



Joint Press Release

Navajo Nation Office
of the President and the Vice President
and Navajo Nation Office of the Speaker



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2015

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Navajo Nation leaders reach unprecedented agreement on priorities

CHURCHROCK, N.M.—The Navajo Nation branch chiefs and the 23rd Navajo Nation Council met on June 27 at Fire Rock Navajo Casino and hammered out a priority listing for the tribal government to share nationally and internationally.

Nine priorities were outlined, with particular emphasis on water rights/projects and economic development, and infrastructure. Other areas included were housing, education, human services, governance, public safety, natural resources and judicial needs.

President Russell Begaye, Vice President Jonathan Nez, Speaker LoRenzo Bates and acting Chief Justice Eleanor Shirley spoke on the needs of the Navajo people. It was a follow up to the meeting held weeks earlier at Twin Arrows, where the Executive and Legislative Branches agreed it was imperative to include the Judicial Branch in the discussions.

“We are looking at a six-percent shortfall across the board and we’re going to make sure we have adequate funding, especially for the priority areas,” said President Begaye.

He expressed the need for the tribe to establish property taxes and other sustainable revenues that will revive the economic health of the Navajo Nation, aside from the volatile funding sources derived from gas, oil and coal.

“How do we show that we can raise revenue that is sustainable on the Navajo Nation and not rely heavily on volatile revenue? We need to have this larger discussion,” President Begaye said.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) hosted the meeting and restated that the Council has emphasized the need for the Nation to be united to move its initiatives and to lobby effectively.

“As I previously stated, the three branches need to communicate and have honest discussions on a regular basis in order for our government to make real progress,” said Speaker Bates.

Council members also issued several recommendations including adding uranium issues under the nine priorities and developing a new and more effective annual budget process that will help to meet the needs of the people.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said the creation of an OPVP workgroup to research infrastructure will provide the Council recommendations on policy, structure or law changes that are needed. He cited the need for such changes with Division of Community Development, Division of Economic Development, Office of Management and Budget and Office of the Controller as examples.

“The \$554 million is available, but how do we keep those dollars on Navajo? That should be the overall goal for us because we don’t want it to flow off the Nation,” Vice President Nez said. “We’ll be in the same social, economic condition after these new facilities are built.”

Acting Chief Justice Eleanor Shirley presented several priorities on Saturday, including the need for legislative support to assist in funding for new judicial facilities to replace dilapidated judicial buildings that pose health and safety risks for judicial employees. Additionally, the presentation highlighted other areas of need such as improvements to the restorative justice or peacemaking program.

The Council directed Speaker Bates to hold the leadership meetings with the purpose of aligning the Nation’s priorities and to re-establish relations between the tribal branches of government to advocate and lobby on behalf of the Navajo people for funding from the county, state and federal levels.

President Begaye said that he is in agreement with the nine priorities, which encompass the four pillars of his administration: Navajo veterans, elders and youth, infrastructure and job creation. He added that the division directors within his administration now have their “marching orders” to begin aligning their respective programs with the priorities.

The nine priorities were established based off of the priorities identified at the chapter level, President Begaye’s administration, the Council’s standing committees, and public comments received last year during public hearings held to gain input as to how the Nation’s \$554 million trust settlement award should be used and/or invested.

“Working and communicating together will make our Nation much stronger internally and at all other levels of government,” added Speaker Bates, adding that the three branches will continue to hold meetings on a regular basis to move the Nation’s agenda forward.

Near the conclusion of the meeting, the three branches agreed to sign a written agreement in the near future that outlines the nine priorities.



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

June 2, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye issues safety warning for Sanostee wildland forest fire



The wildland forest fire caused by lightening is located near Sanostee, N.M. President Begay and Vice President Nez encouraged safety. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On July 1, the Navajo Forestry Department reported a forest fire in the vicinity of Sanostee, N.M.

Alexious Becenti, forest manager, said the fire was caused by lightening and is currently burning on a slope on the Chuska Mountain Range.

“BIA Fire Management is on scene with the following resources: BIA Navajo Hot Shot crew, BIA Navajo Helitack crew, and a U.S. Forestry Service Flagstaff Hot Shot crew is en route,” said Becenti.

Two air tanker drops have been made on the fire. No

report was available on the total acres burned by the fire and more information will be released later today.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said, “We are praying for the protection of the various teams fighting the forest fire. We encourage the public to give right of way to official vehicles as they make their way to the impacted area.”

He also added that extra precautions must be taken this weekend with the Independence Day holiday, especially with campfires.

“Have a great time with your families and be safe,”

President Begaye said.

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed with the safety precautions and said tribal members must comply with the Navajo Nation Fireworks Code.

“Fireworks are illegal on the Navajo Nation and we must prevent forest fires that can be caused by the use of fireworks,” Vice President Nez said.

He noted that Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CAP-18-86 details the Navajo Nation Fireworks Code under Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code.

The possession, sale and

use of fireworks are against the health, safety and welfare of the Navajo people, the resolution states, and tribal council concurs with the intent and purpose for banning such fireworks from the Navajo Nation.

The Navajo Nation employees will have a tribal holiday on July 3 in observance of Fourth of July holiday.

President Begaye encouraged tribal members to attend the Fourth of July Celebration in Window Rock. A fireworks display will be free to spectators at the event on the evening of July 4.

Executive Branch Report

CHINLE AGENCY COUNCIL MEETING

Wheatfields, Ariz.



THE NAVAJO NATION
Office of the President and Vice President
July 11, 2015



Yá'át'ééh!

It is the awakening of a new dawn for the Navajo Nation. Our administration is doing things differently than previous leaders and we believe that the Navajo people have given us a mandate, through their vote, on what they want to see during our administration.

As such, we have four pillars that we will be focused on during our time of office, four mandates that have come directly from the Navajo people.

The first one is our Navajo Veterans. We will be working hard to ensure they are properly acknowledged and provided a helping hand with the issues they face. Our veterans are in need of housing and mental health counseling services for the post-traumatic stress syndrome they must deal with on a daily basis. They put their lives on the line for our nation and now it's time we provide the assistance they need.

The second mandate from the Navajo people is our Navajo Elders. They are the bedrock and foundation of our Navajo sovereignty. They too, must be properly taken care of and provided for, whether it is nursing homes or assisted living centers. Our youth are included in this effort, as they are both interconnected. We will encourage our elders to teach our youth our language and our culture to continue for the years to come.

The third mandate from our people is Infrastructure. Time and again we see countless trucks traveling the roads to haul water in huge barrels to provide their families with drinking water, but also for cleaning and bathing. Many of our people also haul water for their livestock. Beyond the water issues, there is also a tremendous need for electricity and power lines to provide basic life necessities that improve the quality of life.

The fourth mandate from the Navajo people is Job Creation and Employment. We have heard over and over again about the unemployment rate hovering at more than 50 percent across our nation. However, in some chapters, it is as high as 70 and 80 percent. We are planning on taking advantage of our desert economy to create jobs such as making creams, lotions and ointments from aloe vera and yucca plants.

From Capitol Hill to the Navajo Nation, you can rest assured that we have selected the best and brightest Navajos to help us with these mandates that came directly from the Navajo people. Please join us in this awakening of a new dawn. It is only by working together and with each other that these tasks can be completed. Ahe'hee.

NEW OPVP, CABINET APPOINTMENTS

We selected new appointments recently and we believe they will compliment the team that we have already assembled. The first is Teresa Hopkins, our new executive director for Navajo Telecommunications Regulatory Office. Her impressive career in the field of telecommunications will undoubtedly make a positive impact for the administration, we believe, and she will work with such technological areas such as broadband, cellphone coverage and how we communicate with one another. We also appointed Jamescita Peshlakai to serve as the Office of the President and Vice President Veterans Administration Liaison. A veteran of the Persian Gulf War, we know she will represent our Navajo veterans at the highest levels and her experience as a state legislator brings a wealth of knowledge to the table. We also selected Rick Abasta as our communications director for OPVP. His knowledge of the newspaper industry and tribal government will be beneficial in keeping our tribal members updated on news from the Executive Branch.

NAVAJO CODE TALKERS APPRECIATION EVENT

On July 4, we honored the Navajo Code Talkers at the Dean C. Jackson Memorial Arena. We said their strength and resiliency during World War II not only ended the war, but served as a prime example of the strength and power of Dine' bizaad, the Navajo language. Navajo Code Talkers John Kinsel, Sam Holiday, Thomas H. Begay and Roy Hawthorne were in attendance at the event and honored President Begaye and Vice President Nez.



Speaker LoRenzo Bates also honored the four brave men that proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps as Navajo Code Talkers and set the bar for the many men and women that would follow in their footsteps for the generations.

N.M. TRIBAL LEADERS SUMMIT

On July 1 and 2, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye attended the N.M. State-Tribal leaders Summit at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort at Santa Ana Pueblo. Presidents, chairmen and governors across N.M. convened at the summit and spoke about issues relating to their respective nations, in particular Tribal Infrastructure Funding and Capital Outlay appropriations to address the needs on the reservations. President Begaye met with Gov. Susana Martinez and advocated on behalf of the Navajo Nation to address infrastructure development for N.M. chapters. He was also on the panel for economic development and led the discussions, focused in particular on increasing bond ratings for outside investors, leveraging funding for infrastructure projects and how the Navajo Nation invested \$26 million that grew to about \$2 billion.

