



NAVAJO DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 29, 2015

CONTACT:

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Shiprock Department for Self Reliance Schedule for June 2015

SHIPROCK, New Mex. — SHIPROCK, New Mex. —The Department for Self Reliance's (DSR) Shiprock office would like to announce their office schedule for the month of June.

The DSR will continue to utilize the small building next to the Teen Life Center located off of Highway 64, immediately west of the Shiprock Chapter House. This location is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. until further notice.

Please be informed that only limited services can be provided at this location. Customers of the Shiprock DSR must contact the Gallup DSR office, toll free at 1 (866) 704-6940 or (505) 722-8415, to inquire about their case status due to no network connection at this location. Customers are welcome to submit their applications and documents at this location.

Despite the constant efforts of the DSR to locate an adequate office facility, the Shiprock office will continue to be displaced, unless a facility which meets the needs of the DSR is found.

The schedule of services for the Shiprock DSR office for the month of June 2015 is as follows:

Please be advised that the schedule is subject to change and can change without notice.

Shiprock, NM (Limited staff will be available only to receive documents. Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Located next to the Teen Life Center, off of Highway 64, immediately west of the Shiprock Chapter House.)

- Mondays: No intake interviews.
- Tuesdays: Appointments only.
- Wednesdays: No intake interviews.
- Thursdays: Appointments only.
- Fridays: Intakes (walk-ins).

Shiprock DSR Itinerate sites will continue to operate as scheduled:

NMHSD Income Support – Farmington (located at 101 W. Animas in Farmington, New Mexico.)

- June 2, Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- June 16, Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Aneth Chapter House (located off of HWY 162 in Aneth, Utah.)

- June 11, Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- June 18, Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

(Continued on Page 2.)



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Please be reminded that the following information will be required when applying for DSR services: Social Security Cards; Birth Certificates; valid picture I.D. for adults; information on income, assets and resources; school enrollment/attendance verification for minor children; if there is an absent parent, child support information is required; and if you are a caregiver, guardianship documents are required.

To contact the Shiprock DSR staff please call, the Gallup, New Mex. DSR office, toll free at 1 (866) 704-6940 or (505) 722-8415. For more information please call the DSR Support Services Office at 1 (928) 810-8553 or toll free at 1 (866) 347-2403.

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June 1, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez honor Navajo Nation Treaty Day



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez shared their message in honor of our Navajo ancestors who were in the Long Walk for their Navajo Nation Treaty Day message. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Nitwohdéé' nihi amá sání
dóó nihi acheií Hwéeldi
déé ahní nak'aa.

A time ago, our grandmothers and grandfathers returned back from Ft. Sumner on foot, after years of captivity by the federal government. The Long Walk of the Navajo people was a time of suffering and sadness for the tribe.

Many of our Navajo ancestors, especially the young, old and sick, died during the march to Bosque Redondo, located southeast of Santa Rosa, N.M. Many more died in captivity.

Because of the strength and resilience of our ancestors and their Navajo leaders, the Treaty of 1868 was signed on June 1, 1868, between the Navajo Tribe and the United States of America.

Today, we celebrate the Treaty of 1868, *naaltsoos sání*.

The treaty returned our ancestors back to our tribal homelands between the Four

Sacred Mountains of *Tsisnaajini*, *Tsoodzil*, *Dook'o'oosliid*, and *Dibe' Ntsaa*.

The Treaty of 1868 ended the war between the Navajo people and the U.S.

Provisions in the treaty delineated a reservation for the tribe. Other terms included land distribution, education for Navajo children, agriculture and other conditions.

The Navajo people agreed not to attack U.S. citizens or their belongings. After the Treaty of 1868 was signed, the Navajo people were allowed to return home after years of suffering in captivity.

To this day, the Navajo language and culture survive.

We will be forever indebted to Navajo leaders such as Barboncito, Manuelito, Largo, Narbono, Ganado Mucho and others. With an X, 29 Navajo leaders signed the Treaty of 1868 with Lt. Gen. William T. Sherman.

From the small parcel of land that was allotted the Navajo people as their reservation, the Navajo Nation today has the largest land base in the country. Moreover, we have preserved our language and culture, our songs and prayers that have been held in reverence since time immemorial.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez send a message of unity and strength for Navajo Nation Treaty Day.

It is a day to remember those who came before us, our Navajo ancestors, many of whom suffered and died to allow the survival of our tribe to become the thriving nation it is today.

This afternoon, President Begaye and Vice President Nez visited the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., where they toured the exhibit of the Treaty

is because of their strength and perseverance that Navajo people are survivors of the highest caliber today.

“Our Navajo people are strong. Many of them still live the old way: they haul water, chop wood, care for their livestock and make a living from the land. Today, we acknowledge the sacrifice of our forefathers and pay tribute to their strength and leadership,” Vice President Nez said.

The intestinal fortitude of leaders like Chief Manuelito and Chief Barboncito led to the agreement with General Sherman to end the war and allow our ancestors to return home to Navajo land.

Centuries later, the Navajo people are thriving. We have tribal members who heeded the words of Chief Manuelito to obtain their education and return home under the rainbow of

“We stand strong by this treaty. We will stand by this treaty forever and it will not be taken from us.”

of 1868.

Speaking in Navajo, President Begaye said, “Today, we celebrate this treaty across the Navajo Nation.”

“This exhibit talks about the Navajo people being moved off Navajo land and marched to Ft. Sumner. The Treaty of 1868 is the authority and according to it, we are the Navajo people of today,” President Begaye said.

Our ancestors suffered at Ft. Sumner.

Vice President Nez said it

Navajo sovereignty to advance our nation forward.

“My relations, my people, we stand strong by this treaty. We will stand by this treaty forever and it will not be taken from us. Thank you for observing this day and may God bless you,” President Begaye said.

Executive Branch Report

EASTERN AGENCY COUNCIL MEETING

Nahodishgish, N.M.



THE NAVAJO NATION
Office of the President and Vice President
June 6, 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.

CAPITOL HILL MEETINGS

For the first week in June 2015, we traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with federal officials and leaders from the House and Senate to discuss issues important to the Navajo Nation. These issues ranged from water rights, infrastructure, funding formula changes, appointing members to national tribal organizations, energy, Navajo veterans, employment, economic development, Ft. Wingate, working with the U.S. EPA, transportation, and the reauthorization of NAHASDA.

We met with 11 congressmen and congresswomen, seven senators and several leaders from various federal departments. The legislators we met with were the decision makers: ranking members and chairpersons of committees in both the House and Senate.

It is our intention to ensure that our leaders on Capitol Hill know that Big Navajo is back. The voting block from the Navajo Nation has been the difference in key elections this past season, including the reelection of Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Ariz.), who acknowledged this fact by proudly displaying the Navajo flag outside her office doors.

