

NAVAJO NATION REINVENTED

Economic Development Marketing Plan
for Areas Affected by Coal Mine Closure



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Introduction

This Economic Development Marketing Plan has been developed to compliment the *Economic Development Strategies for Areas Affected by Coal Mine Closures*. This marketing plan outlines general strategies for the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development (Division) to employ in attracting and retaining businesses and young professionals, as well as gain support for the strategies for economic development.

Marketing and public relations strategies identify the target audience and the best strategy through which to connect and share the key message(s) that resonate with that audience. Ideally, the key messages will be used in all communication marketing tactics and will be tailored to the specific audience and communication medium.

Return on investment (ROI) is important when spending funds and the proper metrics for tracking returns need to be monitored regularly. This plan outlines how to use messaging tactics and metrics in developing strategies and priorities for economic development marketing.

Consistency is critical in marketing strategies, earned media/public relations, as well as in maintaining websites and publishing new content. It is recommended that the Division retain additional support to manage and carry out the strategies outlined in this plan by either creating a new position or by contracting services.

It will be the responsibility of the Division to determine how this marketing plan will be implemented and how resources will be allocated. It also will be the Division's responsibility to prioritize the strategies listed in the plan, based on need and budget.

Current Situation

The competitive price of natural gas compared to coal burned energy has resulted in the decision of Navajo Generating Station's (NGS) ownership to close the coal fired power plant. This also will result in the closure of Peabody Energy coal mining operations in Black Mesa near Kayenta, Arizona, as NGS is its only customer.

Royalties from both the coal mine and power plant constitute the largest source of Navajo Nation government and program funding. Additionally, NGS and Kayenta Mine employ over 600 Navajo people who earn an average salary of over \$100k. The impact includes both direct jobs and indirect jobs in the Northern Arizona region. The impact analysis found that a single job at the NGS or Kayenta Mine support 2-3 other jobs in the region.

The Navajo Nation is exploring ways to lessen the economic impact by implementing *Economic Development Strategies for Areas Affected by Coal Mine Closure* to develop new industries and workforces.

Economic Development Strategy

Throughout the development of the *Economic Development Strategies for Areas Affected by Coal Mine Closure*, a copious amount of data was collected and analyzed: including, past and current plans, demographic data, impact analysis, workforce development skills, business community surveys, stakeholder meetings and comments. In addition to information gathering, ETD Inc conducted one-on-one interviews with Regional Business Development Offices, Navajo business owners, Workforce Development Programs, stakeholders and community members.

The following economic development strategies have been developed for Navajo Nation areas affected by the coal mine closure, and bear consideration when developing marketing content:

1. Enhance Tourism
2. Expand Agriculture/Modern Water Use
3. Enhance Information Technology
4. Expand Public-Private Partnerships/Business Friendly Environment
5. Enhance Hospitality
6. Expand Utility Infrastructure
7. Enhance Lifestyle Amenities
8. Redevelopment of Workforce

Goal

The goal of this marketing plan is to provide strategic tactics and messaging for the Division to use in retaining and attracting residences and businesses to the Navajo Nation, specifically in the areas affected by coal mine closures.

Target Audience

The marketing strategy focuses on trends and opportunities in tourism, agriculture, and technology, which are identified as the emerging economic development opportunities on the Navajo Nation. The strategy focuses on collaborative efforts between the Nation, communities and individuals to ensure adequate infrastructure, workforce skills, and lifestyle amenities. To this end, the marketing plan outlines tactics to reach the following target audiences:

1. **Business Owners:** Current business owners who may be operating or interested in opening operations on the Nation.
2. **Young Professionals:** Skilled Navajo people with high aspirations who want to live and work on the Navajo Nation.
3. **Influencers:** Elected officials, news media journalists, and industry associates who influence public opinion.

Key Messages

Commitment to positioning and messaging, with the proper amount of content development, can shape the narrative for how people think of areas affected by coal mine closure. A strong positioning statement and supporting key messages explain why these regions of the Navajo Nation are great places to do business, why young skilled and professional Navajo people may wish to stay or return to the Nation, and the importance of elected officials' support for the implementation of economic development strategies.

These statements declare the Navajo Nation's position and how it wishes to be perceived by its target audiences (business owners, young professionals, and influencers). These messages will be the foundation for all future communication and marketing tactics outlined in this marketing plan. The overall objective is to position the Navajo Nation as a place that encourages and supports economic growth, has a young and skilled workforce, and is supported by industries and the governing administration.

