

# TiLT hosts four-day conference, reopens headquarters

By Will Hooper Nov 2, 2022 Taos News

Staff and members of Taos Initiative for Life Together, a local nonprofit known by its acronym TiLT, held a four-day conference last weekend as it celebrated its official reopening after a fire brought down its headquarters at 215 La Posta Road over two years ago.

Todd Wynward, TiLT's executive director and founder, organized the event as a way to bring the community together to work on a variety of initiatives centered on its broad mission aimed at building a stronger local community — from repurposing plastic to be used for building to bridging cross-cultural divides. Wynward said the event brought together 24 local leaders.



“This conference was different because it was in Taos, for Taos, by Taos,” Wynward said. “It brought diverse people together around what we are for, not what we are against. It was about calling people in, not calling people out.”

The first day, on Oct. 27, began with a song and ceremony in TiLT's new “great hall,” which is located on Salazar Road. The large addition is one way TiLT has “rebuilt from the ashes,” as Wynward said, to become bigger and better than before.

Over the course of the next three days, the group visited different sites around Taos County that showcase a number of projects, including the “Repurposing Plastic Project” in Questa and off-grid building sites in Carson. Wynward said the days wrapped up with “engaging afternoon workshops, home-cooked meals and music.”

The TiLT team first visited with Taos Pueblo tribal member Kevin Whitefeather, who told the group that “despite all the pain and hardship, despite the tendency to be suspicious and fearful of other cultures, my people have always insisted that we all are one, that we're all human beings,” Whitefeather said. “That's why I welcome you here today, because now more than ever we need to learn how to live well together in this place as a connected community, taking care of each other.”



The group also visited a Questa trailer park, where attendees worked with Daniel “Ryno” Herrera, of the Repurposing Plastic Project, to break down plastic into construction materials TiLT then sells. “I've done worse things with worse people,” laughed Herrera, an ex-con and ex-addict. “When we cross cultures and get together conjuntos like this to repurpose plastic and reduce damage to our Mother Earth — we're not just building walls — we're building the community we want to see in the world.”

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*Pictured: (Left) Angie Fernandez and Daniel Herrera team up to create the modular wall of repurposed plastic, (Top Right) Red Willow singers perform drum & song ceremony at Kevin Whitefeather's land, (Bottom Right) Carole Crews Shares innovative plaster and Adobe techniques.*

On the third day, the group took a trip across the Rio Grande Gorge, visiting off-grid building sites in Carson, and hearing from community speakers and leaders like Ryan Timmermans with Veterans Off Grid, master plasterer Carol Crews, Stephen Fry of the Rio Fernando Watershed Collaborative, architect Doug Eichelberger of the Repurposing Plastic Project and Daniel Hutchinson of Metate Mills and Big Wheel Farms.

“Approximately 120 people attended some portion of the four-day event,” Wynward said. “The crowds were small, but that was to be expected for something that was assembled so hastily and promoted so sparsely. We didn’t even have an operating bathroom just a day before the event began,” he joked. “But at least now we’re on the map, and TiLT is open to the community again. Everyone who came to the event was hungry for more, and said, ‘Now that I know about this, I’ll be ready for next year.’”