

7th Annual

2025 Navajo Nation Economic Summit

Investing in the Diné Economy

April 21-23, 2025 | Twin Arrows Casino Resort



Navajo Nation Economic Summit 2025 Agenda

All events in Mountain Standard Time

DAY ONE: Monday, April 21, 2025

7:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Golf Tournament at Oakcreek Country Club - Sedona, AZ

Location: 690 Bell Rock Blvd, Sedona, AZ 86351

Welcome from Presenting Sponsor: Austin Tsosie, CEO,
Diné Development Corporation

3:00 PM – 7:00 PM

TWIN ARROWS NAVAJO CASINO

Early Registration (Hotel Front Desk)

Exhibitor & Artisan Booth Setup (Rotunda & Event Center)

6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Welcome Network Reception (Diné B,E,H)

Master of Ceremonies: James Junes

Introduction: Tony Skrelunas, Division Director, Division of Economic
Development (DED)

Welcome from Presenting Sponsor: Oscencio Tom, Tribal Liaison,
Diné Development Corporation

Welcome from the Navajo Nation: Honorable Richelle Montoya,
Navajo Nation Vice President

Navajo Tourism Department Promotional Video

Entertainment: Delbert Anderson Quartet

DAY TWO: Tuesday, April 22, 2025

6:00 AM – 7:00 AM

Fun Run & Walk (Outside Twin Arrows Entrance)

6:30 AM - 7:00 AM

Yoga & Meditation (Dine' Event Center Courtyard)

Led by: Deoné Newell

Sponsored by Navajo Power

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Summit Registration (Hotel Front Desk)

7:00 AM – 8:15 AM

Summit Network Buffet Breakfast (Diné Events Center)

Sponsored by Navajo Tourism Department

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Business Matchmaking Event (Grand Falls Buffet Area)

Sponsored by The NCAIED APEX Accelerator

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Business Plan Competition (Marker 219 - Trucker's Lounge)

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Opening General Session (Diné Events Center A-I)

Master of Ceremonies: James Junes

Posting of the Colors Ceremony: Saani Silaoltsoi Color Guard

Invocation: Tyrone Chee, Support Services Dept., DED

Opening Remarks: Tony Skrelunas, Division Director, DED

Welcome from the Navajo Nation: Honorable Richelle Montoya,
Navajo Nation Vice President

Dine' Development Corporation 20th Anniversary Video Presentation

Welcome from Presenting Sponsor: Austin Tsosie, CEO, Dine'
Development Corporation

Fireside Chat: Martin Sensmeier, Indigenous Actor and Model

Moderator: Jocelyn Billy-Upshaw, Diné Development Corporation

10:00 AM – 10:10 AM

Break (Diné Event Center)

10:10 AM – 10:40 AM

General Session I

Transition Economics: Alternative Energy Sources, Coal and Beyond (Diné Events Center A-I)

Speakers:

- Arvin Trujillo, Manager of Navajo Nation Government Affairs, Navajo Transitional Energy Company
- Tony Skrelunas, Division Director, DED

10:45 AM - 11:25 AM

General Session II

Economic Outlook of the Navajo Nation

(Diné Events Center A-I)

Speakers:

- Dr. Manley Begay, Northern Arizona University
- Dr. Feifei Zhang, Research Associate, Northern Arizona University
- Melissa Jurgensen, Research Associate, Northern Arizona University
- Osei Kwarteng, Research Associate, Northern Arizona University

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Buffet Luncheon (Diné Event Center A-I)

Sponsored by To'Nanees'Dizi Local Government

Master of Ceremonies: James Junes

Luncheon Panel: Future Leaders for the Navajo Economy

Panel Speakers:

- Constance Begayne, Navajo Technical University
- Allyn Allen, Navajo Technical University
- Paige Begody, University of Arizona
- Christopher Beyal, Northern Arizona University
- Vikkilynn Watchman, Diné Development Corporation