SCOTUS RULINGS

The Supreme Court of the U.S. issued a ruling on same sex marriage a few weeks ago and the Navajo Nation OPVP was flooded with calls from media and persons interested in the decision. President Begaye said, “People must understand that we are a sovereign nation. We have our lawmakers and we support the laws that are in place. We stand behind the laws of what marriage is on the Navajo Nation. We’ve always said the people need to decide on these issues that impact our families and the future generations.”

The Supreme Court also presided over the Arizona State Legislature v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission. President Begaye and Vice President Nez applauded the high court ruling in favor of the commission. President Begaye expressed appreciation for the Supreme Court honoring the values and voice of tribal people. “At the end of the day, it shows that the people won,” Vice President Nez said. “They voted through the ballot to create an independent entity to develop balanced districts throughout the state without political influence by elected leaders. It’s a win for the people of Arizona”

The Supreme Court also ruled that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency unreasonably interpreted the Clean Air Act when it decided to set limits on the emissions of toxic pollutants from power plants without first considering the costs on the industry. President Begaye said, “We value the health of our people. We lived with power plants that provided revenue and jobs to our nation, but also have been a source of health issues for our people. The ruling should be a call to the industry that they need to be more cognizant of the people that they serve.”

SANOSTEE FIRE SAFETY WARNING, FIREWORKS BAN

President Begaye issued a safety warning on July 2, after the Navajo Forestry Department reported a forest fire in the vicinity of Sanostee, N.M. on July 1. The fire was caused by lightning and was burning on a slope of the Chuska Mountain Range. BAI Fire Management responded to the scene, along with Navajo Hot Shots, Navajo Helitack and the U.S. Forestry Service Hot Shot crew.

President advised residents in the area to yield right-of-way to firefighters responding to the scene as they made their way to the impacted areas. He also advised against campfires in light of the forest fire.

Vice President Nez reminded tribal members that fireworks are illegal on the reservation and that the Navajo Nation Fireworks Code must be observed. He cited Navajo Nation Council Resolution No. CAP-18-86 as the tribal law that details the restriction under Title 17 of the Navajo Nation Code.

NAVAJO NATION-ASU COLLEGE OF LAW MOA

The Navajo Nation and Arizona State University Sandra Day O’Conner College of Law are officially in collaboration to provide opportunities to Navajo students to attend law school.



President Begaye signed the agreement into law on June 30, approving the memorandum of agreement between the university and the nation.

“We are working with ASU for more Navajo attorneys. This agreement will provide Navajo law school students an opportunity to continue their education and one day return home to help the Nation,” President Begaye said.

According to the agreement, the parties will implement a program known as the Peterson Zah Legacy Fellowship, which will provide financial support and academic counseling to 15 Navajo Fellows and assist them with obtaining their Juris Doctorates at ASU.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said the agreement is an opportunity to bring home talented and educated professionals to assist with moving the Navajo Nation forward.

“My *nalí*, President Begaye, opened the door for many of our educated to Navajos to come home and help their people. We feel this program will continue that effort in the field of law,” Vice President Nez said.

The agreement will be in place for six academic years, continuing through 2020. Upon graduation, the participants will have commitment to work for the Navajo Nation for a period of five years.

CONCLUSION

The administration is off to fast start and we have hit the ground running. From lobbying more than 20 congressmen, congresswomen and senators on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to meeting with the Branch Chiefs of the Navajo Nation, we are committed to serving the Navajo people.

There are many new developments that you will be hearing about very soon. We cannot disclose that information right now because they are still under negotiations. However, we are very confident the Navajo people will be happy with what will be achieved on their behalf.

As we stated previously, the only way such achievements can be done is by working together, including our Navajo chapters across the nation. We look forward to working with you on projects in the future. Ahe’hee!

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July 13, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye, Vice President Nez issue proclamation, honor native youth



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the National Center Native American Youth Reception on July 8. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and Nike N7 co-sponsored the event, featuring hundreds of native youth from across the country. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WASHINGTON, D.C.— About 800 Native American youth from around the country, representing more than 200 tribes, converged upon the nation's capital last week for two conferences aimed at empowering native youth.

The efforts to inspire these native youth were supported by the two top leaders from the Navajo Nation, especially with regard to native language revitalization and preservation.

President Barack Obama extended an invitation to the

Begaye-Nez administration to attend the White House youth summit and support the Obama administration's outreach to Native American youth.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez were on Capitol Hill from July 6 to 10, meeting with congressional members, senators and top federal officials from various departments.

They met with Navajo youth and other youth ambassadors from across

Indian Country to encourage and support them during the youth summit.

On July 8, President Begaye issued a proclamation in honor, recognition and celebration of native youth. The Navajo Nation was the only tribe to issue a proclamation to acknowledge the youth in Washington, D.C. last week.

The proclamation referenced the Obama administration's historic White House initiative, Generation

Indigenous, to support native youth in advancing their education and gain firsthand experience on the federal government operations in Washington, D.C.

"It is the hope of the Navajo Nation that these native youth will use the skills and knowledge they attained in Washington, D.C. to improve the lives of their people in their communities," stated President Begaye.

He said, "These incredible Native American youth should

be honored, celebrated and congratulated.”

Vice President Nez was particularly proud of native youth who fostered the effort to preserve tribal languages and speak their native tongue, identifying this as an important aspect of their self-identity.

“Native American youth gathered here in Washington, D.C. stood up for preserving their language. We appreciate that,” Vice President Nez said.

“*Diné bizaad* is inherent within you. You just need to bring it out. We’re proud of those Navajo youth that speak the language and we encourage all of our kids to learn,” said Vice President Nez.

In addition to the Generation Indigenous gathering, more than 60 Navajo youth were also in Washington, D.C. to attend the 2015 United National Indian Tribal Youth Conference.

For more than 37 years, UNITY has promoted the spiritual, mental, physical and social development of American Indian and Alaska Native youth to build a strong, unified and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement.

One group in attendance, chaperoned by Claudia Jackson, traveled from Dilkon, Ariz. to represent the Navajo Nation at both conferences.

Jackson works for the Dilkon Youth Services as a program and projects specialist, a position she has held since October 2014.

“The UNITY Conference is important to Navajo youth because it helps to foster their curiosity of the world and they build on their experiences when they travel to other places and meet new people,” Jackson said.

She noted that DYS encourages Navajo youth to network and branch out to locally, regionally and nationally.

Jackson began working with Navajo youth in 2008, through the Leupp Family Farms initiative. At the time, she was the legislative district assistant to former 22nd Navajo Nation Council Delegate Elmer Begay.

Begay is the founder of DYS and is still involved with the program to help educate youth of the Dilkon community. The other primary supporter is the Holbrook Unified School District, in particular, the Indian Wells Elementary School.

The school district has been assisting DYS since its inception and helped develop an afterschool program. The program will again be in place in August, when school starts.

“This Navajo Nation Proclamation will make a difference, with the support of our Navajo leaders, President Begaye and Vice President Nez,” Jackson said. “The biggest challenge facing our Navajo kids is providing services such as afterschool programs.

“We know the kids want to be involved, but transportation is one of the main challenges for our kids to participate in the activities that we provide,” she added.

Currently, the DYS is only program providing activities to kids in the community. She encouraged the general public to support the youth programs by sending their kids to activities offered in the community.

“Let’s nurture our young leaders of today with the knowledge we already possess and help them build a better Navajo Nation,” said Jackson.

The youth ambassadors of Dilkon Chapter will be returning to the Navajo Nation on July 14.



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Nez met with Sen. Byron Dorgan during the youth reception and thanked him for co-sponsoring the event. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Hundreds of Native American youth from across Indian Country attended the youth reception on July 8. They were in Washington, D.C. to attend Generation Indigenous and UNITY 2015. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Sam McCracken, general manager of the Nike N7 program and chairman of the Nike N7 Fund, met with President Begaye and Vice President Nez during the youth reception. N7 co-sponsored the event. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Proclamation

IN HONOR, RECOGNITION AND CELEBRATION OF NATIVE YOUTH July 8, 2015

WHEREAS, President Obama launched the Generation Indigenous initiative to help remove the barriers between Native youth and their opportunities to succeed; and

WHEREAS, Native youth from across the nation are attending the historic Generation Indigenous White House Gathering to interact directly with senior administration officials; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation continues to support these Native youth in advancing their education; and

WHEREAS, these Native youth will gain firsthand experience and valuable insight into how the United States is governed by meeting administration officials in Washington, DC; and

WHEREAS, these bright and passionate Native youth are the future leaders of Indian Country; and

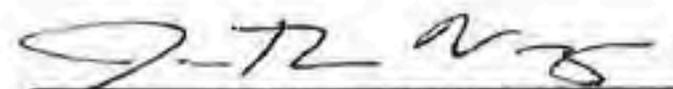
WHEREAS, it is the hope of the Navajo Nation that these Native youth will use the skills and knowledge they attain in Washington, DC to improve the lives of their people in their communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RUSSELL BEGAYE, President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim that these incredible Native Youth shall be honored, celebrated and congratulated.