1. The Navajo Nation champions business within the Nation to foster an environment for economic opportunity and growth.
2. The Navajo Nation honors its young professional and skilled workforce by providing amenities for families to prosper on the Nation.
3. The Division of Economic Development is committed to work in partnership with all stakeholders to realize solutions for economic development on the Navajo Nation.

Marketing Tactics

There is no exact formula for economic development and marketing for Indian Country. This plan outlines a general marketing approach, with a focus on earned and owned media. The following lists and describes marketing tactics recommended in this plan:

Earned Media – Public Relations

The most influential medium of communication is dialogue with peers, followed by articles in newspapers and magazines. A positive story in a top national or global media outlet is the ultimate third-party endorsement and can be one of the most powerful tools to shift perceptions about the Navajo Nation business environment.

The plan recommends publishing a steady stream of positive stories about businesses that succeed, grow, and contribute to the development of the economy and workforce on the Navajo Nation. With all earned media, a proactive approach requires pitching, hosting press tours, and developing relationships with regional, state-wide, and national publishers.

One of the Division of Economic Development’s primary goals is to maintain a consistent stream of positive coverage in trade, industry, and other news media. To do so, the Division needs to build out storylines and ensure Division communications representatives are equipped with accurate data, rankings, facts, and stories. Hard data will make for more compelling media pitches.

Relationships with journalists are part of the process for pitching stories to large media corporations. Thus, Division focus on developing storylines and building relationships with targeted top-tier media contacts will secure positive media coverage at the appropriate time. An effective approach to pitching these storylines is to invite journalists to tour the Nation’s economic development projects and zones.

The Division might consider using these sample headlines in relation to the economic development strategies to build out storylines for earned media content:

- “Tourism Explores New Territory on the Navajo Nation”
- “Growing an Agricultural Industry on the Navajo Nation”
- “Wiring the Navajo Nation for the Technology Industry”
- “The Navajo Nation Public-Private Partnership Economic Model”
- “The Navajo Nation Gaming and Hospitality Winning Streak”
- “The Rural Road to Navajo Nation Infrastructure Investments”
- “Comfort and Convenience on the Navajo Nation”
- “Working on Navajo Nation Workforce”

New Website

The solid foundation for a long-term marketing plan is a strong and versatile online presence that can serve both as a resource and an effective marketing tool. The Nation can actively tell its own story using key word search optimized web pages and articles about what it means to thrive on the Navajo Nation.

The current Division website is a starting point and resource for individuals or companies that conduct, or wish to conduct, business on the Navajo Nation. However, it does not feature content about why successful individuals and businesses choose the Navajo Nation. A new and complimentary website

could be such a platform for sharing the vision and telling the success stories of Navajo economic development.

Content on the new website should seek to inspire people to want to live, work, and start a business on the Navajo Nation. It also should serve as a hub for multimedia resources and success stories that drive traffic via media relations, social-digital initiatives, special events, collateral materials and other marketing initiatives. The goal is to sell the Nation from a big-picture perspective with effective storytelling marketing.

The Division will want to consider the following recommendations when developing the new website:

1. Be a resource for economic development, success stories, and big idea initiatives. Showcase leading employers, entrepreneurs, and small startups.
2. Create engaging, but simple content, and draw site visitors with vibrant multimedia. Link the content to other resources for more in-depth information. Include clear “calls to action” to encourage visitors to learn more, subscribe to the e-newsletter, and connect on social media.
3. Highlight industries including tourism, agriculture, and technology with strong stories that describe the Nation as a place for start-up business. Highlight industry sectors with a page dedicated to each sector. Publish short and simple content with plenty of links and downloads from resources from the various divisions and departments working to promote economic development.
4. Think modern and new designs using high resolution photos, balanced with white space, bold colors, and text. Use images and infographics to visually communicate the Nation’s creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative qualities.
5. Stock image resources with large, crisp visuals to enhance websites - especially when the images feature the unique and visually stunning landscapes found on the Nation. Develop a resource bank of dynamic, high-resolution photos for the website and other marketing materials.
6. Consider user experience – visitors should find what they are looking for within one or two clicks on the homepage. A major component of user-friendly experience is responsiveness across mobile devices such as smartphones and iPads.
7. Consistency keeps visitors up-to-date on new developments, success stories, the latest announcements, events and accolades on an ongoing basis. Funnel news through the website, and take advantage of opportunities to influence the tone of news being disseminated locally.
8. Use social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Feature a live feed of Twitter activity on the new website. Make sure social media icons are prominent to make it easy for users to connect and follow via social platforms.
9. Use search engine optimization to maintain relevance in the various search engines. Start with comprehensive keyword research, and integrate them into website title tags, meta descriptions, and page content. Create unique page descriptions to stand out from other websites and use alt-text to insure images are not ignored by search engines.