Moderator: Dr. Alisha L. Murphy, Economist, DED

1:00 PM - 1:25 PM

Keynote Address: Honorable Dr. Buu Nygren, Navajo Nation President

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Break (Diné Event Center)

Sponsored by Navajo Oil and Gas Company

2:00 PM – 5:25 PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Navajo Nation Access to Capital Through New Lending: The Navajo Small Business Credit Initiative Program (Twin Arrows A)

Speakers:

- Elaine Young, Small Business Development Dept., DED
- Kristine Laughter, Director of Kinship Lending, Change Labs

Moderator: Jeremy Buckingham, Eastern RBDO, DED

Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Small Business (Twin Arrows B)

Speaker:

- Richard St. Germaine, Founder, St. Germaine Data Innovations

Moderator: Rochelle Tabaha, Business Regulatory Dept., DED

Introduction to United Diné Ventures (Diné A,D,G)

Speakers:

- Oscencio Tom, Tribal Liaison, Diné Development Corporation
- Austin Tsosie, CEO, Diné Development Corporation
- Nicholas Taylor, CEO, Navajo Nation Shopping Center Inc.
- Garret Silversmith, General Manager, Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority
- Cisco Benally, General Manager, Native Broadcast Enterprises

Moderator: Dr. Alisha L. Murphy, Economist, DED

Leveraging State, County, and Federal Resources Through Collaborations (Diné B,E,H)

Speakers:

- Jey Bernal, Tribal Tourism Development Officer, NM Tourism
- John Saltonstaff, Economic Development Director, Coconino County

Moderator: Shaunya Manus, Navajo Tourism Dept., DED

Healthy Heart, Healthy Mind: The Role of Stress in Heart Disease

(Diné C,F,I)

Speakers:

- Shawnmarie Billiman, Sr. Program and Project Specialist, Navajo Dept. of Health

Moderator: Martina Yazzie, Chinle RBDO, DED

3:10 PM – 4:10 PM

Navajo Division of Economic Development Initiatives

(Twin Arrows A)

Speakers:

- Tony Perry, Project Development Dept., DED
- Elaine Young, Small Business Development Dept., DED
- Bobby Martin, Navajo Tourism Dept., DED

Moderator: Shaunya Manus, Navajo Tourism Dept., DED

Loan Readiness for Navajo Businesses: Understanding Documentation and Loan Requirements (Twin Arrows B)

Speakers:

- Veronica Lane, Vice President, Native American Bank
- Swarovski Little, Native Lending Specialist, First Southwest Bank

Moderator: Martina Yazzie, Chinle RBDO, DED

Business Governance Best Practices (Diné A,D,G)

Speaker:

- Brad Preber, Diné Development Corporation

Moderator: Vikkilynn Watchman, Diné Development Corporation

Reimagining Our Economy Through History (Diné B,E,H)

Speaker:

- Tamara Begay, Principal, Indigenous Design Studio + Architecture

Moderator: Beatrice Watchman, Project Development Dept., DED

Oil, Gas, Minerals, ROW Lease Income (Diné C,F,I)

Speaker:

- Rowena Cheromiah, Navajo Nation Minerals Department

Moderator: Sharlene Begay-Platero, Project Development Dept., DED

4:10 PM – 4:25 PM

Break (Diné Event Center)

Sponsored by To'Nanees'Dizi Local Government

4:25 PM – 5:25 PM

**How to Maximize Your Vendor Relationship -
Getting Started and Working to Build a Financial Return**

(Twin Arrows A)

Speakers:

- Mike Sixkiller, Sales Supervisor, Nackard Pepsi
- Don Scheid, Business Development Manager, Nackard Pepsi

Moderator: Edbert Little, Western RBDO, DED

How to Evaluate Your Business (Twin Arrows B)

Speakers:

- Gerald Secody, Diné Development Corporation

Moderator: Jocelyn Billy-Upshaw, Diné Development Corporation

New Market Tax Credits and Energy Generation Projects

(Diné A,D,G)

Speaker:

- Robert Silva, Attorney, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority

Moderator: Sharlene Begay-Platero, Project Development Dept., DED

**Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company: Economic Driver For The
Navajo Nation** (Diné B,E,H)

Speaker:

- William McCabe, Vice President, Navajo Petroleum, Navajo
Nation Oil & Gas Company

Moderator: Tony Perry, Project Development Dept., DED

Unlocking Potential: The Visionary Path of Economic Growth In Indian Country (Diné C,F,I)

Speakers:

- Ron Spoerl, President/CEO of Aambe
- Mars Callahan, Partner, Native First Capital
- Shane Urry, Vice President, Aambe Health

Moderator: JoAn Begay Notah, Project Director, NCAIED

DAY THREE: Wednesday, April 23, 2025

6:00 AM – 7:00 AM

Fun Run & Walk (Outside Twin Arrows Entrance)

6:30 AM - 7:00 AM

Yoga & Meditation (Dine' Event Center Courtyard)

Led by: Deoné Newell

Sponsored by Navajo Power

6:45 AM – 8:00 AM

Network Breakfast (Dine' Events Center)

Sponsored by Navajo Oil and Gas Company

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Summit Registration (Hotel Front Desk)

8:00 AM – 11:25 AM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM

EV Charging Solutions: The New Business Standard (Twin Arrows A)

Speakers:

- Joaquin Q. Yates, Mike Nelson Enterprise
- Geraldine Laughter, Kayenta Township

Moderator: Elaine Young, Small Business Development Dept., DED

Business Start Up: Indianpreneurship (Twin Arrows B)

Speakers:

- Henry Silentman, Shiprock RBDO, DED
- Edgar Tohtsoni Sr., Eastern RBDO, DED
- Stephany Skeets, Eastern RBDO, DED

Moderator: Jeremy Buckinghorse, Eastern RBDO, DED

Firing Up The Navajo Nation Economy: Establishing The Navajo Energy Office and Developing The Navajo Energy Plan (Diné A,D,G)

Speakers:

- Sam Woods, Project Manager, RedStreak, LLC
- Stanford Lake, PE Owner/Project Manager, Hooghan, LLC

Moderator: Tony Perry, Project Development Dept., DED

Creating Sustainable Economic Growth Through Data-Driven Shared Accountability (Diné B,E,H)

Speaker:

- Dr. Cyndi Laurin, Southwest Alliance for Excellence

Moderator: Henry Silentman, Shiprock RBDO, DED

A New Form of Sustainability: Exploring AI For The Workforce (Diné C,F,I)

Speaker:

- Brandon Lock, Director at Workday

Moderator: William Raines, Support Services Dept., DED

9:10 AM – 10:10 AM

Building A Food Network On The Navajo Nation (Twin Arrows A)

Speakers:

- Sean McCabe, Controller, Navajo Office of the Controller
- Duane "Chili" Yazzie, Director of ToohBAA
- Tony Skrelunas, Division Director, DED
- Michael John, Owner/Founder, Navajo Mike's

Moderator: Ginger Sykes Torres, Vice President of Resiliency Programs at Local First Arizona

Pathways To Prosperity: Exploring Capital Access In Native Communities (Twin Arrows B)

Speakers:

- Nicole Johnny, Raven Indigenous Capital Partners
- Veronica Lane, Native American Bank
- Swarovski Little, First Southwest Bank

Moderator: Jeremy Buckingham, Eastern RBDO, DED

Tribal Enterprise Roundtable Discussion: Procurement Opportunities With Navajo Nation Enterprises (Diné A,D,G)

Speakers:

- Kelly Dunagan Johnson, Director of Purchasing, Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise
- Natasha Hanley, Purchasing Officer, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority
- Emery Tapahe, Procurement Manager, Navajo Housing Authority

Moderator: Sharlene Begay-Platero, Project Development Dept., DED

Achieving Excellence: The Five Ideas to Accelerate Your Success Today (Diné B,E,H)

Speaker:

- Mike Gratz, Rocket Mountain Performance Excellence

Moderator: Martina Yazzie, Chinle RBDO, DED

Navajo Nation Rural Addressing (Diné C,F,I)