ORDERED THIS 8th DAY OF JUNE 2015


Russell Begaye, President
THE NAVAJO NATION

AFFIRMED


Jonathan Nez, Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION



July 14, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye announces new appointments to NNTRC, Navajo DOT



Last week, President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez announced new cabinet appointments on KTNN AM 660, while they were in Washington, D.C. The appointments were for Teresa Hopkins and Garret Silversmith for Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission and Navajo Division of Transportation, respectively. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez announced new appointments to their cabinet this week.

M. Teresa Hopkins has been appointed as executive director of the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission. She previously worked for the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch as deputy director for the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Hopkins was employed with the Judicial Branch for more than eight years, also serving as director of Special Projects and project manager of the Navajo Nation Integrated Justice Information Sharing Project.

She was responsible for all information technology related projects, planning and implementation of a new court case management system, execution of an archived court records system and other duties.

“If you look at her background, it’s always been in telecommunications. She has a very strong background and is very knowledgeable,” said President Begaye. “She was operating her own business in telecommunications.

“We selected her to be executive director of Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission. We know that she will really move the Navajo Nation forward,” he added.

Hopkins was appreciative for the opportunity and said, “I am honored to have been selected to join the Begaye-Nez team. It is my hope that I will exceed their expectations.”

The second appointment to Begaye-Nez cabinet was Garret Silversmith as executive director of Navajo Division of Transportation.

“We really looked across the Navajo Nation and outside the tribe to find somebody for this position,” President Begaye said.

He said Silversmith most recently worked for BIA Department of Transportation in Chinle Agency and is knowledgeable with funding from the Federal Highway Administration and the processes for road construction and maintenance.

“Navajo Nation is going to be assuming all responsibilities in the area of roads. The division director for NDOT needs to understand roads, from planning, assessments and engineering,” President Begaye said. “Garret knows all of that. He’s young, intelligent and has very strong leadership.

“He did a lot of work on the Nation and now, he is going to help us. We are very excited about Garret Silversmith heading up NDOT,” he added.

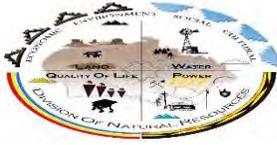
Since 2012, Silversmith served as the supervisory highway engineer for the BIA DOT in Chinle. Prior to that, beginning in 2003, he served as a civil engineer to Bighorse Engineers.

Silversmith received his bachelor’s of science degree in civil engineering from New Mexico State University in 1993.

He previously served as a staff engineer for Nation’s Gas Technologies, Inc. and as a project engineer with Navajo Housing Authority.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 15, 2015

Bowl Canyon Recreation Area Re-Open

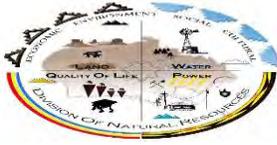
WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – The Bowl Canyon Recreation Area is open for day use at Asaayi Lake.

Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department Manager Martin L. Begaye, stated, “After receiving numerous inquiries about the Bowl Canyon Recreation Area, we want to assure the public that Asaayi Lake is not closed, but open for camping and picnicking.”

Begaye said there is no entrance fee to visit Bowl Canyon Recreation Area; however, visitors must purchase a day-use camping permit for camping or picnicking from the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department. Camping permits can be obtained at Gorman Hall on the Navajo Nation Fairgrounds in Window Rock, Arizona. Visitors are encouraged to “take in, take out” meaning all trash should be hauled out since trash collection is limited.

Bowl Canyon Recreation Area consists of Asaayi Lake, which was never closed and Camp Asaayi, which is closed due to ongoing renovation. Visitors are invited to go camping and picnicking at Camp Asaayi, however, the lake has not been restocked with fish yet.

There have been concerns by the public that Asaayi Lake became contaminated due to a 2014 fire in the watershed around Bowl Canyon Recreation area; however, Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife officials said it is a misconception.



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Navajo Nation Fish and Wildlife Manager Jeffrey Cole said that the Navajo Department of Fish and Wildlife conducted an assessment and found that Asaayi Lake is not contaminated.

Cole explained, “Most of the fish had died due to ash flowing into the lake. The water is still too warm for us to stock with trout. Some fish did survive and fisherman are catching a few fish at this time. We will continue to monitor the water quality and when that is stabilized, we will then stock the lake.”

Camping permits are \$15 per site per night up to seven people. For group sites, it is \$25 for half a day and \$50 for a full day. Day use permits for picnicking are also \$15.00 per site. For more information about fishing permits, contact the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife at (928) 871-6450, 6451 or 6452.

Visitors can enter Bowl Canyon Recreation on the north side from New Mexico State Highway 134 near Crystal, New Mexico. For more information about camping permits, contact the Navajo Nation Parks and Recreation Department at (928) 871-6647 or via their website at www.navajonationparks.org



NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 16, 2015

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Navajo Head Start partners with Navajo Technical University to help its employees obtain degrees

25 NHS employees enrolled in summer classes at NTU

CROWNPOINT, N.M. — Navajo Head Start employees now have a better opportunity to pursue and obtain their college degrees thanks to a partnership established between Navajo Head Start and Navajo Technical University.

On July 15, Navajo Head Start (NHS) signed a memorandum of understanding with Navajo Technical University (NTU) to help its teachers obtain their Associate of Science degrees or their Bachelor of Science degrees in early childhood multicultural education from NTU.



Navajo Head Start and Navajo Technical University sign MOU to help Head Start employees obtain degrees. PHOTO, L-R: Rolanda White, NHS; Dr. Lamont Yazzie, NHS; Casmir I. Agbaraji, Ph.D., NTU; Morris Denetdeel, NHS; QuinTINA Deschenie, Ed.D., NTU; Sharon H. Singer, Navajo Head Start; and Dr. Elmer J. Guy, Navajo Technical University.

The partnership, forged by Sharon Henderson Singer, assistant superintendent of the Navajo Department of Diné Education and Dr. Elmer J. Guy, president of NTU, creates even better opportunity for NHS employees to attend classes during the summer session when NHS is on break and on the weekends all while remaining full-time employees.

Both entities were swift in implementing the new partnership and getting NHS employees enrolled in classes.

“Within two weeks, we were able to get things running. It was amazing having two entities come together with a vision and just making it happen right then and there,” said Singer. “Though it was short notice for our employees, we had over 30 students who applied and are now taking classes at NTU.”

Currently, there are 25 NHS employees enrolled in summer classes at NTU. Other employees have consulted with their school readiness coaches inquiring about available courses since the partnership was established.

Rolanda White, a school readiness coach at NHS, participated in a similar partnership at Arizona State University where she earned her Masters of Curriculum and Instruction. Becenti was involved in this new partnership between NHS and NTU, from recruiting staff, to chaperoning visits to NTU to ensure needs were met.

“The employees were excited about the opportunity to attend classes in the vicinity of their homes and a lot of them are very dedicated,” said White. “The employees have come together as a group to help each other succeed—I think that is their goal.”

Singer is pleased with the program thus far and is impressed with the variety and flexibility of class structures offered at NTU, as well as the university’s emphasis on culture in early childhood education.

“Dr. Lamont Yazzie and I got to meet with Dr. Guy and his staff, we let them know some of our needs as far as obtaining our goal of having a 100% highly-qualified workforce,” she said. “We wanted to go with the weekend college concept, which I think was really unique for an institution and its paraprofessionals who work full-time.”

Dr. Lamont Yazzie, director of educational services at NHS, also commended the NHS staff for taking advantage of the opportunity to improve themselves and in turn, improving early childhood development services on the Navajo Nation. He also commended NTU for partnering with NHS as they share similar goals to develop a highly-qualified workforce for the Navajo Nation.

“Partnerships, with sound and quality services responding to the needs of our communities on the Navajo Reservation such as this partnership with Navajo Technical University, help us pursue and meet those efforts in serving the birth through five-year-old population,” Dr. Yazzie said.

Dr. Guy explained NTU is proud to have new students enrolled at NTU and is excited to see the perspectives they bring to the classrooms. He hopes to help create similar partnerships in the future.

“We been wanting to partner with Head Start because we know they need early childhood teachers as well as other institutions, the bureau school and public schools. We want to help build the Navajo Nation so that we have our own professionals,” said Dr. Guy. “That is the only way to build our nation, through education.”

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Navajo Head Start is the largest federally-funded grant program in the country. Head Start and Early Head Start services are provided within the geographical area of the Navajo Nation, an area approximately the size of West Virginia that spans more than 27,000-square-miles across the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. The Central Administration offices are located in Window Rock, Ariz., capital of the Navajo Nation.

THE STATE OF THE NAVAJO NATION
President Russell Begaye
and
Vice President Jonathan Nez



The Executive Branch Report

Presented to the
23rd Navajo Nation Council
July 20, 2015



**NAVAJO NATION PRESIDENT RUSSELL BEGAYE
VICE PRESIDENT JONATHAN NEZ
STATE OF THE NAVAJO NATION
2015 NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL SUMMER SESSION
JULY 20, 2015**

Mr. Speaker, members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, distinguished guests, visitors in the gallery, and my fellow Navajo people:

Welcome to the 2015 Summer Session. We are honored and privileged to join you today inside this historic council chamber. Thank you for the opportunity. The summer rains have blessed our tribal lands and it is great to see the green vegetation across our nation. It's a sign that our great Navajo Nation is blooming and our lands are thriving.

