

# **FORMER BENNETT FREEZE AREA**

## **Native Builders' Response**

### **to NHLCO Report**

**Report Delivered to the Naabik'iyati' Committee**  
**Grey Hills Academy ~ High School Tuba City**  
**September 24, 2015**

**How the Native Builders' work on the Economic Development Project**  
**will address the NHLCO Staff Report**

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



**Native Builders LLC**

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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 Committee requested a report from the NHLCO Staff on the work of their office to address the needs of the FBFA Chapters. The Staff Report contained:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Background of the NHLCO</li> <li>2) NHLCO past projects and activities in the FBFA</li> <li>3) Present NHLCO development activities</li> <li>4) Specific recovery activities</li> <li>5) Lobbying activities</li> <li>6) Barriers and Challenges</li> </ol> <p>This paper highlights how the proposed work by Native Builders for the NHLCO Economic Development Project addresses the staff report.</p>	<p><b>Native Builders LLC is a 100%-owned Navajo Priority One company dedicated to improving the lives of the Navajo people, with a special focus on the Former Bennett Freeze Area.</b></p>

<b>Native Builders: Addressing the Needs of All Interested Parties</b>		
<i>This is one of three sets of papers documenting how Native Builders meets FBFA needs</i>		
Interested Party	Action/Documents	Date Paper Issued
FBFA Chapters	Ten Resolutions of Support	June 2014-December 2014
Naabik'iyati' Committee	Addressing the 38 Recommendations	September 2015
<b>NHLCO</b>	<b>This Document</b>	<b>October 2015</b>

Report Content/Recommendation	How Native Builders Would Help
<p>1. Navajo Nation designated the NHLCO to be responsible for “rehabilitating and <b>improving the social, economic and education condition</b> of the people and communities adversely affected by the Freeze...”</p>	<p>In 2014, the NHLCO staff, after listening to the leaders of the FBFA Chapters, developed a Scope of Work for the Economic Development Project that addressed the social, economic and education needs of the FBFA. <b>The Native Builders response addresses all these goals. This is Step #1 of the Bennett Thaw Implementation Plan.</b></p>
<p>2. "Ensure the FBFA has made top priority development and gets <b>due funding</b>, thus implementing a July 2015 Navajo Nation Council decision <b>making the region a top priority</b>..."</p>	<p>Native Builders will create the <b>FBFA Advisory Committee to connect the needs of the FBFA to the major funding sources</b> of Navajo Nation (and other) for infrastructure and economic development.</p>

<p>3. “The remaining <b>\$3.6 million of the housing set aside was distributed</b> to the nine FBFA Chapters based upon their population...”</p>	<p><b>Native Builders recommends the integration of the distribution of the Housing Escrow Funding with the Economic Development Project.</b> The Chapter-based Steering Committees would receive reports on the availability and eligible use of such funding, and be assisted by Native Builders to strategically utilize the funds consistent with their Chapter-based plans. <b><i>This is Step #2 of the Bennett Thaw Implementation Plan.</i></b></p>
<p>4. “The Navajo Housing Authority awarded NHLCO \$2 million of NAHASDA monies to <b>assess homes in the FBFA</b> and create housing waiting lists for each FBFA Chapter...”</p>	<p><b>Native Builders recommends that the Housing Study be coordinated with the Economic Development Project</b> to ensure each Chapter is informed of the intent, progress and benefits of the study. The <b><i>Bennett Thaw Implementation Plan (Step #3)</i></b> recommends an RFP be issued that would allow for Housing Study expertise to be combined with the past and existing efforts of FBFA leaders to develop and implement the study.</p>
<p>5. “With the \$1 million allocation of escrow funds for FBFA economic development purposes, NHLCO proposes to: a) have <b>feasibility studies</b> conducted at six potential development sites, b) mentor some 40 individuals in <b>business entrepreneurship</b> by establishing development accounts and grants/loans for them to use to create savings accounts..., and c) <b>present financial literacy training</b> at the FBFA Chapters.”</p>	<p>These three desired outcomes of the Economic Development Project are a subset of the seven deliverables defined by the NHLCO in the Economic Development Project Request for Proposals. <b>Native Builders is prepared to not only implement these three intended outcomes, but also the other four outcomes as well</b> within the \$1 million allocation of funding.</p>
<p>6. “The (technical amendments) legislation calls for designating the FBFA as an <b>empowerment zone...</b>”</p>	<p>Native Builders is familiar with many federal designations that could provide an advantage to Navajo Nation. For example, in early 2015, USDA Rural Development designated the Former Bennett Freeze Area as a Community Economic Development region. In addition, Navajo Nation benefits with Preferred Sustainability Status from work previously completed by Building Communities (a subcontractor to Native Builders) for HUD in 2011-2013. <b>Native Builders would use its expertise to assist Navajo Nation to gain additional designations.</b></p>
<p>7. “The NHLCO faces the...lack of demographic data to complete a <b>comprehensive FBFA Regional Plan.</b>”</p>	<p>Native Builders is prepared to <b>complete the Regional Plan</b> for the FBFA as per our proposed methodology in our response to the Economic Development Project RFP.</p>
<p>8. “The NHLCO faces the...<b>lack of administrative capacity and technical expertise</b> in project development at the Chapter level.”</p>	<p>Native Builders has <b>already submitted a grant application</b> that would benefit Navajo Nation by providing \$250,000 of grant funding to the FBFA to <b>improve the administrative capacity and technical expertise</b> of the Area.</p>
<p>9. “The NHLCO faces...<b>insufficient level of operating funds</b> provided to NHLCO to effectively and efficiently carry out FBFA development projects”</p>	<p>One of the requirements of the Economic Development Project RFP—and the capabilities of Native Builders—is to <b>write grants to leverage existing funding</b> for project development.</p>
<p>10. “The NHLCO faces...<b>lack of congressional appropriations</b> and Navajo Nation funding for FBFA...projects.”</p>	<p>The establishment of the FBFA Advisory Committee would bring all funding parties to the table to understand the needs of the FBFA, and to set the stage for <b>successful grant writing and lobbying to gain financial resources</b> for the Area.</p>
<p>11. “The NHLCO faces...<b>limited number and availability of NHLCO staff...to undertake workload and supervise FBFA...projects.</b>”</p>	<p>The Native Builders staff, through the Economic Development Project, would assist the NHLCO by <b>providing the administrative capabilities to conduct the work.</b></p>



## **Native Builders LLC**

### **ABOUT NATIVE BUILDERS LLC**

**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 to remedy the severe impacts of the Former Bennett Freeze.**

**By combining the talents, interests and abilities of these members, a foundation is formed for the successful implementation of the NHLCO Economic Development Project.**

**Throughout 2014, the members of Native Builders have worked closely with Building Communities, Inc. to not only advocate for this Economic Development Project, but also to develop a team that possesses all of the connections and abilities to successfully implement the Project. With the implementation of the Project, the Native Builders members will be trained to be an integral part of project implementation.**

**Native Builders and Building Communities envision a fully integrated planning effort whereby the time, talent and efforts of both entities get merged to achieve the following goals:**

- 1. Complete and successful implementation of the 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**