NAVAJO NATION TREATY DAY

Níwohdéé' nihi amá sání dóó nihi acheii Hwéeldi déé ahní nak'aa.

A time ago, our grandmothers and grandfathers returned back from Ft. Sumner on foot, after years of captivity by the federal government. The Long Walk of the Navajo people was a time of suffering and sadness for the tribe.

It is because of the strength and resilience of our Navajo ancestors that the Treaty of 1868, *naaltsoos sání*, was signed and the war of the federal government against the Navajo people ended. The Long Walk, *Hwéeldi*, tested the limits of our people, but through our sacred language, traditions and songs, we overcame these challenges over time to become the thriving Navajo Nation of today.

We honored the bravery and sacrifice of Navajo leaders such as Manuelito, Barboncito, Largo, Narbono, Ganado Mucho and others at the Smithsonian Institute National Museum of American Indians. We met with the director, Kevin Gover and spoke about the possibility of displaying the original Treaty of 1868 inside the museum and possibly, at the Navajo Nation Museum to share with the Navajo people and others.

We will stand by the Treaty of 1868 forever and it will never be taken from us. Thank you to all who observed Navajo Nation Treaty Day and may our God bless the Navajo Nation.



TÓDÍNÉESHZHEÉ PUBLIC SAFETY COMPLEX GRAND OPENING

On May 29, 2015, the Kayenta Township celebrated the grand opening of the Kayenta Department of Corrections and the Kayenta Support Facility.

The new facility was funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, at a cost of \$34 million and provides a 54,000 square foot facility with 84 beds, a short-term holding facility for male and female inmates, plus a 13,500 square foot support building to house dispatch, police and criminal investigation departments.

The facility is located near the Kayenta District Court, which is another benefit because it reduces travel distance, in addition to relieving overcrowding. The facility also features culturally beneficial healing areas such as a sweat lodge, teepee ground and traditional Navajo hogan. Throughout the construction, there was an 80 percent Navajo workforce participating in its construction.

President Begaye said the construction of the facility was not one person's work or one person's idea. Rather, it was a collective work effort that blessed the Kayenta Chapter with a new public safety facility. He said the new building is symbolic of public safety, from the police officers, emergency medical services and all people serving to protect the Navajo people.

Vice President Nez said the work, dedication, and sacrifice of public safety personnel must be respected. He said the new building was also because of Navajo residents in the community buying goods and services that were taxed and subsequently went toward the facility's construction. He said the fallen Navajo officers must also be honored for the sacrifices they made to protect the Navajo people in the line of duty.

SAN JUAN FIRE SUPPORT SERVICES

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez met with representatives from San Juan County and the Navajo Nation to discuss fire protection support services provided for three Navajo chapters located within the county boundaries. The chapters are Newcomb, Ojo Amarillo and Shiprock.

San Juan County Commissioner Wallace Charley organized the meeting, which was held in late May 2015. It was the first time that this issue was brought forth to the Begaye-Nez administration. President Begaye said the Navajo Nation is exploring temporary options with the county to provide protection to the affected chapters.

This includes the transfer of needed equipment from the county to the tribe and mutual aid response, which would allow the Navajo Nation to reimburse San Juan County for each emergency fire response on the Nation. The tribe will plan for a more permanent solution next fiscal year.

Vice President Nez, who previously served with the Navajo County Board of Supervisors, said the taxes collected by the county from Navajo people paying for goods and services must be taken into account.

"The myth is that Navajos don't pay taxes. Navajos visit the border towns and infuse millions of dollars. We need to remind the commission that if it wasn't for the economic power of Navajos, the county budget crisis would be worse than it is," Vice President Nez said.

President Begaye agreed and said more advocacy from commissioners elected into office by the Navajo people needs to be done. Because they represent these Navajo constituents, they need to advocate on their behalf, he said.

"These are critical services," said President Begaye. "Our people go to Farmington and shop, paying taxes in the process. Those taxes benefit the county, including the fire tax. The county must take that into consideration."

BIRDSPRINGS MEMORIAL DAY

The Birdsprings Chapter honored their fallen warriors on Memorial Day and Vice President Nez attended the event to pay his respects to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who paid the ultimate sacrifice. The veteran organizations from Birdsprings, Leupp and Tolani Lake also participated in the event.

More than 100 people were packed into the domed confines of the chapter, including a large group of veterans. The group honored their fallen comrades with photos of Navajo warriors hung on the wall to honor their service. The color guard also unfolded the flags of these American heroes, inspected them for any wear and tear before refolding them and giving the flags back to family members.

Vice President Nez said Navajo veterans are one of the four main pillars of the administration and that a veteran would be appointed to the Office of the President and Vice President to serve on behalf of the veterans.

"We know that you need a veteran in our office. They know you've been through and what you're facing on a daily basis. We're going to put a good person in there who knows the veteran issues," said Vice President Nez.



TSAYATOH CHAPTER POWER LINE EXTENSION

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez joined Navajo Nation Council Delegate Seth Damon on May 19 to present the chapter with a check amounting to more than \$168,000 for power line extensions.

The chapter members were moved to tears upon seeing their tribal leaders attend their meeting unannounced. They said it was the first time a sitting president and vice president visited their chapter for other reasons than campaigning for election.

Both President Begaye and Vice President Nez praised the tenacity and intelligence of Damon and told community members they raised good leader who is looking out for their best interests. Damon said what initially began as a \$50,000 supplemental appropriations request grew to more than \$168,000 to meet chapter needs.

A young man introduced himself as a member of the Notah family and said he was in the eleventh grade. He recounted his life of doing homework in the dark and worrying about his elder grandmother in the winter, as his family stacked blankets to keep warm.

Breaking down in tears of joy he said, "Maybe now my younger brothers and sisters will finally have light to do their homework and we can utilize heaters and those kind of things to stay warm in the winter."

GRADUATION MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS

President Begaye and Vice President Nez congratulated students that graduated from high school and colleges and universities across the country. They said education is crucial for tribal leadership and that their first round of cabinet member appointments highlights that point.

Several graduates of Harvard University have been appointed to the Begaye-Nez administration to provide solutions to problems facing the Navajo people.

In May, President Begaye traveled to Tempe, Ariz. to honor Navajo students graduating from Arizona State University. ASU has partnered with the Navajo Nation to educate teachers and staff from Navajo Head Start, which currently has more than 50 percent of their staff with a bachelor's degree education.

"Congratulations to our high school graduates across the nation. We are also very proud of all our graduates from the colleges and universities across the country," said President Begaye. "Our administration is excited to bring you home to work for the Navajo people."

Vice President Nez commended the president for opening the door to educated Navajos to return home and serve the people.

"I want to thank *shi nali*, President Begaye, for opening the doors to a lot of our educated folks coming back to the Navajo Nation," said Vice President Nez.