Vice President Jonathan Nez and I are two months into our administration and already, we are making significant strides tribally, regionally and nationally. There is definitely more to come and we have selected key individuals that will build upon the four pillars of our administration and make our vision a reality.

We selected Ethel Branch to serve as Navajo Nation Attorney General. She is a graduate of Harvard Law School with both transactional and litigation experience. Ethel also obtained her master's degree in public policy and bachelor's degree from Harvard University.

Born in Tuba City, Ethel grew up in Leupp, herding sheep and tending to cattle on her family's ranch. She is licensed to practice law on the Navajo Nation and in the states of Arizona, Oregon and Washington. Ethel is a critical part of our administration.

We also selected Wenona Benally to serve as the executive director for the Office of the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission. She most recently served as the assistant attorney general for the Pascua Yaqui Tribe near Tucson, Arizona and previously worked for the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona.

Wenona is from Kayenta. She earned her Juris Doctorate and master's degree in public policy at Harvard University. She obtained her master of law from the University of Arizona and earned her bachelor's of arts degree in English, summa cum laude, from Arizona State University.

For executive director of the Division of Natural Resources, we selected Bidtah Becker. She previously served as the assistant attorney general for the Navajo Department of Justice, under the Natural Resources Unit.

Bidtah earned her Juris Doctorate at the University of New Mexico School of Law. She is also a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. In 2012, President Barack Obama appointed her as a trustee for the Institute of American Indian Arts. She was also appointed to the boards of Navajo Studies, Inc. and the Southwestern Association of Indian Arts.

For the Division of Social Services, we tapped Terrelene Massey to serve as executive director. Terrelene is from Pinon, Arizona and holds a Juris Doctorate and Certificate in Indian Law from the University of New Mexico School of Law. She earned her master's degree in public affairs from the University of Texas at Austin and her bachelor's of science in political science from Arizona State University.

She previously worked for New Mexico Legal Aid, Incorporated, New Mexico Human Services Department, New Mexico Indian Affairs Department and the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development.



We selected Jackson Brossy to serve as executive director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office. Jackson is a graduate of Stanford University, where he received his bachelor's degree in economics, statistics and public policy. He is pursuing a master's degree in public policy from the Harvard John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Jackson knows his way around Capitol Hill politics and has plenty of diplomatic connections from his previous work as a Native American policy advocate and senior associate with Upper Mowhawk, Inc. He also worked for the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C.

For the Division of Public Safety, we selected Jesse Delmar to serve as executive director. Jesse is a graduate of Northern Arizona University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice administration with a minor in psychology. He is also a graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Academy and FBI National Academy.

Jesse most recently served multiple terms as chief of police for the Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation. He served as an executive fellow with the FBI Executive Fellowship Program in Washington, D.C., as vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police Indian Section and as president of the Indian Country Intelligence of Arizona.

For executive director of Navajo EPA, we selected Dr. Donald Benn. Dr. Benn earned his doctoral degree in chemistry at New Mexico State University in 2005. In 2000, he obtained his master's degree in chemistry from NMSU. In 1997, he earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from University of New Mexico.

Dr. Benn is a scientist and most recently worked as research science consultant for Nihidah Nidii Dal, LLC in Lukachukai, from July 2010 to May 2015. In 2010, he successfully wrote and received the NASA-MIRS research grant for use at Navajo Technical University. He also worked as director of the Native American Research Laboratory at the University of Montana in Missoula.

For the executive director of the Navajo Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, we selected M. Teresa Hopkins. She worked for more than eight years with the Navajo Nation Judicial Branch, but has a strong background in telecommunications and is also chief executive officer of her own business, Diné Digital Services, LLC.

Teresa is experienced and very knowledgeable in such areas as telecommunications licensing, federal funding support, computer networking, microcomputer systems, local area networks, and more. We are very confident she will bring these skills to the table for the Navajo Nation.

For the executive director of Navajo Division of Transportation, we selected Garret Silversmith. Garret most recently worked for the BIA Department of Transportation in Chinle and is very familiar with the Federal Highway Administration funding and the processes for road construction and maintenance.

An engineer by trade, he obtained his bachelor's of science degree in civil engineering from New Mexico State University in 1993. Since then, he has worked as a project engineer with Navajo Housing Authority, staff engineer with Nations Gas Technologies, Incorporated, and as a civil engineer with Bighorse Engineers.

Our administration is very proud and excited to bring these highly educated and experienced professionals back to the Navajo Nation and you should be, too. They will assist us with restoring the confidence of the Navajo people back with the Office of the President and Vice President. The restoration of this trust also includes Capitol Hill, the Obama administration, tribal leaders, Standards and Poor and many others.

In addition to bringing home highly educated and experienced Navajo professionals, we also resolved to work together with our Legislative and Judicial Branches of government. Since our oath of office and inauguration two months ago, we have already met twice with our fellow Navajo leaders and agreed to nine priorities from the Nation.



The nine priority areas are water rights, economic development, infrastructure, housing, education, human services, governance, public safety, and natural resources. We will implement these priorities into the four pillars of our administration: Navajo Veterans, Elders and Youth, Infrastructure and Job Creation.

We met with Speaker LoRenzo Bates and acting Chief Justice Eleanor Shirley and said, moving forward, there should be one voice from the Navajo Nation on Capitol Hill and around the globe. The Nation has not had a consistent message from the tribal branches on specific priorities. That played to the advantage of other tribes across Indian Country lobbying against us.

It's very important that we do not lose sight of these priorities and the fact that the only way to achieve our goals is by working together, not against each other. We appointed highly competent individuals that have the dedication and experience to achieve our Nation's objectives. Navajo Nation leadership will meet quarterly to ensure the lines of communication remain open between the branches and to provide updates on our progress.

Our tribal government has an opportunity right now to re-evaluate the way our divisions, departments and programs do business. We must embrace the opportunity and ensure our tribal operations maximize efficiency at all levels. We must downsize the central government and give it back to the Navajo people.

The Office of the President and Vice President will soon share our recommendations on how to utilize the Sihasin Fund to the benefit of the Navajo Nation. We must exercise fiduciary responsibility and consider how we could utilize the funds to elevate the Nation to the coveted AAA rating.

By doing so, we would return a lot of confidence back into the Nation by the financial institutions, banks, S&P and others because they would know that we are set to pay our debts. In turn, that would open the door for future bond opportunities to build our infrastructure needs.

We are creating a position within our office to specifically track all external funds coming into the Nation. This individual would track the timeline of when we received the funds, what reports are needed, deadline dates, project management needs and work closely with the grantees. We must ensure that the Office of Management and Budget is communicating with the Office of the Controller.

We said the same thing about creating a position at OPVP for a veterans' liaison that would work with the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs on behalf of our Navajo veterans. We appointed Jamescita Peshlakai for that role in June and she is already working on behalf of our veterans.

This is just a broad overview of our plans for the future. In order for these goals and objectives to be achieved, we must be committed to working together. The Navajo people elected us to work on their behalf and that is where we must remain steadfast in our actions, especially when funding is involved.

We cannot exceed the Undesignated, Unreserved Fund Balance. We must be very strategic on how we spend the Navajo people's money. In the past, utilizing riders for supplemental appropriation requests was a popular methodology that caused overspending. We do not want to go down that road again.

Please be diligent and work with our office to ensure our Nation does not fall into deficit. All supplemental appropriation requests should be in the form of stand-alone legislation and go through the required five-day comment period to ensure the Navajo people have their input on the funding request.

During our Navajo Nation Leadership meetings, we all agreed to work together and keep open channels of communication between the branches. Let us remain committed to this. We recently were notified of legislation that was introduced to create a police commission. The fact that we were never invited to the table to sit down and



talk about this legislation affecting one of our divisions was disheartening. Instead, we heard about the initiative when the bill was introduced.

That is not an example of working together. Please, we encourage the members of this distinguished body and our counterparts at the Judicial Branch to remain committed to working together for the benefit of the Navajo people. If we are to have a united voice on Capitol Hill and upon the global stage, it must first begin here, at home.

Thank you for the opportunity to report to you on the Navajo Nation Executive Branch. The state of the Navajo Nation is strong and we working together to fortify that strength even further, onto the steps of Capitol Hill and the rest of Indian Country.

Ahe'hee and God bless.



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NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 20, 2015

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Navajo Head Start, San Juan Chapter sign MOU

*"It's a win-win situation for the community, for Head Start, and especially the children."
—Rick Nez, president of San Juan Chapter*

FRUITLAND, N.M. — The Navajo Head Start Center in the community of San Juan Chapter near Fruitland, N.M. is open once again thanks to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by Navajo Head Start (NHS) officials and the San Juan Chapter.

In February, the nearby Head Start Center in Nenahnezad was closed because of health and safety concerns of an aged-facility.



Navajo Head Start and San Juan Chapter sign MOU on July 16 to provide facility usage for Head Start children. PHOTO, L-R: Ashton Metteba, NHS; Robert C. Begay, San Juan Chapter; Esther Keeswood-Begay, San Juan Chapter; Larry Tsosie, NHS; Dr. Lamont Yazzie, NHS; Carlene Wauneka, NHS. Front Row, L-R: Rick Nez, San Juan Chapter; Sharon Henderson Singer, NHS; and Dr. Tommy Lewis, superintendent of the Navajo Department of Diné Education

Head Start officials quickly responded and began working with San Juan Chapter to identify a facility to utilize for the upcoming school year. The chapter offered some space to use in their 10,000-square-foot multi-purpose facility that was built in 2008—a facility constructed using funds from the Navajo Nation and the Navajo Abandon Mine Lands (AML).