Speaker:

- M.C. Baldwin, Rural Addressing/GIS Coordinator, Division of Community Development

Moderator: Bobby Martin, Navajo Tourism Dept., DED

10:10 AM – 10:25 AM

Break (Diné Event Center)

10:25 AM – 11:25 AM

Empowering Nations to Strengthen Their Food Initiatives
(Twin Arrows A)

Speakers:

- Leah Prisque, Indigenous & Community Relations, Growcer
- Zachariah Ben, Owner, Bidii Baby Foods

Moderator: Dr. Alisha L. Murphy, Economist, DED

Resource Providers: Gain The Confidence To Pursue Your Dreams
(Twin Arrows B)

Speakers:

- Karen Allen, Small Business Administration
- Craig Boston, Northland Pioneer College SBDC

Moderator: William Raines, Support Services Dept., DED

Registering Your Business With The Navajo Nation

(Diné A,D,G)

Speakers:

- Rochelle Tabaha, Business Regulatory Dept., DED
- Cheryl Bia, Sr. Tax Compliance Officer, Navajo Nation Tax Commission

Moderator: Melissa Cheromiah, Business Regulatory Dept., DED

Exploring Business Possibilities In The Entertainment Industry (Diné B,E,H)

Speakers:

- Jennifer LaBar-Tapia, Commissioner, Santa Fe Film Office
- Steve Mullen, IATSE 480 Business Agent, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage
- Julius Roanhorse, Community Engagement Specialist, Native Professional Advancement Center NM

Moderator: Shaunya Manus, Navajo Tourism Dept., DED

Procurement Contracts & Contract Readiness – Getting Your SAM Registration (Diné C,F,I)

Speakers:

- Mabel Tsosie, APEX Accelerator, NCAIED
- Christopher Crazy Bull, Procurement Specialist, NCAIED

Moderator: JoAn Begay Notah, Project Director, NCAIED

11:25 AM – 11:55 AM

Break (Diné Event Center)

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Business Awards Luncheon (Diné Events Center A-I)

Master of Ceremonies: James Junes

Opening Prayer: Zachariah Ben, Traditional Song

Welcome Address: Project Development Department Staff

Keynote Speaker:

Kenneth Shirley, CEO, Indigenous Enterprise

Business Plan Awardees: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th Place

Keynote Speaker:

Jenn Harper, Founder, Cheekbone Beauty

Sponsored by Change Labs

Navajo Nation Economic Summit

Business Award Categories:

Small Business

Naa'taani Nez Restaurant

Shiprock, NM – Simon Cai, Owner

Professional Services

Fourth World Design Group, LLC

Phoenix, AZ – Kim Kanuho, President

Construction

Native Partnership for Housing

Gallup, NM – Rollin Wood, Chief Executive Officer

Tourism

Beauty Way Jeep Tours

Chinle, AZ – Leander Staley, Owner

Industrial Sector Award

ZenniHome, LLC

Page, AZ – Brett Rigby, VP of Government Affairs

Commercial & Tourism Services

Antelope Point Marina

LeChee, AZ – Ken Runnells, Chief Administrative Officer

Distinguished Business of the Year

Enchantment Physical Therapy

Gallup, NM – Anthony & Patricia Arviso, Owners

2:00 PM – 2:15 PM

Break (Diné Event Center)

2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Indigenous Film Industry Celebrity Business Panel (Diné A-I)

Sponsored by Bitco

Panel Speakers:

- Martin Sensmeier, Indigenous Actor and Model
- Jeremiah Bitsui, Indigenous Actor and Producer
- Derek Hinkey, Indigenous Actor and Model

Moderator: Jocelyn Billy-Upshaw, Diné Development Corporation

3:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Closing (Diné A-I)

Door Prize Drawing: DED Staff

Closing Remarks: Elaine Young, Small Business Development Dept., DED

Retire the Colors: Saani Silaołtsoi Color Guard