BEGAYE-NEZ CABINET APPOINTMENTS

For the awakening of a new dawn, it was important for President Begaye and Vice President Nez to change the consciousness of the Navajo people, especially the tribal employees providing direct services to the people. The administration did this by appointing highly educated and qualified executive directors to their cabinet to oversee the different tribal divisions.

These key appointments include Jackson Brossy as the executive director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office, Bidtah Becker as the executive director of the Division of Natural Resources, Wenona Benally as the executive director for the Navajo-Hopi Land Commission, Jesse Delmar as the executive director of the Division of Public Safety, and Dr. Donald Benn as the executive director of the Navajo Environmental Protection Agency.

The Begaye-Nez administration received hundreds of resumes and applications to join the team and President Begaye and Vice President Nez will be announcing more new appointments soon. In the interim, they have asked others to assist temporarily as they assemble the right team to assist the Navajo Nation.

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June 6, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez encourage public to be cautious when traveling



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez asked the traveling public to stay off Highway 95 near the Comb Ridge by Bluff, Utah. A tornado was spotted in the area, along with rockslides. (Courtesy photos)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez urge tribal members to be safe during rainstorms passing over the nation.

“We encourage the traveling public to be cautious with the recent storms arising on the Navajo Nation. There have been marble sized hail, a tornado and rockslides reported,” said President Begaye.

He encouraged the public to report any storm related damages to their local law enforcement and to allow

emergency personnel to do their job.

Vice President Jonathan Nez was in Monument Valley today and he, too, encouraged public safety.

“We saw some ominous clouds, but did not see the tornado. We are requesting that the general public slow down when traveling and to be careful during the storm,” said Vice President Nez.

Around 8 p.m., Rose Whitehair, director of the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, sent photos of a tornado touching down northeast of Monument Valley.

“There was (silver) dollar sized hail and multiple rockslides in the Montezuma Creek and Bluff area,” Whitehair said. “No injuries or damages reported thus far.”

Herman Shorty, chairman of the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management said the commissioners would be on standby and would convene on Sun., if necessary.

Otherwise, he said the commission would meet on June 8, beginning at 9 a.m. at the Emergency Operations Center at the Navajo Transportation Complex in Tse Bonito, N.M. for updates and preparation for possible action.

“I’m most concerned with the road between Bluff and Aneth, Montezuma Creek included. We must act as prudently as possible,” Shorty said.

The traveling public is encouraged to stay away from Highway 95 near the Comb Ridge in Bluff, Utah. There were reports of rockslides in the area and the NNDEM is awaiting confirmation on road closures and alternate detour routes.

More updates will be provided as information becomes available.





THE NAVAJO NATION

Proclamation

IN HONOR AND RECOGNITION OF THE LATE NAVAJO CODE TALKER PFC BAHE KETCHUM

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

WHEREAS, The late Bahe Ketchum 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 1944 to 1946, when he was honorably discharged; and

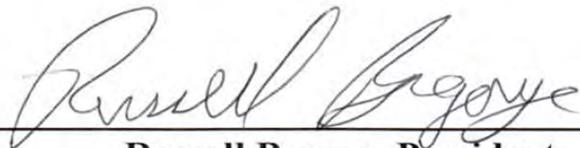
WHEREAS, The late Bahe Ketchum served as a Navajo Code Talker and was stationed in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater from 1944 to 1946, fighting in the Battles of Guadalcanal, Okinawa, and Tsingtao; and

WHEREAS, The late Bahe Ketchum 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 Bahe Ketchum, from sunrise on June 9 to sunset on June 12, 2015.

ORDERED THIS 8th DAY OF JUNE 2015



Russell Begaye, President
THE NAVAJO NATION



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June 8, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye orders flags at half-staff in honor of Bahe Ketchum



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye ordered flags across the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff in honor of Navajo Code Talker Behe Ketchum, who passed this morning in Flagstaff, Ariz. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—The Navajo Nation is in mourning.

President Russell Begaye ordered flags across the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff from sunrise on June 9 to sunset on June 12, 2015, in honor of the late Navajo Code Talker Bahe Ketchum.

Ketchum passed at the age of 96 at 9:20 a.m. today in Flagstaff.

“The Navajo Nation sends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of Bahe Ketchum. As a Navajo Code Talker, he defended not only the Navajo Nation, but the United States of America against

tyranny and oppression,” said President Begaye.

“We salute his bravery, sacrifice and determination for the Navajo people,” he added.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said, “Bahe Ketchum honored the Navajo people, not only through his service as a Navajo Code Talker, but by his willingness to help people throughout his lifetime.”

“Bahe Ketchum was an American hero and he will be honored by the generations to come for his service to his country. We salute his life and his military service,” said Vice President Nez.

Vice President Nez was the former council delegate for the chapters of Inscription House, Navajo Mountain, Oljato and Shonto.

Ketchum reached the rank of private first class and served with the 6th Marine Division from 1944 to 1946. He saw combat in the Battles of Guadalcanal, Okinawa and Tsingtao. He was born in Kaibeto, Ariz. and grew up at Inscription House.

He was married to Estelle Ketchum, who passed in 2006. The couple had 10 sons, two daughters, 29 grandchildren and 18 grandchildren.

Marvin Ketchum, his son, said his father received a “whole slew of medals,” including the Congressional Silver Medal for his service as a Navajo Code Talker.

The funeral date has not been set and the family will be meeting at the Navajo Mountain Chapter House on June 9 at 5 p.m. to plan arrangements, including establishing a bank account for monetary donations.

Marvin Ketchum said his father often talked of working for the headquarters during the war, transmitting and translating messages for generals, commanders and top brass. He said his father also saw action on the battlefield.

“He said he was in Phoenix, about to catch a train, when he ran into a U.S. Marine Corps officer who recommended that he enlist,” Ketchum said. “My father was with a friend he was working with and the officer said, ‘You guys aren’t doing anything, so you should enlist.’”

His friend, Willard Nez Tsosie, joined Ketchum and enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps to become Navajo Code Talkers.

Ketchum said of his father, “He did a lot of services for the community of Navajo Mountain and people in general. He served his country. He was a positive role model. We ask the public for a lot of prayers for the family.”



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

June 8, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye, Vice President Nez meet with U.S. Congressmen, Senators

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez spent last week in Washington, D.C. meeting with Congressmen, Congresswomen and Senators on behalf of the Navajo Nation. Their first meeting was at the White House, with Raina Thiele, Associate Director for the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



WASHINGTON, D.C.—Big Navajo is back.

From June 1 to 5, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez spent the week on Capitol Hill lobbying on behalf of the Navajo Nation.

Their whirlwind tour of the nation's capitol was not a haphazard affair, however.

Everything was carefully strategized and well researched before the two most powerful men in Indian Country began meeting with congressmen, congresswomen and senators from various states.

