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Navajo Nation Airport System Master Plan Receives Award at Annual ACEC of AZ Awards Banquet

October 31, Tse Bonito, NM – At the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Arizona Engineering Excellence Awards Banquet, the Navajo Nation Airport System Master Plan received a Grand Award. The plan, completed by the Navajo Division of Transportation, Armstrong Consultants, Inc., and Genesis Consulting Group, LLC, marks an exciting new frontier for the maintenance and improvement of the Nation’s airports.

According to the ACEC of Arizona website, the “Engineering Excellence Awards competition recognizes engineering firms for projects that demonstrate an exceptional degree of innovation, complexity, achievement, and value.”

Armstrong, who completed the Navajo Nation’s Airport System Master Plan in 12 months, entered the project into the competition. Charlie McDermott, Senior Aviation Planner with Armstrong, said of the plan, “The system plan provides the foundation for the Navajo Division of Transportation to develop their airports. It was a privilege and an honor to be part of such an important study.”

Navajo DOT Acting Deputy Division Director Arlando Teller said the following of Armstrong’s work, “This award is a wonderful recognition addressing the improvements of the Navajo Nation’s airport system. It was a collaborative team effort lead by Armstrong Consultants.”

Aviation on the Navajo Nation is a critical area for current maintenance and future development. The vast distances between local communities and medical centers, both on and



L-R: Mary Ortega-Itsell, Genesis Consulting Group, Charlie McDermott, Armstrong Consultants, and Arlando Teller, Navajo DOT, stand with ACEC of AZ Grand Award.

off the reservation, necessitate functioning airstrips for emergency medical evacuations. In terms of economic development, the Nation’s airstrips are vital for expanding tourists’ access to the Nation’s beauty and rich cultural experiences.

For Navajo DOT, an important part of the plan’s development was culturally competent community outreach. Genesis Consulting Group, LLC provided the communication and community outreach for the master plan. The outreach was the largest community involvement program ever undertaken by the Navajo DOT Department of Airports.

In a statement, Genesis Principal Mary Ortega-Itsell explained their approach: “Genesis worked closely with all of Navajo DOT to develop a program that would meet the technical requirements of the program, but more importantly, the outreach was developed to reach the communities where the airports were located. This outreach included all involved Chapter Houses and community leadership.

The results were hundreds of responses expressing the vision that each community held for their airport and the services it could provide in the future.”

The event was held at the Arizona Historical Society Museum on October 29th in Tempe, AZ.

A list of nominees can be found here.

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