Owned Media – Digital/Social Media

Social media is a powerful tool in digital marketing, making it cost effective and highly targeted. It is important to build a strong digital presence for the Nation by being consistent with messages and posting frequency on social media. The Nation can own keywords related to the Navajo Nation and economic development in the social space via the use of hashtags such as #discovernavajo and #navajoliving, for example.

The Navajo Nation can engage with young professionals on social media and develop a strong presence on popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The use of trending topics on social media can contribute to a conversation and deliver consistent messages. For example, these topics and hashtags are currently trending in the social media space related to 'Navajo' and #navajo:

Social Media Keyword Search:

- Politics
- History
- Language
- Relationships
- Tourism
- Bull Riding
- Trump
- Tradition
- Sacred Sites
- Coal Mining
- Film
- Crime

Social Media Hashtag Search

- #navajonation
- #rezlife
- #turquoise
- #frybread
- #nativetwitter
- #indigenous
- #culture
- #history
- #dinebizaad
- #healthynatives
- #discovernavajo
- #rezist

It is possible to have an impact in the social-digital sphere with consistent postings and single hashtags. Here are some strategies for using the various platforms and techniques:

Twitter

Twitter is a simple outlet to post website content, push other positive stories about the Nation, and join conversations that are already happening. Division focus on developing a unique “voice” that tells its stories in an authentic way will draw return followers to the Division’s Twitter account. Using original high-resolution multimedia content and adopting hashtags (e.g., #livingnavajo) for inclusion in Division Twitter posts are proven strategies for increasing Twitter engagement and employing this powerful social media platform to consistently communicate key messages.

Instagram

Instagram is used often by younger populations and is a great platform to reach those target audiences. The Navajo Nation’s scenic landscape, cultural amenities, and innovative designs are ideal for photos and videos. The Division may also wish to establish an Instagram presence, and populate the platform with visually captivating #livingnavajo content.

Developing content is time consuming. Crowdsourcing content, or sharing content, is a great way to diversify and engage with followers and influencers. Using creativity, leveraging key influencers and other Instagram trends can drive engagement.

Facebook

Facebook is an effective marketing tool when funds are used to increase the reach of targeted content. 'Boosted Posts' or sponsored posts will allow the Nation to extend and target specific Facebook demographics including age, interests, location, and other factors. When sponsoring posts, it is important to understand to whom your messages are targeted, and to track metrics to understand message effectiveness and the level of its reach. It is also recommended to post raw video content, as it has proven to have greater reach than posts with links from YouTube content.

E-Newsletter

A Navajo economic development e-newsletter is recommended as a method of accumulating subscribers and followers whose networks can be leveraged. A Division newsletter would be a great resource for in-Nation business, and those interested in learning the details of the economic development programs within the Division and other departments.

A quarterly newsletter can be used to push success stories and news to audience prospects and influencers. Sending newsletters to regional companies and influencers as a means of educating them about the good things happening on the Nation will instill pride and inspire them to share similar stories.

Digital Ambassadors Program

Digital ambassadors include young professionals, industry professionals, entrepreneurs, investors, and community leaders. A grassroots campaign can leverage influencers and reach target audiences while giving credibility to the Division's initiatives with their endorsements.

Ambassadors can help harness social media networks and attract people who are passionate about economic development and life on the Navajo Nation by spreading key messages and success stories to targeted audiences. Messages will be amplified to hundreds or thousands of others, because they are coming from a friend or trusted connection.

The following strategies can be followed to launch an effective program:

- Develop a digital identity that ties to key messages, brand standards, and style consistent with the website and social-digital platforms.
- Build a digital army by advertising for volunteers as "economic development ambassadors" and by build a pool of interested individuals.
- Create engaging content that has positive messages and write stories that ambassadors will want to share with their followers. 'Sharing' links should be easy to find and easy to use.