Their meetings were with majority leaders and the chairpersons of committees in both the House and Senate. Additionally, they met with key programs such as the U.S. Department of Interior and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

At each step of the way, President Begaye and Vice

President Nez were well received by federal officials and legislators alike. They were very popular with the contingent of tribal members residing in Washington, D.C.

The Begaye-Nez administration stuck to the four pillars of their platform when addressing the nation's legislators: Navajo veterans, infrastructure, Navajo elders/youth, and employment.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez honed in on these priority areas throughout their discussions on Capitol Hill.

They explained to legislators that the four pillars were a mandate by the Navajo people that elected them into office by such an overwhelming margin against their opponent.

The Navajo people are tired of the old system, they said, adding that it was truly the "awakening of a new dawn" for the nation.

Navajo Nation Ambassador Dr. Peterson Zah, Office of the

President and Vice President Chief of Staff Robert Joe and the staff of the NNWO joined President Begaye and Vice President Nez during their packed schedule of meetings throughout the week.

They met with the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate. No matter the meeting, their focus was always the same: the mandate of the Navajo people.

President Begaye referenced the large voting block of the Navajo Nation and its role in electing Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick (D-Ariz.) into office.

"Navajo has become a swing vote and people in Arizona know that Navajo voters got Rep. Kirkpatrick into office. That's why she took her oath of office inside the Navajo Nation Council Chamber," said President Begaye.

He said the paternalism of the federal government of the past needs to be redefined to

allow the Navajo Nation to begin creating new jobs through manufacturing, negotiating water rights settlements with the three states and reforming appropriations funding formulas that favor smaller tribes that vote against Big Navajo.

Many of the people who are unemployed include segments of the 22,000 Navajo veterans residing on the nation. The veterans are also in need of housing and mental health counseling services for their post-traumatic stress disorder.

"Our veterans are saying they've been forgotten from one administration to the next, that countless politicians used them to get elected, but once in office, nothing happened," President Begaye said.

The Begaye-Nez administration is determined to get the Navajo Nation Veterans Act passed to address these many concerns.

The other pillar was focused

on Navajo elders and youth, which are interrelated by the preservation of the Navajo language and culture.

Vice President Nez said the 2014 presidential election was a contentious time in the tribe's history and framed in the middle of the controversy was *Dine' bizaad* and the effort to preserve it for the future generations.

"Our Navajo elders are the foundation of who we are, our cultural identity. We need to encourage our elders to spend time with our youth. The youth can take care of them and in return, our elders can teach them our language and traditions," said Vice President Nez.

The other component to be addressed by the administration, he said, was the need for nursing homes and assisted living centers across the nation for Navajo elders.

Vice President Nez said, "We need to provide these kind of facilities so our elders can eat traditional Navajo food, communicate in Navajo and be taken care of by people who understand the culture and language."

The large land base of the Navajo Nation must be taken into consideration when decisions are made on infrastructure development, President Begaye said, especially when it comes to the funding formulas for distribution.

"People don't understand our unique issues. It's hard to imagine unless you travel the land and meet the people, visit homes and families," President Begaye said. "People are constantly hauling water for drinking, cooking, bathing and livestock."

He shared the story about how he and Vice President Nez presented a check for more than \$168,000 for power line extensions in the Tsayatoh Chapter in N.M. in late May 2015, along with tribal council delegate Seth Damon.

The chapter members wept

at the news that their community would finally receive electricity after a lifetime of waiting for electricity.

"One young man in the eleventh grade stood up and said he and his siblings studied every night with their flashlights. It was a humbling experience to see our people get those necessities of life we take for granted," President Begaye said.

He noted that the needs of electricity and water on the nation are overshadowed by the demand for broadband access. Only a small portion of the nation has online access because other infrastructure like electricity must be in place before Internet access can occur, he added.

Vice President Nez said the other mandate from Navajo voters was for job creation to combat the high number of unemployed Navajos, which hovers at more than 50 percent.

Possibilities included taking advantage of the desert economy of the Navajo Nation to begin producing goods from local products such as yucca plants for the production of soap, lotions, ointments, lip balm and other products.

"Yanabah Navajo Tea is being sold right now across the country and that's an example of our desert economy creating not only jobs, but economic development. Our people are attached to the land, that is why many of our elders refused to leave, even during the Navajo-Hopi relocation," Vice President Nez said.

He also spoke of innovative efforts like those employed by Habitat For Humanity utilizing sweat equity for tax credits and mentorship programs to help with initiatives like building homes for Navajo veterans.

Throughout the week, the Navajo delegation met with 11 congressmen and congresswomen, seven senators, and several leaders from various federal departments.



Vice President Jonathan Nez explains issues facing the Navajo people to Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) during a meeting at the Hart Senate Office Building on June 4. Sen. Udall is the ranking member of the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and related agencies. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



President Russell Begaye speaks with Congressman Don Young (R-Ala.) at the Rayburn Building on June 3. Rep. Young is the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs. The meeting was cordial and productive. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



President Begaye speaks with Congressman Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.) on the afternoon of June 1 at the Rayburn House Office Building. The discussions were focused on a number of issues facing the Navajo Nation from the reauthorization of NAHASDA to Navajo veterans. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



NAVAJO HEAD START

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 8, 2015

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Navajo Head Start partners with Diné College to help teachers obtain degree

“This partnership will further promote our initiative to have a highly-qualified workforce.”—Sharon H. Singer

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Sharon H. Singer, assistant superintendent of the Navajo Nation Department of Diné Education, is pleased to announce a new partnership between Navajo Head Start (NHS) and Diné College to help paraprofessionals obtain their associates degree in early childhood education, and Navajo language and culture.

Singer explained NHS and Diné College established this partnership to further the mission and vision of both institutions, which is to make higher education and a highly-qualified workforce a priority for NHS.

“We are excited with our new partnership with Din. Col lege, who will be working with our para-professionals in obtaining their A.A. degrees in early childhood education, and Diné language and culture,” said Singer. “This partnership will further promote our initiative to have a highly-qualified workforce.”

Diné College entered into the memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Navajo Nation, which was signed by Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly in April. Per the agreement, the Navajo Nation and the Navajo Department of Diné Education (DODE) will be committed to supporting NHS and its staff in attaining Associate of Arts degrees in early childhood education from Diné College for the next three years.

In 1995, the Navajo Nation, under the leadership of then-Navajo Nation President Albert Hale, made a promise to develop the capacity for Navajo language and culture immersion in NHS centers.

Dr. Daniel McLaughlin, chairperson for the Center for Diné Teacher Education, explained that Diné College is preparing future teachers to become respectful and effective teachers utilizing Navajo-Diné teachings with all students. He described the partnership as a “win-win-win.”

“It’s a win-win-win. It’s a win for Navajo Head Start, it’s a win for Diné College, and it’s also a win for the teacher candidates, not to mention communities and Head Start centers across the Nation,” said McLaughlin. “We like to beef up our enrollment and have our faculty busy doing what they do best—that is train teachers.”