On July 16, Navajo Head Start officials including Dr. Tommy Lewis, superintendent of the Navajo Department of Diné Education, Sharon Henderson Singer, assistant superintendent, and Dr. Lamont Yazzie, director of Educational Services at NHS, met with San Juan Chapter officials to finalize the signing of the MOU.

Dr. Lewis stressed the importance of early childhood education and development, and the critical need for the Head Start program on the Navajo Nation.

“We have a chance to get these students on the right track,” said Dr. Lewis. “Those students who go through Head Start—the record shows that they graduate on time and their achievement scores are higher than those who don’t get that kind of experience.”



Rick Nez, president of San Juan Chapter, explained the San Juan Chapter is ready and excited to welcome Head Start into their community and they will now maximize their facility’s potential and usage. He also said they plan to open their senior center soon.

“We are very proud of our community and glad that we are going to get started with Head Start. The kids are going to be enjoying school next door to us,” said Nez. “It’s a win-win situation for the community, for Head Start, and especially the children”

“I am happy the agreement was finalized and the plan is coming to fruition,” he added. “I am excited to make the public announcement at our upcoming chapter meeting. It will become a good community effort.”

Singer explained Head Start is not wasting no time preparing for the upcoming school year and said recruitment is their top priority right now.

“Recruit! We need 20 kids in the program and I understand there are 10 on the waiting list,” said Singer. “Our community assessment shows that there are enough kids in the area.”

Singer said NHS will begin the process of creating and advertising job vacancies as well since the MOU has been finalized. NHS is continually recruiting for Head Start teachers, paraprofessionals and bus drivers.

Navajo Head Start thanked San Juan Chapter for their partnership and for sharing their vision.

“You have a beautiful building here,” said Dr. Lewis. “I know these kids will really appreciate what you’ve done for them—even later on. They are going to remember that experience.”

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THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

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July 20, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez sign three branch chief agreement



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez signed the branch chief agreement before the start of the summer session with Chief Justice Eleanor Shirley and Speaker LoRenzo Bates on July 20. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—History was made today.

Before the start of the 2015 summer session, the leaders of the three branches of the tribal government gathered inside the council chamber to sign an agreement outlining the priorities of the Navajo Nation.

“It’s historic,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

Speaking in Navajo, President Begaye said, “This has never happened before. We’ve been working separately, until now. We never brought our plans together, our priorities, until now.”

The agreement is the first time in the history of Navajo Nation governance that an agreement was reached between the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches on the

priorities and needs of the Navajo people.

“By doing this, we’re saying that (the branches) are coming together, that we’re going to pursue these objectives and goals together,” President Begaye said. “We can move the Nation forward by demonstrating that the Navajo Nation government can work together.

“This is just the beginning,” he added.

He thanked the members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for the opportunity to meet and share their priorities from the committee level and from the individual delegates. He expressed appreciation to the Judicial Branch for also sharing their goals and objectives.

“A true *nabiki’yati*’ has taken place today. Thank you,” President Begaye said.

Vice President Nez thanked the 24 delegates of the Navajo Nation Council.

He said that council delegates expressed the concerns of their respective chapters during negotiations of the priority listing. They deserve to be commended for speaking on your behalf, he added.

Speaking in Navajo, Vice President Nez said, “The delegates spoke on behalf of their relatives, their chapter people on the challenges they face and those needs were written down on paper. All of (the leaders) will have one plan, that’s why we’re here today.”

He said there will now be one voice for the Navajo people, not just on the Navajo Nation, but with the states, the federal government and throughout the world.

Chief Justice Pro Tem Eleanor Shirley spoke almost entirely in Navajo.

She expressed appreciation for the “Navajo Nation Three Branch Chief Agreement” that was signed.

“Yes, we talked it over and came to an agreement. From the Judicial Branch we spoke of the need to strengthen our judicial system because that gives us the strength to work for the Navajo people,” Chief Justice Shirley said.

She said the money flowing off the Navajo Nation must be stopped and that the branches must work together to find a way to keep the funding on the Nation.

People from the outside were watching us to see if our judicial system is strong, she said.

“We have an independent judiciary, an independent dispute resolution,” said Chief Justice Shirley in English. “Let’s give ourselves the confidence to say we have a stable, strong, independent judiciary.”

Generations from now, even beyond our children and grandchildren, the Navajo people of that time will look back and say it was for a good reason, that there was a purpose for this agreement that was reached by our past leaders, she said.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates echoed the sentiment that the signing ceremony was a historic event.

“I want to thank this council for being able to move in that direction to where we are today,” Speaker Bates said.

He said that although there may be differences between the branches but that they will sit down to address the differences to meet the needs of the Navajo people.

“One voice, one nation,” Speaker Bates said.



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Speaker LoRenzo Bates sign the agreement for the three branch chiefs. Chief Justice Eleanor Shirley prepares to sign the document. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez prepares to sign the three branch chief agreement, as President Russell Begaye looks on. Speaker Bates and Chief Justice Shirley finished signing. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



At the conclusion of the three branch chief agreement, the Navajo leaders paused for a moment for a photo opportunity for the media in attendance at the council chamber. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

CHINLE AGENCY

	Hardrock	Forest Lake	Pinon	Tachee/Blue Gap	Chinle	Mary Farms	Nazlini	Tsalani/Cottonwood	Lukachukal	Round Rock	Tsalle/Wheatfields	Tse Ch' Lzhi	Black Mesa	Whippoorwill
Voter Participation	18%	27%	21%	21%	20%	21%	29%	23%	19%	24%	27%	18%	25%	16%
Referendum - FOR	56	61	226	67	442	125	100	103	105	80	188	74	84	68
AGAINST	102	79	155	112	341	162	167	181	124	128	159	80	64	91
Local Issue - FOR					169	121	182							
AGAINST					121	145	104							



**NAVAJO NATION REFERENDUM
ELECTION NIGHT UNOFFICIAL RESULTS
JULY 21, 2015
Navajo Election Administration**



Brief Statement of Legal Effect
A "FOR" vote will allow Navajo voters to decide, by their vote, whether a candidate for President and for Vice-President meet the Navajo and English language qualifications.
"AGAINST" vote will not amend the Navajo Nation Election Code.

EASTERN AGENCY

	Becanji	Lake Valley	Littlewater	Nahodishgish	Pueblo Pinaldo	Tse' I' Ah'i	Torrean	Whitehorse Lake	Whiterock	Baca/Prewitt	Bahaaali	Casamero Lake	Chichilah	Churchrock	Iyanbito	Manuelito	Mariano Lake	Pinedale	Tse' Lichil	Rock Springs	Smith Lake	Thoreau	Tsayaloh	Huerfano	Nageezi	Ojo Encino	Ramah	Tohajilee	Alamo	Crowpoint	Counselor					
Voter Participation	25%	16%	22%	23%	16%	31%	16%	16%	23%	15%	24%	24%	14%	21%	19%	26%	18%	18%	19%	16%	19%	19%	19%	13%	20%	17%	22%	10%	10%	22%	11%					
Referendum - FOR	82	27	77	54	47	89	75	42	42	80	98	49	82	218	94	94	88	90	149	128	54	116	84	113	95	48	133	56	54	141	24					
AGAINST	89	33	69	47	25	111	92	41	36	80	92	80	89	160	52	103	55	106	100	90	68	128	76	82	89	52	122	36	53	103	38					
Local Issue - FOR			102																																	
AGAINST			44																																	

FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY

	Dilcon	Indian Wells	Jedillo	Teeslo	Whitecone	Coyote Canyon	Mexican Springs	Naschitli	Tohatchi	Bahast' A' A'	Comfields	Ganado	Greasewood Springs	Kin Dah Lich'ir	Klageloh	Steamboat	Wide Ruins	Crystal	Fort Defiance	Houck	Oak Springs	Red Lake	St. Michaels	Sawmill	Tse Sr' Ani	Low Mountain	Nahala DZili
Voter Participation	21%	24%	16%	21%	25%	27%	29%	30%	25%	17%	28%	29%	26%	27%	29%	24%	30%	33%	23%	22%	34%	25%	28%	24%	26%	27%	22%
Referendum - FOR	79	85	58	93	76	142	130	141	174	119	122	161	122	161	152	124	135	152	403	168	103	83	379	109	126	96	124
AGAINST	148	108	78	80	146	133	108	185	136	132	112	167	82	212	81	160	108	99	265	81	119	96	220	134	61	104	76

NORTHERN AGENCY

	Mexican Water	Rock Point	Tollkan	Teachospos	Avelh	Toadlena/Two Grey Hills	Red Valley	Tse' Ahnaazt' I' I'	Sheepsprings	Shiprock	T' I' isloh Sikaad	Menahnezad	Upper Fulland	Red Mesa	Beclabito	Tse' Daa' Kaan	Gag' I' Ah' I' / To' Koi	Cove	Newcomb	San Juan	
Voter Participation	18%	20%	14%	22%	15%	17%	22%	23%	21%	18%	26%	16%	17%	17%	26%	15%	19%	22%	17%	16%	
Referendum - FOR	48	106	51	137	109	60	116	136	61	478	78	164	192	98	89	86	56	83	53	59	
AGAINST	82	134	71	91	116	100	122	211	86	437	65	84	97	119	73	97	64	45	57	34	
Local Issue - FOR											95										
AGAINST											46										

