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**IWSH Completes New Plumbing Training Facility
at Navajo Technical University Ahead of Program Launch**

Washington, D.C. (Aug. 18, 2022) — In preparation for the start of the Navajo Nation's first dedicated plumbing training program later this month, the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) has finished the construction and setup of a new plumbing classroom and wet lab at the Navajo Technical University Kirtland Instructional Site in Kirtland, New Mexico.

The new education facility will offer a 34-credit plumbing certificate program. IWSH developed the introductory courses covering plumbing concepts and applications, which will equip learners with the skillsets and understanding needed for a career in the plumbing profession.

"Our IWSH team, in collaboration with DigDeep, has put together a solid plumbing program that will provide multiple opportunities for the students of NTU," said IWSH North American Program Director Randy Lorge. "It's the first plumbing program of its kind for the Navajo Nation in the Four Corners region. The class and wet lab will help provide students with hands-on, practical learning, which can help develop a skilled workforce that can support future water and sanitation services in these communities."

The road to a new plumbing training course for the Navajo Nation stretches back to the very first IWSH Community Plumbing Challenge hosted by the DigDeep Navajo Water Project in Baca-Prewitt, New Mexico, in 2018. Since that time, IWSH has focused on developing courses and the hands-on training facility to provide a pathway for residents to learn and become a part of the plumbing profession.

DigDeep Chief Program Officer Julie Waechter said the scarcity of trained technicians is a critical challenge to water access across the United States, one that will likely impact the quality of water service in the coming years. She said the plumbing program will improve employment opportunities while supporting DigDeep's work to expand water access to every person on the Navajo Nation.

"I am so proud of what we have been able to do through the partnership between NTU, IWSH and DigDeep to begin training new water technicians and certified plumbers on the Navajo Nation," Waechter said. "NTU, IWSH and DigDeep are working together to avert this crisis on the Navajo Nation by creating a world-class plumbing certification program with a wet lab for hands-on learning. Partnerships like this bring out the best in academia, the business world and philanthropic work to solve some of the most intractable challenges of our time; this type of program and this type of partnership are imperative to closing America's water gap."

In addition to IWSH's partners at DigDeep, this project was made possible by generous donations from Ferguson and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). The design and installation of the new wet lab, as well as the development of the new training curriculum, were due in large part to the contributions from UA Local 412 in New Mexico.

"In June, UA Local 412 members, IWSH North American Program Director Jed Scheuermann, NTU staff and I put the finishing touches on the lab by installing the plumbing fixtures, appliances and related piping needed to finish the job," Lorge said. "It was a humbling experience to see all the planning and work everyone did finally come together."



“We at NTU are proud to have partnered with IWSH and DigDeep to develop a new course and training facility focused on plumbing systems. We are excited to begin training students to become plumbers and support our community,” said Dr. Elmer Guy, president of Navajo Technical University. “The new plumbing course at NTU will give students the valuable skills to help many households fix their poor plumbing and improve safe access to clean water.”

Visit <http://www.navajotech.edu/academics/certificate/plumbing> to learn more about the new plumbing course.

Visit www.iwsh.org/iwsh/our-work/n-america/us to learn more about IWSH work in the United States.

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