACTICES:

- Church Rock Senior Center—Navajo Nation

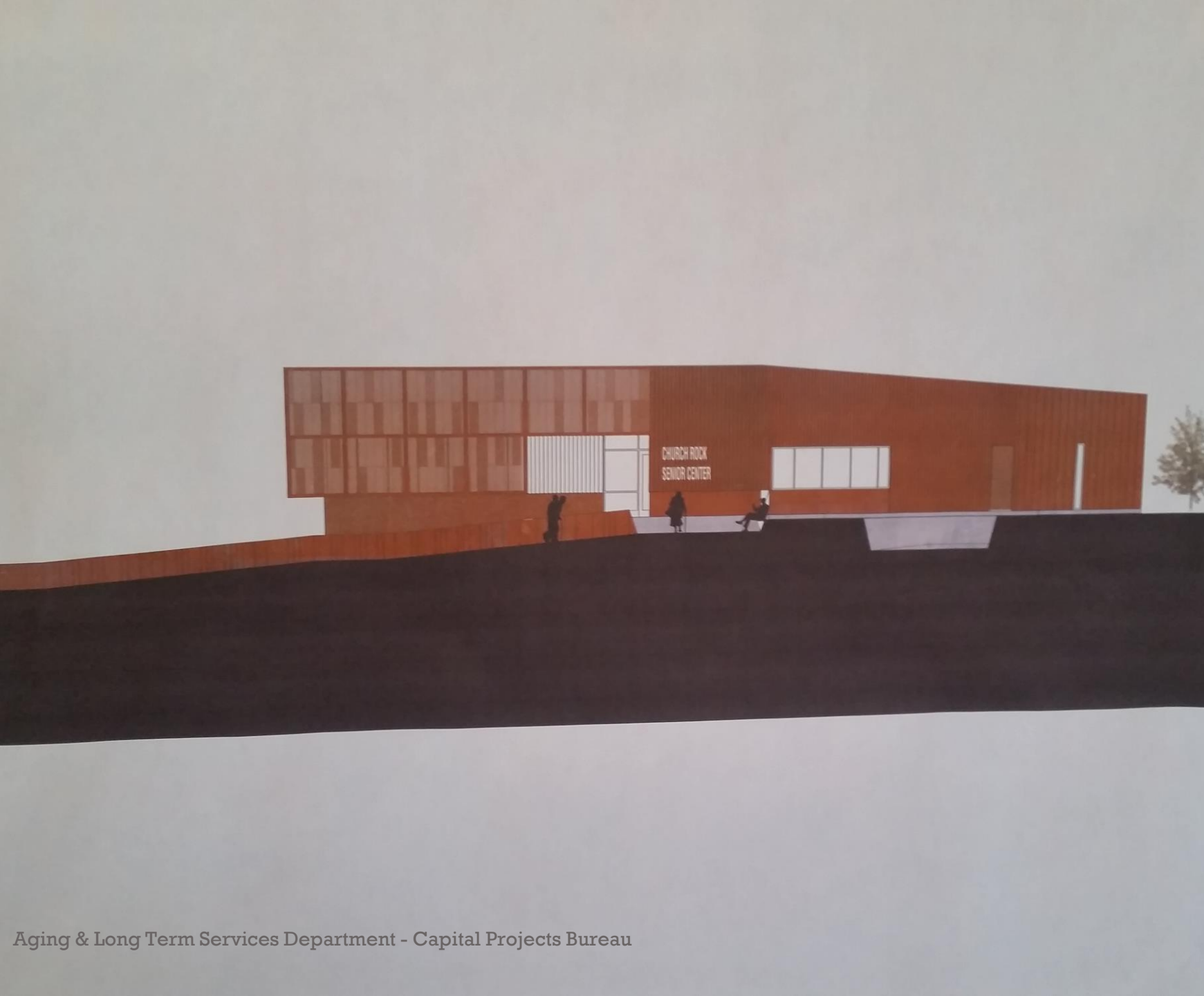
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Presented by: Rebecca Martinez, ALTSD Capital Projects Bureau Chief



**Grand Opening of
Church Rock
Senior Center
Wed. Nov. 8, 2017 9:00 am**

**57 Telstar Road
Church Rock NM 87311**



FUNDING STRATEGIES

- 2013 STB \$198,000 to plan & design a new senior center (Reauth 2017 to include “construct”)
- 2014 GOB \$1,850,000 to construct, renovate and improve infrastructure at the senior center
- AIPP \$18,500
- 2014 GOB \$36,830 meals & other equipment
- 99% State Funded
- Chapter contributed funds for A&E Firm reimbursable expenses



PLAN & DESIGN

- Master Plan
- Programming
- Schematic Design Phase
- Design Development
- Construction Documents
- Construction Administration
- Close Out



WHAT WENT RIGHT?