- Measure success and effectiveness by tracking email open rates, post engagement rates, and tweak content when necessary. Focus on quality and share-ability of content rather than quality of posts to ensure newsletters are a resource and not spam.

Multimedia

The use of videos and images to enhance economic development success stories is a powerful tool in capturing the attention of target audiences. A library of multimedia content such as success story photos and videos, as well as imagery of the Navajo lifestyle, will make articles and social media posts more attractive to users.

Developing a library, along with sharing multimedia content from partners, such as regional economic development entities, government entities, and influencers/ambassadors will make the use of multimedia for social-digital efforts much easier.

To develop a library of diverse content that reflects the values and messaging of the Division, solicit testimonials from some of the companies, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and young professionals from different industries. Consider the following themes when soliciting testimonials:

- “Why Choose the Navajo Nation?” Testimonials from CEOs and high-skilled workers who make their living on the Nation.
- “A Day in the Life.” Testimonials about commuters, young professionals, or families who are living and thriving on the Nation.
- “Welcome back!” Testimonials about families who had to leave the Nation in the past for jobs but have now “come home” for opportunities within the Navajo Nation.
- “Tradition Meets Technology.” Feature an industry on the Nation that combines traditional ways of living with new technology such as the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry.

This content should be featured prominently on the website, and can be repurposed as interesting quotes, facts, and images, that make for “evergreen” social-digital content. Building the digital library will help in times when stories and news are in short supply. Multimedia content also needs to include introduction videos, infographics, repurposed content, and captured event video.

Paid Media – Digital Advertising

Print advertising is costly; thus, this plan recommends collaborating with various departments and divisions with funds for conducting joint advertisements. The Division will want said collaborators to have similar objectives and publish similar messages to reach a shared target audience.

Utilizing search engine and social media advertising gives the greatest value for advertising dollars if the advertising campaign fits the goals and budget of the Division. Advertisement messaging should focus on retaining businesses and attracting talent and be integrated with tourism and department advertising.

Consider focusing on the following themes when developing a strategy and messaging:

- Professionals who want to start a business.
- Technology integrated into traditional Navajo lifestyles.
- Scenic landscapes in balance with industry.

Collateral

Print collateral is still relevant in certain situations such as meetings, tradeshows, and targeted mailing. By creating digital-first collateral, the Division can regularly update the information according to its needs and purpose. These materials can be housed on the new website and printed on-demand in the required amount. The distribution of collateral pieces to all existing partners and subscribers will spread the Division's key messages among targeted young professionals and tourists, and to drive traffic to the website.

Here are some "must-have" collateral design materials:

- General Navajo Nation Business Brochure
- Navajo Programs and Incentives
- Benefits of Navajo Lifestyle
- Navajo Employment Opportunities

Trade Shows and Special Events

Equipped with fresh collateral and pop-up branded displays, the Division will be able to take advantage of facetime and sponsorships at trade shows and other events to build relationships with young professionals, business owners' companies, and other influencers.

Further, when the Division posts and shares the upcoming tradeshows and special events it will be attending and involved in on its website, it will maximize the benefits of the Division's time/attendance at such events. In this way the Division website will serve as a resource for individuals interested in Navajo economic development, while also supporting influential groups that put-on and sponsor events.

Here are recommendations for participating in tradeshows and events:

- Update Pop-Up Displays for Tradeshows
- Sponsor/Attend Young Professionals Events
- Attend Consumer Technology Expos
- Maximize Regional Events in AZ, NM & UT

Higher Education and Alumni Outreach

Working close with workforce development and higher education institutions can influence focus on certification and degree programs to meet the needs of the Navajo Nation. Partnerships with higher education programs are a great way to influence workforce development to meet the needs of the Nation. Said partnerships will provide another channel through which to reach current and future young professionals, and through which to deliver positive message about existing opportunities to live and work on the Nation.

Alumni magazines and organizations are great mediums for sharing success stories of individual alumni who are living and working on the Nation. Scholarships and apprentice programs will ensure the Navajo people are prepared to fill the highest positions within Navajo business and government.

Marketing plan recommendations include:

- Developing and showcasing apprenticeship programs
- Spotlighting college and program success stories that involve Navajo students

- Attending alumni events and job fairs

Direct Outreach for Business Retention and Expansion

As the Nation loses its top industry and employer, it is important that it retains and helps expand current businesses on the Navajo Nation. Expressions of gratitude to businesses currently operating on the Nation and invitations to roundtables to discuss how things can be improved can change the current perceptions of business on the Navajo Nation.