-More-

Page 2/2/2 – Navajo Head Start Partners with Diné College

McLaughlin said their lessons will be based on *Sá' h Naaghái Bik'eh Hózhóón*, developing their students according to Navajo teachings and traditions.

The partnership begins this summer and more than 25 NHS staff plan to attend classes at various Diné College sites across the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Head Start recently established a partnership and cohort program with Arizona State University, which recently graduated three NHS teachers with master's degrees in instruction and curriculum with an emphasis in early childhood education.

“We look forward to working with Diné College in getting our staff into their classrooms and on the road to earning their bachelor's degrees,” said Singer.

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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.



June 11, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pinon Unified School District loses nine buses to overnight fire



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez expressed disappointment with the news that buses for Pinon Unified School District were burned overnight. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

TWIN ARROWS, Ariz.— Nine school buses from the Pinon Unified School District were burned sometime after midnight.

Seven of the buses were completely destroyed and two were partially burned.

The Navajo Nation Fire Department from Window Rock is in Pinon, Ariz. investigating the fire. The scene has been shutdown and summer school is cancelled for Thursday and Friday.

The preliminary report is that the incident is suspected arson.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye admonished the person or persons responsible and said it is the children and the community that will suffer the consequences.

“It is unfortunate that there are people out there burning

buses that transport our children who are continuing their education during the summer,” President Begaye said. “The people responsible are not harming the vehicles, but our children and our communities.”

He said during the summer, kids are out of school and enjoying free activities sponsored by the school districts, like summer school and the free lunch program.

People with negative intentions need to pause and think about what they are about to do and the people that will be harmed by their actions, he said.

“We’re asking the public to also be on the lookout for people that may want to harm our children and our people,” President Begaye said.

Anyone with information on the fire is encouraged to

step forward and contact the local authorities.

“Our community members need to be vigilant. Keep an eye out for your chapter. NDOT and NECA’s equipment get vandalized also,” said Vice President Nez. “We need to hold each other accountable, from the young to the old.”

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon was equally disappointed with the news of the buses being burned.

“It saddens my heart that any school would be a target for arson,” said Witherspoon.

Attakai Tso, former transportation manager for the Pinon Unified School District, said the fire occurred between midnight and 1 a.m.

“The school security saw the fire and reported it. One bus caught fire and then it spread to other buses. They were able to move some buses, but nine buses were burned,” Attakai said.

“It’s bad, real bad,” he added.

Doug Vaughan, superintendent for Pinon Unified School District, said there were no injuries. Although buses were burned, the bus barn did not burn in the fire.

“There was an incident in the middle of last night. We conducted an extensive survey of all staff and students

and there are zero injuries reported. The incident is under investigation,” said Vaughan.

He said the estimated damage from the blaze is \$1.4 million. The school district is already moving toward replacement of the buses for the upcoming school year beginning in the fall.

“For today and tomorrow, it’s having a drastic effect, we had to cancel summer school. We’ll have summer school back in session on Monday,” Vaughan said.

Pinon Unified School district has a total of 33 buses and for now, there will be enough buses to transport students for the summer school session.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez were attending the Navajo Nation Council Leadership Meeting at Twin Arrows when they received word about the fire.

“I’m asking people to refrain from doing any further damage to our property and ultimately, our children and our people,” President Begaye said.





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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 12, 2015

No More Snakes at the Navajo Nation Zoo

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – No more snakes.

The Navajo Nation Zoo is no longer a home for two bull or gopher snakes and a rattlesnake.

Navajo Nation Zoo Manager David Mikesic said the bull snakes were rehomed in March and the rattlesnake was rehomed in May.

More than 3,000 students from various schools on the Navajo Nation visit the Navajo Nation Zoo every year.

Mikesic said approximately 25 percent of the teachers who accompanied the students expressed concerns from parents who did not want their children viewing the snakes at the zoo.

“It was not a case of fear. It goes beyond fear,” Mikesic explained. “It was a cultural issue. The parents did not want them to view, nor breathe the same air as the snakes. If there’s a concern that people can’t view snakes, why continue to house the snakes here. I want all classrooms to see all the other animals that we have in the rest of the Discovery Center.”

The Discovery Center is home to other classes of animals and mammals such as spotted skunks, ringtail, Gila monsters, scorpions, spiders, frogs, toads, fish and lizards.

The bull snakes were sent to the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Draper, Utah and the rattler was transported to the Staten Island Zoological Society in Staten, New York. The Navajo Nation Zoo is the only zoo in the U.S. that is managed and owned by an American Indian tribe. It is home to over 100 animals representing over 50 different species. Nearly all of the animals housed at the Navajo Nation are injured or orphaned, leaving them unable to be released back into the wild.

After several months of renovation the Discovery Center will reopen on Monday, June 15th for visitors to see new upgrades that the Zoo’s construction staff has completed. For more information, contact them at www.navajozoo.org or (928) 871-6574.



Joint Press Release

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



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 12, 2015

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Navajo Nation leaders meet to address top priorities

TWIN ARROWS, Ariz.— For the first time in tribal history, Navajo leaders from the Executive and Legislative Branches met to discuss the needs and priorities of the Navajo Nation to present a unified voice on the national and international stage.

These meetings will be continued for the duration of the administration and will also include the Judicial Branch to strengthen the voice and position of the Navajo Nation on Capitol Hill and the world at large.

The 23rd Navajo Nation Council and Speaker LoRenzo Bates hosted the meeting at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort. The purpose was to align the Nation's priorities and 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.

"For years, dating back to before any of us took office, there has been this mentality that legislative is on one side of the street and executive is on the other side — that mindset needs to be eliminated to truly make progress," said Speaker Bates, emphasizing the need to be united and consistent when lobbying for external funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

President Begaye provided an overview of the four pillars of his administration: Navajo veterans, elders and youth, infrastructure and job creation. He said the Navajo Nation's power and authority needs to be re-established nationally.

Speaking in Navajo, President Begaye said, "The time has come for us to execute the platform we presented during our campaign. We've been talking about it for a while now, the need to strengthen relations with the tribal branches and work together."

He said areas of discussion include water rights, expanding Navajo lands and establishing authority over surface and subsurface leasing.

He said only seven to 12 percent of the Navajo population holds authority over the land in the form of grazing permits, often impeding progress such as home site leasing, farming and infrastructure development.

“We want to open this up to make the process easier. We want to strengthen partnerships with county, state and federal officials,” said President Begaye. “The leveraging of funds is important to the Nation and when these funds are reverted, it really impacts our programs and communities.

“We also need to revitalize the local governance and strengthen the voice and needs of the people,” he added.

The chairpersons from each of the Council’s standing committees also presented their respective priorities as they relate to their oversight authorities, outlined in Title II of the Navajo Nation Code. Additionally, each delegate was provided time to present an overview of the needs and priorities within each of their respective chapters.

