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IWSH Team Returns to Navajo Mountain for Renovation Project

Navajo Mountain, Utah (Dec. 3, 2019) — Representatives of the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) have returned to the Navajo Nation this week to support the installation of new toilet and washroom facilities for the Naatsis'áán (Navajo Mountain) Chapter House. This key administrative hub for the Naatsis'áán community is being relocated, while the existing Chapter House — the base for the most recent IWSH Community Plumbing Challenge (CPC) project, in Piute Mesa, Arizona, in June — undergoes major renovation.

"This week, the team is installing a cistern system and a septic system at the Arizona warehouse office building, which we will be using for our temporary chapter office building," said Lorena Atene, Community Services Coordinator at Naatsis'áán Chapter. "The new office is very important, to help us continue providing services for families in the local community."

"Through our Chapter House, we provide services for bathroom additions, minor renovations, roof replacements, and we process paperwork to do with power line extensions and house wiring projects for families that are being hooked up to power lines," Atene continued. "So from the new site we are going to be able to continue this remote office work and important communications with Window Rock offices plus all the other entities we work with, to make things happen for our community."

The team assembled for the project this week includes two IWSH representatives — Jed Scheuermann and Randy Lorge — plus volunteers from the Naatsis'áán Chapter and DigDeep, hosts of the Navajo Water Project and IWSH's ongoing CPC collaboration in the Navajo Nation. Also joining the crew are four volunteers from UA Local Union 412 (Albuquerque, New Mexico): two apprentices, Sasha Sun and Aaron Heitman, Business Agent Adam Valdez and Business Manager Courtenay Eichhorst.

"We have been given another opportunity to help the Navajo Nation, so we thought it would be a great chance to bring some new people out here — as well as some older, familiar faces — and do some good for our community," said Eichhorst, the recent recipient of the inaugural IWSH Award in recognition of his dedicated support toward the development of the first U.S. CPC program.

"We've brought a young female apprentice — Sasha Sun — and this is her second time out here. And we've brought another apprentice — Aaron Heitman — who has never done this before! This is the first time he has been out here, and he is super excited to help; he was one of the first to volunteer. He has never been in Arizona! So this was the perfect opportunity to come out and help us; as well as providing these folks with their new, temporary Chapter House, we have the opportunity to teach some of our apprentices what it is like to do more residential-style plumbing out here on the reservation, rather than the industrial-style plumbing in the middle of town that we normally do.

"At UA Local 412, one of the biggest things we are focus on is community involvement," Eichhorst continued. "In every meeting, and in everything we do, we encourage participation and we encourage community involvement. This IWSH collaboration is probably the best project we are involved with. Like many other organizations across the country, we support the 'Heat's On' program, and many other events with our city, state, and surrounding counties. But our IWSH partnership has a special place in our hearts, because we know how much good these projects do."

During a busy first day onsite, the team started installation of drain, waste and venting systems as well as the layout of water distribution piping. Preparation work was completed for the septic system, and tunneling through the footing of the building for the building sewer to the septic tank was also finished. Excavation was also completed for installation of a water cistern.

The project concludes Friday, and updates from the work site will be shared on IWSH Foundation social media channels throughout the week.

Companies or organizations who wish to get involved with the CPC Navajo Mountain program, or any other future editions of the international CPC program, are encouraged to get in touch via info@iwsh.org. One-time, tax deductible donations to support these efforts may also be made via www.iwsh.org/donate.

ABOUT IWSH

The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation harnesses the skills and expertise of water industry professionals, organizations and manufacturers to support critical water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives worldwide. It does this by tapping into more than 100 years of industry experience to develop local infrastructure, improve governance, and create conditions for better public health and economic outcomes. For more information, visit www.iwsh.org.