- Ground breaking and Dine' blessing ceremony
- From foundation to structural enclosure – minimal delays
- Full Chapter participation and support of project
- Monthly project meetings with architect and project owners/stakeholders



WHAT WENT RIGHT? (CONT'D)

- Community Elders participated in all aspects of the project



CHALLENGES

- Undocumented sewer & water line had to be rerouted
- BIA clearances to relocate gas line which required amendments to 1998 Chapter documents
- Negotiations with utility/natural gas company – ROW clearances with the Navajo Nation
- Delayed site work construction phase
- Monsoons

9/28/2018



CHALLENGES (CONT'D)

- Preparing all required documents to reroute utility lines while in construction phase
- Change of administrations ending FY2016-2017



LESSONS LEARNED

- Look at the big picture – forecast below ground as well as above ground development
- Forecast possibilities & possible obstacles to mitigate risks
- Conduct more research prior to commencing to construction phase
- Infrastructure investigation analysis (especially underground)



CONGRATULATIONS CHURCH ROCK CHAPTER!!!

“Expect the unexpected to move forward with the project...”

Andy Thomas
Project Manager





Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye speaks to a full house at the opening of the new Churchrock Senior Center in Gallup Friday. Cable Hoover/Independent

Senior centers a necessity

Churchrock Chapter celebrates grand opening

By Vida Volkert
Staff writer
eastnavajo@gallupindependent.com

CHURCHROCK — Juanita Yazzie is always by herself. Yazzie, 74, lives alone in a small house in a rural area outside Crownpoint, the central chapter of the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation.

The elderly woman spends most of her time alone, she said. Cleaning the house is her way to stay busy, and keep her house ready in case her adult sons who live as far as Albuquerque have extra money for gas and find the time to visit her with their children.

"I love to clean the house, even though there's nobody around, I still have to clean and dust," Yazzie said with a smile. Only in recent months, the elderly woman discovered the Crownpoint Senior Center and has been catching rides to lunch at the center to mingle with other elders. It has changed her life.

The center offers activities for elders, like sowing and quilting. "They recently announced, if the elderly have their clothes torn, that they can bring them to mend them. I started bringing those. I even brought my pants to mend," she said.

She has also made new friends and goes to local events with them. On Friday, Yazzie caught a ride to Churchrock, about an hour drive, to attend the Churchrock Senior Center's grand opening. When she walked into the 4,000-square-foot building of high ceiling and large windows with panoramic views of the red mesas behind the chapter, her jaw dropped.

"I was just thinking to myself, 'am I in a mansion?'" Yazzie said. Yazzie was sitting by the kitchen counter of the Churchrock Senior Center. On her lap was a plate of hot roast beef with gravy, mashed potatoes and corn made for the special occasion.



Titus Nez, left, Johnnie Henry and other chapter officials welcome visitors to the new Churchrock Senior Center in Gallup Friday. Cable Hoover/Independent

More than 100 people were in attendance, eating, mingling, celebrating the grand opening.

Navajo Nation President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez were in attendance.

As Yazzie expressed her excitement for the Churchrock community, Nez, who was walking around shaking hands with community members, approached her and shook her hand.

She had just been talking about him and Begaye. She asked them to give every chapter a senior center like that.

Senior centers on the Navajo Nation

Phillip Delgarito, an elder from Churchrock, who was sitting on a couch by a window in the back of the building expressed his gratitude and excitement for having such "wonderful" meeting place for elders in his community.

He called it "a Christmas gift for the seniors."

Center. "I think that each chapter deserves a shot at something like this." Seta Lee, the chef cook at the Churchrock Senior Center, cooked for more than 200 people Friday, but she normally cooks for 35-40 elders. The center also delivers about 25 meals. Lee, who has worked 28 years cooking for her community, used to cook at out of small and cramped kitchen at the Churchrock Chapter. She now enjoys a large pantry, state of the art equipment and stove, oven and even an electric flour mixer that she used to mix the ingredients for the dinner rolls she made for the event.

The old days

Begaye recalled his childhood growing up in a farm in Shiprock and visiting his grandparents in Red Valley.

"Back then there was a lot of interaction, natural interaction among families and clans. A lot of cooperation. People helping each other. They would look at each other's cattle horse and sheep," the president said during an interview outside the Churchrock Senior Center.

"When my dad would see somebody plowing, he would always get our plow ready and get everybody, and we would all go there, converge at that farm and help them plow up their field. The same thing with bailing. When it was time to bail hay, everybody would show up at our house to stack the hay and nobody expected to be paid. And everybody ate together. So there were more communities helping one another, and you did not need a senior center. Now with the lifestyle that has changed, you either stay home, try to watch TV or look after your grandkids, with no connection with the outside world outside your immediate family. With the senior center, they can go every day and connect with other people. We have 110 chapters. About half of them have senior centers," he said.

A U.S. Marine veteran, Delgarito is a widower. Like Yazzie, he spends most of his time alone at home, and when he gets anxious or depressed, he takes a walk.

"If you are a widower like me, you need people to talk to," he said. "If you are at the house by yourself all day, you start thinking why, why, why and you get depressed."

Jess Kirwin, a social worker who used to serve with the Navajo Area Agency on Aging, estimates there are about 3,000 seniors on the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation.

Senior centers are becoming modern and a necessity at every chapter. Most elders live alone and in rural areas, isolated and far away from hospitals, shopping centers and their children and grandchildren, who, for the most part, relocate in border towns or communities where the schools and jobs are, he said.

"A lot of people don't take advantage of what's free because of the lack of transportation," Kirwin said, taking a tour of the large, restaurant-like kitchen of the Churchrock Senior

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