The two-day discussion covered a wide range of topics including water rights, economic development, rangeland issues, housing, public safety, external funding, scholarships, elderly care, and others.

Speaker Bates and President Begaye said the meeting marked the first time that elected leaders from the legislative and executive branches had met to discuss issues at length.

“The meeting allowed the elected officials to put everything on the table, from Nation-wide issues to the chapter level, so that we can now begin to align our priorities and to develop and finalize legislation that will allow us to move in the same direction,” added Speaker Bates.

Throughout the two-day meeting, elected officials emphasized the importance of establishing timelines and also to identify which initiatives can be handled administratively and which may require policy changes.

Vice President Nez said the priorities of the Executive and Legislative Branches are related and that the administration looks forward to working in tandem with the Council.

“I appreciate Speaker Bates mentioning the need for unification. To be able to speak with one voice, not only in D.C., but we’re players in the United Nations as well. We really need to have that one voice,” said Vice President Nez.

President Begaye and Council members agreed to meet later in the month to develop a plan of action to address the many issues discussed while stressing that continued communication is key to moving forward together.

“Ultimately, our goal is to establish priorities that help the Navajo People in the form of a resolution that the President and Council agree upon,” Speaker Bates stated.

“These priority areas I shared are from the Navajo people and we view this as a mandate. We will work on their behalf,” President Begaye said.



THE NAVAJO NATION

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June 16, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Russell Begaye honors Navajo Code Talker Bahe Ketchum



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez signed a proclamation for flags across the Navajo Nation to be flown at half-staff in honor of Navajo Code Talker Bahe Ketchum. The proclamation, along with the Navajo Nation flag and a framed document explaining the 13 folds of the American flag was presented to the Ketchum family by President Begaye on June 13 at Naatsis'áán, Ariz. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

NAVAJO MOUNTAIN, Ariz.—A national hero was laid to rest on June 13.

Hundreds of people gathered inside a striped tent at the Pioneer Days Event Field for the funeral service of Navajo Code Talker Bahe Ketchum, who passed on June 8 in Flagstaff.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye was in attendance to pay respect to Ketchum on behalf of the Navajo people. Rep. Jennifer

“We extend our heartfelt condolences to his children, friends, relatives and the community of Navajo Mountain.”

Benally (D-Ariz.) also attended the funeral service.

Four Navajo Code Talkers were also on hand to honor their brother and comrade in arms. Members of the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders and a

detachment of U.S. Marines from Phoenix joined the Code Talkers to remember Ketchum.

“Today, our nation is mourning over the loss of Bahe Ketchum, one of our national heroes. We extend

our heartfelt condolences to his children, friends, relatives and the community of Navajo Mountain,” said President Begaye.

He said Ketchum was not only a hero and Marine, but also a kind person who served his community and advocated for the next generation, the children.

“Our nation extends gratitude for his service and his work will continue for the years to come and may he rest

in peace,” President Begaye said.

President Begaye presented the Ketchum family with the Navajo Nation flag, a framed and signed proclamation for flags across the Nation to be flown at half-staff in honor of Bahe Ketchum, and a framed document explaining the 13 folds of the American flag.

Former chairman and Navajo Code Talker Peter MacDonald Sr. provided the eulogy, recounting the humble background and childhood of Ketchum, before he began his service to the country as a Code Talker.

Ketchum was of the Many Goats Clan, born for the Edge Water Clan. His maternal grandfathers were Bitter Water Clan and his paternal grandfathers were Black Streak Wood Clan.

After Ketchum’s biological mother passed when he was a toddler, *Asdzaa Bi Tlizi Ligaii*, Lady with White Goats, raised him.

In his late teens, Ketchum was married *Hastii Bi Gishii’s* daughter from the Kaibeto area, but she died giving birth to their daughter when Ketchum was serving in World War II.

After returning from the war, he married Estella Nez Tsosie, who preceded him in death in 2006. Eight children, 29 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren survive Ketchum.

“We’re here to honor a Marine, a man of good character, a man who loved deeply and was loved in return,” MacDonald said. “He was a Navajo Code Talker, a hero and friend of our family.”

Ketchum landed April 1, 1945 on the beaches of Okinawa with the 6th Marine Division. After surviving the Battle of Okinawa, he served in main land China assisting with the surrender of the Japanese at Tsing Tao.

“What he experienced growing up out here in the remote area helped him, I’m sure, to survive the years he was in the military,” said MacDonald.

Ketchum’s children celebrated their father’s gentle spirit that was never harsh in speech or actions. They said he was a man of faith who never hesitated to share his love of God with others.

“Dad was an honest, reliable and faithful provider to his wife and children. He encouraged his children to attain higher education and was an active community member and leader of Navajo Mountain,” his children said. “We are hopeful our family will follow in the footsteps of his kindness, faith and leadership.

“We’ll miss you Dad, but we know you are in a good place with God and other family members who left before you,” they added.

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NAVAJO PHONETIC ALPHABET

A	Wóláchíí'	Ant
B	Shash	Bear
C	Mósi	Cat
D	Bijih	Deer
E	Dzeeh	Elk
F	Ma'ii	Fox
G	Tł'izi	Goat
H	Łji'	Horse
I	Tin	Ice
J	Télichó'i	Jackass
K	Tł'izi yázhí	Kid
L	Dibé yázhí	Lamb
M	Na'ats'oosi	Mouse
N	Neeshch'ii'	Nut
O	Né'eshjaa'	Owl
P	Bisóodi	Pig
Q	K'aa' yeitłijh	Quiver
R	Gah	Rabbit
S	Dibé	Sheep
T	Tązhii	Turkey
U	Nóóda'i	Ute
V	Ak'ehdidlini	Victor
W	Dl'ooii	Weasel
X	Alná'ázdzh	Cross
Y	Tsá'ászi'	Yucca
Z	Béesh dootł'izh	Zinc



Many people asked to be photographed with President Begaye after the funeral service concluded. He met with young and old, veterans and civilians alike for photos. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Private First Class Bahe Ketchum was honored not only by his community and tribal leaders, but his comrades, the Navajo Code Talkers, as well. Four members were present for the ceremony. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Hundreds of people packed inside the yellow and white striped tent that was erected at the Navajo Mountain Pioneer Days Event Grounds. Although it was hot, the community and public paid their respect to a hero. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



June 16, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Vice President Nez attends agency council, Coyote Canyon building dedication



Vice President Jonathan Nez said Marshall Plummer was a public servant who was dedicated to his chapter and the Navajo people. (Photo by Rob Joe)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On June 13, Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez was in attendance at the Northern Agency Council meeting at Sanostee, N.M. The meeting was scheduled during the same time President Begaye was at the funeral services for Navajo Code Talker Bahe Ketchum at Navajo Mountain.