WESTERN AGENCY

	Coppermine	Kat' Bil' To	Lechee	Tonalea/Redlake	Tsah Bil' Kin	Navajo Mountain	Shonto Community Gov	Bodaway/Gap	Cameron	Coalmine Canyon	To' Nanees Dizi Local Gov	Tsidi' To' I'i	Leupp	Tolani Lake	Chilchimbeto	Demeholso	Kayenta	Ojilajo
Voter Participation	32%	19%	28%	20%	22%	24%	30%	16%	21%	23%	16%	16%	18%	19%	21%	18%	21%	21%
Referendum - FOR	160	113	191	132	89	89	232	133	116	109	343	78	106	67	68	115	272	125
AGAINST	57	86	57	144	64	64	135	68	65	70	178	41	142	56	110	81	225	177

COUNT OF POLLS REPORTING TOTAL POLLS											
110	110	14	14	31	31	27	27	20	20	18	18

**Summary of Unofficial Results -
REFERENDUM pursuant to CMA-06-15
Election Date: July 21, 2015**

VOTER PARTICIPATION						
	21.0%	21.6%	18.4%	25.3%	18.6%	20.5%
	Nationwide	Chinle	Eastern	Fort Defiance	Northern	Western
For	13,017	1,779	2,623	3,817	2,260	2,538
Against	11,778	1,945	2,397	3,431	2,185	1,820
% For	52.5%	47.8%	52.3%	52.7%	50.8%	58.2%
% Against	47.5%	52.2%	47.7%	47.3%	49.2%	41.8%

7/21/15 8:45 PM



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July 22, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye orders flags at half-staff for Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicitty



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye ordered flags across the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff in honor of Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicitty, who passed on July 21. The Nation is in mourning for the loss of a national hero today, he said. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— The Navajo Nation lost a national hero on July 21, with the passing of Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicitty.

“The Navajo people are in mourning for the loss of Kee Etsicitty, one of our beloved Navajo Code Talkers and role models for our nation,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

All flags across the Navajo Nation will be flown at half-staff in honor of Etsicitty, beginning today and ending at sunset on Saturday.

“These defenders of our Navajo way of life demonstrated the strength and power of the Navajo language and utilized it to end World War II,” President Begaye said. “It is only appropriate that we honor Kee

Etsicitty’s faithful service with this display of respect across our Nation.

“Our prayers and condolences to his family,” he added.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said there are very few Navajo Code Talkers remaining and that they must be honored and respected.

“If you see a Code Talker, take the time to thank them for their service and shake their hand. They are truly living legends,” Vice President Nez said.

“We lost a living legend yesterday,” he added.

Kurtis Etsicitty said his father lived a very long life and that he was very proud of him for his service as a Navajo Code Talker.

“(My dad) said our Navajo language is very sacred. He told the kids to speak the language

because it was handed down to us by the Creator,” Kurtis said.

When participating at book signings, Etsicitty was fond of telling young kids that the Navajo language is in their bloodline and the only way they would learn it is by trying to speak the language, Kurtis recalled.

Etsicitty was well known in his community of Chichiltah, where he was one of six Navajo Code Talkers that lived there. The last living Code Talker from the chapter is Thomas H. Begay.

Etsicitty worked for the Navajo Nation School Board and oversaw 67 tribal schools alongside former vice chairman Ed T. Begay, a term of service he was very proud of.

Kurtis said his father was good worker and a humble man with a surname that’s common on the Navajo Nation, but a very uncommon spelling.

“The last name was spelled like that because the Marine recruiter didn’t know how to spell it. He took a guess and my dad kept that spelling from there. We’re the only ones from the Navajo Nation that spell our name like that,” Kurtis said.

Etsicitty’s Marine Corps brothers couldn’t pronounce his last name, so they took to calling him “Electricity,” Kurtis said.

From 1943 to 1945, Etsicitty served in the South Pacific as a Navajo Code Talker for a period of two years, two months and two days. He saw combat in the Battles of Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, Saipan, and Iwo Jima.

He was a member of the second group of Navajo Code Talkers after the first 29, the

all-Navajo Platoon 297. The 60 troops of Platoon 297 were trained at Camp Pendleton before getting shipped off to war.

Kurtis said his father lied about his age to enlist in the U.S. Marine Corps and was actually 16 when he enlisted. Etsicitty volunteered because he wanted to protect the Navajo Nation from foreign invasion and prevent them from “taking away Navajo heritage.”

Etsicitty talked to Kurtis about how he and the other Code Talkers would crave mutton.

“My dad said somebody would run over the hill to a village and steal a sheep. They would bring it back and then butcher it. They even made a sweat lodge out there and had a sweat,” Kurtis said.

Etsicitty was a devout Catholic and often said the only reason why he was able to return home safely was because of prayer. His first night at Guadalcanal, Etsicitty heard a bomb whistling down to earth and believed it was coming for him.

In addition to his service as a Navajo Code Talker, Etsicitty was rodeo announcer for more than 50 years. His vision was always for the future of the Navajo people.

“He’d get all choked up when he saw kids playing basketball or rodeoing. He’d say, ‘This is what we fought for – liberty,’” Kurtis said.

An account has been setup for the family for funeral expenses under the name Kurtis Etsicitty at Wells Fargo Bank, just reference account number 1044509014.



THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF THE LATE NAVAJO CODE TALKER PFC KEE ETSICITTY

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation is greatly saddened by the loss of the late Kee Etsicitty, who served in the United States Marine Corps; and

WHEREAS, The late Kee Etsicitty was a Navajo Code Talker who served the United States of America, the Navajo Nation, and U.S. Marine Corps with courage, honor and distinction; serving from 1943 to 1945, when he was honorably discharged; and

WHEREAS, The late Kee Etsicitty served as a Navajo Code Talker and was stationed in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater from 1943 to 1945, fighting in the Battles of Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, Saipan, and Iwo Jima; and

WHEREAS, The late Kee Etsicitty also was a Navajo Code Talker who was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign and the Congressional Silver Medal; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation unites and offers prayers for his family and friends during this time of grief;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RUSSELL BEGAYE, President of the Navajo Nation, do hereby proclaim that all Navajo Nation flags shall be flown at half-staff in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Private First Class Kee Etsicitty, from sunrise on July 22 to sunset on July 25, 2015.

ORDERED THIS 22nd DAY OF JULY 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Russell Begaye", is written over a horizontal line.

Russell Begaye, President
THE NAVAJO NATION



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

July 22, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye, Vice President Nez issue statement on fluency referendum



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said that now the fluency referendum has been decided, it's time for the healing to begin. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

The referendum has been decided.

Now that the referendum on the Navajo fluency requirements for the presidency of the Navajo Nation has been settled, President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez said it is time to move forward and begin the healing process for the Navajo people.

"We appreciate the fact that the people were given the opportunity to vote, even though we were disappointed with the number of people that came out to vote," President Begaye said.

"In the future, we recommend that referendums be voted on during the general election so we don't spend more money than we need to."

Vice President Nez said, "We believe that the Navajo people know the importance and the value of the Navajo language as the foundation of our Navajo Nation."

The administration has said that as the Navajo Nation moves into the future, there is going to be more referendums put before the people to decide on critical issues like the language debate.

"Our stance was to encourage the people to participate in the voting process and we support the voice of the people," President Begaye said.

He said the language must be protected to ensure that it is spoken for centuries to come and that it doesn't become extinct like it has among some tribes.

"As the Nation advances, now, more than ever, there will be a revitalization of the Navajo language in our schools, places of work, and most importantly, in our homes," said Vice President Nez.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez thank the Navajo people for voting on this important referendum. The fact that both sides from the referendum recognize that the Navajo language is vital to our future is a victory for the Navajo people.

"We appreciate the vote that took place and we're ready to move forward as a nation," said President Begaye. "We need to work together, support each other and encourage one another because we are one people, one nation."



July 23, 2015
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23rd Navajo Nation Council confirms three Begaye-Nez cabinet members



The 23rd Navajo Nation Council unanimously confirmed three cabinet members of the Begaye-Nez administration on July 23. Pictured here are Ethel Branch, Vice President Jonathan Nez, Speaker LoRenzo Bates and Jackson Brossy. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On July 23, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council confirmed three cabinet members of the Begaye-Nez administration.

The tribal council confirmed Jackson Brossy, Ethel Branch and Jesse Delmar as executive directors of their respective divisions.

“We appreciate the members of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for confirming three of our appointments to Begaye-Nez Cabinet,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

“Their education, experience and knowledge in their fields of study will be an asset as we execute the four pillars of our administration,” he added.

Vice President Jonathan Nez was in attendance at the council chamber for the confirmations and praised the working relationship between the Executive and Legislative branches.

“Thank you for confirming our appointees. They can now advance and move our divisions toward the priorities we agreed upon for the Navajo Nation,” Vice President Nez said.