Frequent meetings with business owners and those who invest in the Navajo Nation will give the Navajo Nation exposure and support. 'Thank you' letters issued from the Navajo Nation President and regularly scheduled luncheons and roundtables with employers will build and further relationships with business owners and leaders.

Big Ideas

A vital Division goal is to consistently pursue "big ideas" while building buzz and support for projects through earned and owned media. With that in mind, once the foundations of this marketing plan are executed, the Division might wish to implement the following "big ideas,":

- Brand Partnerships and Joint Marketing Efforts
- New and Upgraded Welcome and Information Centers
- Navajo Nation Park Social Media "Takeover" implemented
- #LiveNavajo Tour Bus

Execution Priorities/Timeline

Completing the following list of priorities in the sequential order suggested below will allow effective leveraging and disbursement of resources throughout the year:

1. Month One
 - a. Strategize for new website: requirements, site map, content plan, four-month project schedule and assignments.
 - b. Take stock of business-oriented multimedia, solicit photos from museums and colleges/universities.
 - c. Develop target media list with targeted reporters from top tier media outlets, and disseminate success stories throughout the year.
 - d. Attend local Economic Summits and Chamber of Commerce events/conferences, and capture videos of the Division in action.
2. Month Two
 - a. Design website
 - b. Write content and success stories
 - c. Gather all visual assets for website
 - d. Edit four existing videos to 30 and 60-second clips
 - e. Reach out to business owners on the nation
 - f. Strategize and budget for attending/sponsoring technology events throughout the United States and abroad.
3. Month Three
 - a. Develop/program website
 - b. Design template for e-newsletter consistent with website design
 - c. Design marketing collateral consistent with website design
 - d. Strategize and seek support for digital advertising campaign
 - e. Seek sponsorship for the Navajo Nation Economic Summit
4. Month Four
 - a. Finalize website, optimize content based on keyword search, develop tags (title, meta, and alt) and beta testing/quality testing.
 - b. Develop content for e-newsletter targeted toward distribution list
 - c. Finish and print new collateral
 - d. Develop content for student/alumni marketing
5. Month Five
 - a. Develop 15-30-second campaign introduction video; develop social-digital calendar for website launch; and draft press release.
 - b. Launch website with aggressive media and social-digital push
 - c. Ramp up #livenavajo; and post daily on all platforms
 - d. Launch e-newsletter to drive traffic to website
 - e. Design and produce pop-up banners for tradeshow using new website branding
 - f. Launch Google AdWords campaign to capture Google user traffic
6. Month Six
 - a. Ramp up Facebook and launch other social media platforms
 - b. Explore sponsorship for young professionals and industry meet-and-greet events

- c. Attend consumer technology and other events to market industries and business owners.
- 7. Months Seven-Nine
 - a. Develop Digital Ambassador program
 - b. Work on multimedia content/repurposing content for infographics
 - c. Seek sponsorship opportunities to reach target audiences
 - d. Launch Digital Ambassador program
 - e. Complete multimedia content
- 8. Months Ten-Twelve
 - a. Develop copy for non-traditional print advertising
 - b. Plan for production of new videos for the new year
 - c. Work with AZ, NM, and UT in joint marketing efforts
 - d. Draft and disseminate 'Thank You' letters from Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice-President
 - e. Host young professionals event
 - f. Host entrepreneur and industry roundtables
 - g. Create success story videos, and publicize to media, social media and newsletter
 - h. Plan for next year by using metrics and data collected over the current yearlong campaign

Metrics

A budget dedicated to economic development marketing will ensure there are funds allocated to fulfill the priority recommendations in this plan. It is important that the Division tracks all metrics related to budget, ROI, and engagement to best understand what messages, mediums, and content resonate with target audiences.

Tracking economic development metrics will ensure that Division representatives are equipped with the most accurate data. It is important to know if initiatives are making an impact and to use the information when promoting initiatives. There are many ways to track economic development using Census data and other demographic data. The subsequent list includes other metrics that can be used for tracking:

Economic/Business Development

- Leads and inquires received from interested parties
- Conversations of leads to projects
- Jobs created or retained
- Capital investment through retention, expansion or attraction

Marketing Metrics

- Website traffic
- Media coverage
- Social and digital media engagement including likes, shares, retweets and follows
- Percentage of increase in Digital Ambassadors
- Video views
- Perception shift based on baseline surveys