Vice President Nez provided an update on the Executive Branch issues he and President Russell Begaye have addressed since taking the oath of office on May 12.

Information included details of meetings with congressmen, congresswomen and senators on Capitol Hill, Navajo Nation Treaty Day, the *Tódinéeshzhee* Public Safety Complex, San Juan County fire support services, Birdsprings Memorial Day, Tsayatoh power line extension, graduation message for students, and cabinet appointments from the Begaye-Nez administration.

“We are working together and opening the door for our educated Navajos to walk through and return home to help

the nation,” he said.

More than 100 people were in attendance for the meeting, a similar crowd as the Eastern Agency Council meeting that was held the week before at Nahodishgish, N.M.

Same as the previous meeting, the chapter officials were eager to begin working with the administration and meet the new leaders of the Navajo Nation.

Later in the morning, Vice President Nez attended the building dedication ceremony at Coyote Canyon. The chapter house was renamed the Marshall Plummer Memorial Hall.

A traditional blessing began the festivities, which included members of the Plummer family, Vice President Nez, Dr. Peterson Zah, Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Robert Joe, Sen. John Pinto (D-N.M.), Rep. Patty Lundstrom (D-N.M.), former vice chairman Ed T. Begay and others.

Vice President Nez said, “We appreciate the Plummer family and realize the sacrifice their father, uncle, brother and nalf made serving in a leadership

capacity. He was out there serving the community.”

While serving as vice president, Plummer was not home very much, Vice President Nez said, offering gratitude for the family’s understanding and support.

He also acknowledged the service and dedication of Navajo veterans and first responders, including police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

Vice President Nez said it was appropriate for the community celebrate the legacy of Marshall Plummer by naming the building after him.

Speaking in Navajo, Vice President Nez said he is standing beside President Begaye and not “sitting behind him,” which is the literal translation for vice president in Navajo.

“That is what Vice President Plummer did for President Zah, he stood beside him and supported him,” Vice President Nez said.

Dr. Peterson Zah spoke of the time in office he shared with Plummer, who served as Navajo Nation Vice President during their administration from 1991-1994.

He said it was a privilege and an honor to serve with Plummer.

“As a show of respect, the residents Coyote Canyon are renaming the chapter house after Mr. Plummer for his many years of service to their community and the Navajo Nation,” Zah said. “Thank you.”

Plummer was a true statesman for the Navajo people, Zah said, and had a unique ability to remain calm and collected during times of crises.

Zah recalled a time in 2006, when the city of Farmington called upon Plummer to quell racial tensions that were growing after an Anglo police officer shot and killed a Navajo man. During that time, three Anglo kids were also charged with severely beating a Navajo.

“Marshall Plummer was a Navajo leader with the innate ability of protecting his Navajo people, which shouldn’t be surprising when you consider his service to his country as a former Vietnam veteran,” said Zah.

Before serving as the first vice president of the Navajo Nation, Plummer served as a council delegate for Coyote Canyon from 1988 to 1991.

During that time, he was a member of the 49ers, a minority group of council delegates that fought against former chairman Peter MacDonald after federal crimes were filed against him.

Subsequently, the tribal council voted in Plummer to serve as interim chairman.

“Ever the statesman, (Plummer) stepped down when Johnny R. Thompson, former vice chairman, argued he had legal title to the chairmanship,” Zah said. “That’s the kind of man he was, diplomatic.

“Thank you for honoring Marshall Plummer in this manner. It shows the character and commitment he had to the Navajo Nation,” he added.

Joe said, “Marshall Plummer was a passionate leader that influenced communities and diverse cultures to work toward a common vision. His legacy is honored by the chapter.”



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2015

New Land Withdrawal Designation Regulations Approved

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – The Resources and Development Committee of the Navajo Nation Council passed a resolution on Tuesday, June 16th approving the Land Withdrawal Designation Regulation to designate land for future development.

The Navajo Land Department has been working diligently to amend regulations to clarify and expedite the land withdrawal designation process, which was causing a little confusion among the chapters and making project time lines longer. These regulations will enhance the chapter Land Use Plans.

Navajo Nation Land Department Director Mike Halona, stated, “We’re trying to clarify the difference between a land withdrawal designation process and land conveyance process. We hope the passage of these new regulations will help clarify and streamline the land withdrawal process for the Navajo chapters to develop their community land use plans. Without recording chapter land use plan (CLUP) land designation, we could be adversely developing within an area planned for other use.”

A land withdrawal designation does not authorize development or disturbance on Navajo Nation land. Moreover, it does not apply to how to get a lease. Prior to any development on the land, a lease must be obtained in addition to the withdrawal.



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The purpose of a land withdrawal designation is to designate an area of land for future development by ensuring that the rights of grazing permittees, who are in compliance with their grazing permits are properly addressed as applicable and as required under 16 N.N.C. §§ 1401 et seq. and to prevent any subsequent claims to the land and ensuring that the affected chapter supports the land withdrawal designation and use of the land.

Halona added, “With the approval of the Navajo Nation General Leasing Regulations of 2013, which gave the Navajo Nation authority to approve leases; this Land Withdrawal Designation Regulation is step one in the Land Use Planning process. The Navajo Land Department is in the process of establishing a Navajo General Leasing Office, where all leases and permits will be administered by the Navajo Nation. Land Withdrawal Designation Regulations was just one among other regulations that are being developed.”

The Resources Development Committee within approval of this legislation also included that “the Navajo Nation government may develop on land designated by the Land Withdrawal Designation without a lease for government purposes only.”

The Resources and Development Committee authorized the Navajo Land Department director the power and authority to give final approval of all land withdrawal designations on the Navajo Nation.

For more information about how to acquire a land withdrawal, contact the Navajo Nation Land Department at (928) 871-6401.



THE NAVAJO NATION

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June 23, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye praises Interior Department for approving gaming compact



Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise board members and staffers stand proudly with President Russell Begaye. (Photo by Lynette Willie)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—With eight days to spare, the Tribal-State Gaming Compact between the State of N.M. and the Navajo Nation is in effect, as of June 22.

The agreement allows the Navajo Nation, Jicarilla Apache Nation, Mescalero Apache Tribe, Pueblo of Acoma and Pueblo of Jemez to continue gaming operations for the next 22 years.

The gaming compact was set to expire on June 30.

“We worked hard on the compact. This compact is an integral part of the Navajo economy and an exercise of our tribal sovereignty and self-determination,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

President Begaye said he was disappointed last year when the compact died on the senate floor of the N.M. Legislature by a vote of 10-31.

The 2014 gaming compact was solely for the Navajo Nation and contained provisions that were unpopular with neighboring tribes in the state.

For more than a year, the Navajo Nation negotiated with

neighboring tribes and crafted an agreement that was favorable to all.

President Begaye commended the tribes for working cooperatively, but said the jurisdiction over gaming compacts by the federal government must be maintained.