He said there are going to be more executive directors to report before the Navajo Nation Council for confirmation very soon.

“We look forward to similar approval for our next group of directors,” Vice President Nez said.

Brossy was confirmed as executive director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office after Legislation No. 0223-15 passed by a vote of 20-0. Honorable Speaker Lorenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, T’iistsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) sponsored the bill.

Brossy is a graduate of Harvard University, where he earned his master’s degree in public policy from the John F. Kennedy

School of Government. He is also a graduate of Stanford University, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in economics, statistics and public policy.

Originally from Red Mesa, Ariz., Brossy is no stranger to Capitol Hill and has plenty of diplomatic connections after serving as a Native American policy advocate and senior associate with Upper Mohawk, Inc. He also worked for the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C.

Branch was confirmed as Navajo Nation Attorney General for the Department of Justice when Legislation No. 0225-15 was passed by a vote of 19-0. Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hard Rock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) was the sponsor.

Branch is a graduate of Harvard Law School with transactional and litigation experience. She also earned her master’s degree in public policy and bachelor’s degree from Harvard.

Born in Tuba City, Ariz., Branch grew up nearby in Leupp on her family’s ranch. She is licensed to practice law on the Navajo Nation, Arizona, Oregon and Washington.

Delmar was confirmed as executive director of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety after Legislation No. 0227-15 passed by a vote of 16-0. Delegate Otto Tso (Tónaneesdizi) sponsored the legislation.

Delmar is a graduate of Northern Arizona University, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in criminal justice administration with a minor in psychology. He also graduated from the Federal Law Enforcement Academy and FBI National Academy.

Most recently, he served as chief of police for the Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation. He was also an executive fellow with the FBI Executive Fellowship Program in Washington, D.C. Additionally he served as vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and as president of the Indian Country Intelligence of Arizona.

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“Their education, experience and knowledge in their fields of study will be an asset as we execute the four pillars of our administration.”



THE NAVAJO NATION

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July 24, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Honor the legacy of Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicitty and live courageously



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye reads the proclamation he issued that ordered flags across the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff in honor of Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicitty, who passed on July 21. He encouraged the audience to honor Etsicitty's legacy by living courageously. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

GALLUP, N.M.—The bells at Sacred Heart Cathedral Church tolled on the morning of July 24 to honor the life of Navajo Code Talker Kee Etsicitty.

His body was transported to the church for the memorial services and escorted by the members of the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders, the non-profit organization that volunteered to repair the roof of Etsicitty's

home last October.

A member of the 3rd Marines, 7th Division, Etsicitty saw combat in the Battles of Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Guam, Saipan and Iwo Jima.

Paying respect to a hero

Before he was laid to rest, Etsicitty's brothers came out to honor him. Navajo Code Talkers Thomas H. Begay, Peter

MacDonald, Alfred Neuman and Bill Toledo were in attendance.

The honor guards from the U.S. Marine Corps and the Ira H. Hayes American Legion Post 84 from Sacaton, Ariz. were also on hand to honor Etsicitty.

A number of dignitaries came out to pay their respects, including Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye, Sen. Carlyle Begay (D-Ariz.),

and Navajo Nation Council Delegates Seth Damon, Otto Tso and Leonard Tsosie.

Faithful Catholic, honorable American

According to Etsicitty's son, Kurtis, his father was a devout Catholic and said he wanted his funeral services to be held at Cathedral Church. His wish was granted as hundreds filled

the massive church located atop a hill in downtown Gallup.

Before the services began, the U.S. Marines performed the flag folding ceremony in front of the church and presented the folded flag to Kurtis.

Etsicitty was only 16 when he enlisted, a responsibility he shouldered with the resolve to protect the Navajo Nation homeland from foreign invasion.

Kurtis said his father told him his decision to enlist was to prevent (foreigners) from taking away Navajo heritage.

Appreciation and respect

President Begaye was given an opportunity to speak and began by thanking the U.S. Marines, the Honor Riders and the American Legion members that were in attendance.

However, it was the Navajo Code Talkers in the audience that commanded his attention and respect.

“Chairman Peter MacDonald, Thomas H. Begay, Alfred Neuman and Bill Toledo, it is an honor and a privilege to have these Code Talkers in our midst,” said President Begaye.

Speaking in Navajo, he gave appreciation to the children and grandchildren of Etsicitty and said the Navajo Nation was grateful for his courageous service, as evidenced by the proclamation that was issued to have flags across the Nation flown at half-staff.

He read the proclamation in its entirety.

Live courageously

“I can’t imagine being the son or daughter of a Navajo Code Talker. To know that your father kept within himself a guarded secret of the U.S. military,” President Begaye said. “These national heroes, like Kee Etsicitty, did not fight with guns and bullets and missiles.

“(They fought with) something more powerful and sacred, the Navajo language, given to our people by the great

Creator,” he added.

The world is now finally learning of the secret that was protected all these years, he said, from the President of the United States to Congress to tribal nations and nations around the world.

“Learn your language, hold it sacred and protect it,” President Begaye said.

He said the world was saved from itself by the beautiful sound of our Navajo people, Dine’ bizaad. Live the legacy of Kee Etsicitty and do things courageously, he said.

“When the battle was raging, when the USS Arizona was at the bottom of the Pacific in the Hawaiian Islands, when the Jews were being incinerated in Europe, Kee Etsicitty signed up (for military service) and shipped out courageously,” said President Begaye.

Navajo Nation flag

“I present the flag of the Navajo Nation with the four directions, the Four Sacred Mountains, the four cycles of life. That’s why our flag is always folded with corners showing,” President Begaye said.

He presented the flag and the signed proclamation to Kurtis and the Etsicitty family.

The Navajo Nation is grateful for the courage and sacrifice Kee Etsicitty displayed as a Navajo Code Talker.

“Live the legacy of Kee Etsicitty by not being afraid of the unknown. Don’t be afraid to step out like he did and embrace the challenges,” President Begaye said.

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President Russell Begaye presents the Navajo Nation flag to Kurtis Etsicitty. President Begaye thanked Etsicitty’s family and said Kee was a national hero that got the recognition of the world. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Before the start of the memorial services, the U.S. Marine Corps honor guard folded the American flag that was draped over Kee Etsicitty’s coffin and presented it to his son, Kurtis. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



These U.S. Marines stood proudly outside the church and awaited the services to begin. The Ira H. Hayes American legion Post 78 from Sacaton, Ariz. were also in attendance. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



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July 27, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye meets with U.S. Department of Education, Bureau of Indian Education



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez met with the U.S. Department of Education and Bureau of Indian Education and discussed issues ranging from the Accountability Work Book to the creation of school districts for BIE schools on the Nation. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— Look at the bigger picture.

That was the message Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye told federal officials from the U.S. Department of Education and Bureau of Indian Education recently during their visit to Window Rock.

President Begaye said a holistic approach is needed to solve the educational challenges facing students on the Navajo Nation, rather than focusing only on meeting school standards.

“When our Navajo people

signed the Treaty of 1868, this is what those leaders were looking at,” President Begaye said. “That education is about meeting the basic needs of students, teachers and communities.”

During the July 22 meeting, President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez were joined by the Dine’ Department of Education to discuss the state of the tribal education system.

President Begaye said looking at the bigger picture means taking into consideration the housing situation on the Nation,

which affects both teachers and students.

Teachers leave the Nation, often when they meet their commitment to repay federal loans, or when they are unable to find adequate housing. For students, they face housing conditions such as the lack of electricity.

“Our students ability to learn is hampered. One high school student recently told us that he had to study every night with a flashlight,” President Begaye said. “Now, for the first time,

he and his siblings can flip on a light and study.

“You have to look at that and ask yourself, ‘What’s the learning environment at the house?’ NAHASDA has opened the door to this kind of thinking,” he added.

The Native American Housing and Self Determination Act was created to construct safe and sanitary housing for tribal nations and their members.

However, as the years progressed, the U.S. Housing and Urban Development

realized unique situations that exist on reservations, which affect the housing effort.

These included the need for infrastructure such as electricity, water and roads. Eventually, other opportunities emerged that allowed NAHASDA funding to be utilized for community centers.

“They invest in more than just housing, now they are building communities. They recently completed a youth center in Shiprock with HUD funding,” President Begaye said.

Before bringing the 32 BIE schools under the Navajo Nation, President Begaye said the tribe must first review the function of the school boards at those schools.

He said the creation of school districts would allow larger schools to assist the smaller schools.

President Begaye said, “We need to focus on the children, rather than who controls the dollars and who has the authority.”

“I am more open to the district approach, where you have schools helping each other. Rather than 66 school boards, you wind up with five to ten school boards that oversee the schools, so we can better manage them,” said President Begaye.

The district approach can also be the framework for establishing Saturday classes, tutoring, and math schools. This effort could provide other opportunities such as bringing in college professors and providing internships for college students to help the schools.

“That can be better managed by a district, than by a single school board at a small community trying to do those things,” President Begaye said.

Vice President Nez said the recent referendum election shed light on the Navajo language and brought it to the forefront of Navajo consciousness.

“There’s going to be a lot more

people wanting to learn Navajo and we need to prepare for that. That was the positive thing that came out of this election, people are all in agreement that the Navajo language is vital for our future,” he said.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez challenged Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey to provide more resources for the instruction of Navajo language at public schools.

“The Navajo Nation, as a sovereign nation, should be in the drivers seat for all our young people’s education,” Vice President Nez said. “The Bureau of Education is tasked here to provide technical assistance and partnership.”

Promoting a healthy lifestyle at the tribal schools and stepping away from junk food being served to students is another consideration, he said.

“Students learn better when they’re healthy and when they eat well,” Vice President Nez said.

President Begaye said the goal of their administration is for the Navajo Nation to control its own schools, including the public schools located on Navajo.

He reported that schools with Navajo teachers and a majority leadership of Navajo school board members are outperforming other schools in surrounding communities like Farmington, Aztec and Albuquerque.

“We know that our students are smart and that they can achieve at a very high level,” said President Begaye.



President Russell Begaye said Navajo students perform at a higher level academically when schools have Navajo teachers and the school boards are comprised mainly of Navajo board members. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Vice President Jonathan Nez said Navajo schools also need to incorporate healthy food to replace junk food to enhance student performance. He said Navajo sovereignty dictates that the tribe is in control of education. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Sharone Pasternak, an attorney with the U.S. Department of Education, asked the fundamental question about BIE schools. Do they have their own school boards, she asked. (Photo by Rick Abasta)





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July 27, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation Proclamation



Top, Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez runs into Pine Springs, Ariz. for the second day of Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation. Bottom, Ettie Anderson carries the staff up the hill during the run from Oak Springs to Pine Springs. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—
The annual relay run across the Navajo Nation has begun.

For the fifth year, the Office of the President and Vice President, along with the Department of Health and Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project, has coordinated the Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation relay run to provide awareness on diabetes, obesity

and other chronic diseases afflicting the Navajo people.

“We encourage our tribal employees to take an hour or two out of their work schedule to run and support this annual event,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

“This is a great cause to support by joining in the run across the Navajo Nation. We even have 54-year-olds running,” he said.

Vice President Nez joined the runners and participated in the event since the start at White Rock, N.M. on Saturday. He invites the general public to join the run.

Many of the runners are running for a cause, whether it is for child abuse, overcoming health issues, to running for the families and communities. Vice President Nez said he is running for suicide awareness, a taboo Navajo subject that must be addressed to stop the rash of suicides that have occurred across the Nation.

“Our administration is making a stand for healthy living and an active lifestyle. Join us in Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation,” said Vice President Nez.

President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez issued a proclamation in honor and recognition of the relay run on July 25. The relay run is scheduled from July 25 to August 1, 2015.

The route for the 2015 Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation is a distance of 435 miles and will circle the Navajo Nation, reaching the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

According to Eddie Scott Yazzie, public information officer for NNSDP, since 2011, the run focused on reaching the 110 chapters of the Navajo Nation to promote healthy living, diet and exercise to combat diabetes and obesity on the Nation.

“In five years, 95 percent of

the chapters have been reached during the relay run,” Yazzie said.

This year, the run will circle through 28 Navajo communities before its conclusion. In previous years, the relay run was from the four cardinal directions of the Navajo Nation.

The communities for this year’s run include White Rock, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Mexican Springs, Twin Lakes, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh, Oak Springs, Pine Springs, Wide Ruins, Greasewood, Steamboat, Cameron, Tuba City, Tonalea, Tsa’ Bi Kin, Naatsis’áán, Dennehotso, Mexican Water, Teec Nos Pos, Beclabito, Gad’iiahi, Shiprock, Hogback, San Juan, Nenahnezaad, Upper Fruitland and Lake Valley.

President Begaye issued a memorandum on July 27 to the divisions within the Executive Branch to allow tribal employees anywhere from one to four hours off from work to participate in the relay run.

The staff of the NNSDP will track involvement through a form developed to include the date, time and location of the run for participating employees. All runners receive a t-shirt commemorating the relay run for their participation.





THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF RUNNING FOR A STRONGER AND HEALTHIER NAVAJO NATION

WHEREAS, Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation is an eight-day relay run across the Nation from July 25 to August 1, 2015 to bring awareness to the dangers of diabetes, obesity and other chronic illnesses; and

WHEREAS, Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation is in its fifth year to promote a healthy and active lifestyle for all Navajos and unite tribal communities in health prevention and intervention; and

WHEREAS, the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, along with the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project, through the Department of Health, has worked together to promote healthy living, exercise and proper diet through Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation; and

WHEREAS, about 90 percent of the 110 chapters of the Navajo Nation have been reached during Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation relay run since 2011, and the goal is to run through all 110 communities; and

WHEREAS, the 2015 Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation will travel through 28 Navajo communities in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah; and

WHEREAS, more than 14,000 participants have been involved in Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation since its inception in 2011, and Navajo Nation Executive Branch divisions have assisted with the movement; and

WHEREAS, The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President encourages all tribal employees to participate in the Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation relay and run and take time off from work to participate in the movement; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RUSSELL BEGAYE AND JONATHAN NEZ, President and Vice President of the Navajo Nation hereby proclaim that the Navajo Nation declares support and participates in the Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation wellness campaign from Saturday, July 25 through Saturday, August 1, 2015.

PROCLAIMED THIS 25 TH DAY OF JULY 2015

Handwritten signature of Russell Begaye in black ink.

Russell Begaye, President
THE NAVAJO NATION

Handwritten signature of Jonathan Nez in black ink.

Jonathan Nez, Vice President
THE NAVAJO NATION



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

July 30, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye, Vice President Nez meet with Utah Gov. Herbert



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez, the two top elected leaders of the Navajo Nation, were given the honor and privilege of addressing the attendees of the 10th Annual Utah Governor's Native American Summit on July 30. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

PROVO—The Navajo Nation was designated as the host tribe for the 10th Annual Utah Governor's Native American Summit today at Utah Valley University.

President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez were in attendance, as more than 600 people, many of them from tribes residing in Utah, gathered for the summit.

Tribal legislators from the 23rd Navajo Nation Council were also in attendance, including Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Davis Filfred, Tom Chee, Nate Brown and Kee Allen Begay.

"Hózhó Speaks – Love, Peace, Beauty and Harmony" was the theme of the summit, which was created by then Lt. Gov. Gary R. Herbert in 2005 and was initially attended by 60 people.

Today, that modest number has increased by tenfold, as tribal leaders, councilmen, native youth and others attended the event. The Utah Division of Indian Affairs and the Navajo Nation

hosted the event.

Gov. Herbert and Lt. Gov. Spencer J. Cox expressed appreciation for the tribes in attendance and said their goal was to work with tribes in Utah.

Ready to work hand-in-hand

President Begaye said, "Some of the issues we're going to be discussing today, Hózhó for our people, is all about economic development, infrastructure and all of the things we need. Like school bus routes and servicing all of our veterans."

He said the Navajo Nation is awaiting the approval of the Utah Public Service Commission for the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority's purchase of the Rocky Mountain Power Company.

"With their approval, we will be able to provide electricity

to over 300 of our Navajo homes and families on the Utah side. We're looking forward to that, Governor Herbert," said President Begaye.

Navajo Nation water rights

President Begaye commended the state of Utah for demonstrating to other states across the country that water rights with tribal nations can be negotiated at the table without going to court and the subsequent years of litigation.

"I was really amazed that the governor and legislators here in the state came up with the proclamation, the resolution, where they agreed they would help the Navajo Nation with their water settlement," he said.

The resolution states that Navajo people will be provided drinking water.

"That is Hózhó," President Begaye said.

Awakening of a New Dawn

Vice President Jonathan Nez said it is truly the awakening of a new dawn on the Navajo Nation. He thanked the governor and lieutenant governor for their advocacy on behalf of native tribes in the state.

"I took time out from a run called Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation. It's over 500 miles, the run, throughout the Navajo Nation," Vice President Nez said. "We have always advocated for healthy living, eating right and taking care of yourself.

"So, our message to the young people in the audience, take care of yourself, stay active and be healthy," he added.

Before leaving the stage, Vice President Nez said the creation of a cabinet level Indian Department in the state is needed. His suggestion drew applause from the crowd.

"We look forward to our continued partnership," said Vice President Nez.

Hózhó and the future

"When talking about Hózhó, we talk about when we signed the Treaty of 1868. It was nation to nation. That was how we were recognized for being a treaty tribe," said President Begaye.

He said the Navajo Nation must deal with three different policies and procedures when it comes to state services provided by federal funds.

"We ask that the state of Utah support that the Navajo Nation. We want to assume total control, direct funding from the federal government," President Begaye said. "Navajo Nation is very sophisticated, we have the infrastructure, the capacity to handle those funds.

"The Navajo Nation stands ready to work hand-in-hand with the Office of the Governor to improve the lives of our people. Thank you," he added.



Vice President Jonathan Nez encouraged the youth in attendance to live a healthy and active lifestyle. He shared his participation in the 5th Annual Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation, where he is currently at 120 miles of running. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez shared the priorities of the Navajo Nation during the tribal leaders round table discussion after the plenary session of the summit. There, they spoke on issues ranging from the Bears Ears Tribal Coalition to infrastructure to roads. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez stand proudly with students who performed in a play honoring the Navajo Code Talkers. Although many of the actors were non-Navajo, they spoke Navajo and acted in a performance that was educational and entertaining. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