The lack of knowledge on Indian nations and the issues facing N.M. tribes by state legislators was the problem in getting the compact passed the first time around, he said. The negotiation of tribal gaming compacts and other issues such as water rights must remain in the hands of the federal government, he added.

“The federal government must live up to their trust responsibility and not push that obligation to the states,” President Begaye said. “Last year, we were really disappointed to see (the compact) get voted down.

“I guess in some ways, it’s good because this year, the compact is a little better than what the state was going to give us from last year,” he added.

A new provision included in the 2015 gaming compact allows

casinos to remain open for 24 hours a day. Another provision established a marker program for gamblers who meet income guidelines and cash balances in their bank accounts.

Allowing tribes to provide complimentary food and lodging was another new provision.

Other components include the tribal self-exclusion program, which reports information on how funds are spent for problem gambling programs and enforcement of arbitration provisions for the state.

Additional concessions by the state provided that tribes would no longer have to make revenue sharing payments if state operated racetrack casinos expanded beyond six or increased the number of gambling machines or hours of operation.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said he has hope that the spirit of cooperation that was demonstrated with N.M. can also be a part of the negotiations with Ariz. when the tribal gaming compact comes up for review.

“We would like to see the same willingness to work together with our friends in Arizona,” said Vice President Nez.

Karis Begaye, an attorney with Navajo Nation Department of Justice, said the compact was officially published in the Federal Register on June 22.

“We are updating our gaming ordinance for implementation of the compact,” Begaye said. “The Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise is also conducting training for implementation of the compact.”

She said the Flowing Water Casino would be designated as the Navajo Nation’s legacy casino under terms of the compact.

Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary on Indian Affairs for the U.S. Department of Interior, sent a letter detailing the approval of the tribal-state gaming compacts to President Begaye on June 9.

Washburn stated, “Each tribe is a separate and independent sovereign with its own identity and salient issues, and that good faith negotiations require the State to address issues that are actually relevant to each tribe.

“Here, our understanding is that each of the Tribes made an independent determination that coordinating their efforts to negotiate the 2015 Compacts was in their best interests,” he added.

Derrick Watchman, CEO of Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, said they are working with their stakeholders and partners moving forward.

“We are implementing the new provisions, including updating the gaming ordinance through the Navajo Nation Council,” Watchman said. “We are training our team members about the new provisions.

“This will take about 30 days to complete and make us more competitive and keep us consistent with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act,” he added.

Paulene Thomas, executive director of the Navajo Nation Gaming Regulatory Office, echoed Watchman’s sentiments.

“We are very pleased with the new gaming compact. There are new provisions and the Navajo casinos and gaming regulatory office are able to fulfill them,” Thomas said.

She said the role of her office is to ensure that Navajo casinos are in compliance with Ariz. and N.M. compacts, including federal and tribal laws.

The Interior Department took no action on the 2015 gaming compacts within the 45-day review period and as a result, the compacts were deemed approved and became effective upon publication of notice in the Federal Register on June 22.



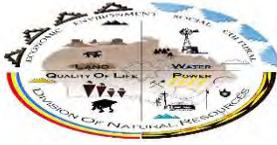
Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye said the 2015 provided new concessions by the state of N.M. that were not available in the tribal-state gaming compact that was negotiated last year. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez said he has high hopes that the tribal-state gaming compact negotiations with the state of Ariz. will also be done in the spirit of cooperation like the N.M. compact. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



The Northern Edge Casino in Fruitland is operated in N.M. by Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise, along with Fire Rock Casino in Gallup and Flowing Water Casino in Water Flow. The nation can open a fourth casino later. (Courtesy photo)



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2015

New Dawn for Navajo Nation Zoo

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – Saving the lives of eagles.

That’s one goal of a new Navajo Nation Eagle Aviary here at the Navajo Nation Zoo.

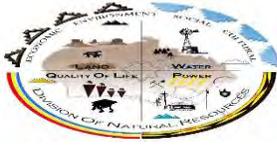
Navajo Nation Zoo Department Manager David Mikesic, said “Thanks to a host of partners, we will now be able to build a new eagle aviary to help save the lives of eagles that have been injured in the wild.”

An 80 feet by 30 feet observation type of facility will be constructed to house approximately 20 golden eagles. It will also include an adjoining office, food prep room and a medical center for eagles.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided initial funding of \$200,000, which was used for planning and design. The Navajo Nation Council also approved an appropriation of \$401,000 from the Navajo Nation Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance in May. The Navajo Tourism Department under the Navajo Nation Division of Economic Development also contributed \$200,000 to help construct a new eagle aviary.

“I want to thank all of our partners for their support and funding that we received,” Mikesic stated. “This is a very exciting and important project for the Navajo people.”

The four main goals of the Navajo Nation Eagle Aviary are to save the lives of injured eagles; It will allow the Navajo people to legally obtain eagle feathers; The facility will be used to educate the public about eagle conservation and it will allow the Navajo people to view and maintain a spiritual connection with eagles.



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The Navajo Nation Eagle Aviary will primarily house injured golden eagles; however, it will also include injured bald eagles.

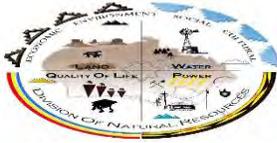
“Although there are legal ways to obtain an eagle feather, there are still individuals out there who are shooting eagles and selling their feathers illegally in the black market,” Mikesic noted. “In addition to education, the Navajo Nation Eagle Aviary will also be used to help the public establish a spiritual connection to the eagles.”

Mikesic said it is hoped the Navajo Nation Eagle Aviary Project will begin construction in July.

The Navajo Nation will also soon be home to a black-footed ferret, which was once considered the most endangered mammal in the U.S.

“The black-footed ferret was once part of the natural environment on the Navajo Nation,” Mikesic explained. “It went extinct from the Navajo Nation in the 1930’s due to canine diseases, reductions in prairie dog towns and other grassland issues.

After the ferret was rediscovered in Wyoming in the 1980s, a number of zoos began captive breeding programs to increase the number of ferrets in the U.S. The young produced from breeding programs are then trained to be put back into the wild. After the ferret was rediscovered in Wyoming in the 1980s, a number of zoos began captive breeding programs to increase the number of ferrets in the U.S. The young produced from breeding programs are then trained to be put back into the wild.



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According to Mikesic, there are approximately 25 locations that black-footed ferrets have been reintroduced into the wild and reintroduced into the western U.S - the closest being the Big Boquillas Ranch in northern Arizona.

The Navajo Nation Zoo also recently renovated three exhibits in its Discovery Center facility, which features a greatly enlarged pond, lizards, Gila monster and other species.

The Navajo Zoo features over 100 different animals of 50 different species and is the only zoo in the U.S. that is managed and owned by an American Indian tribe. It is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit their website at navajozoo.org or contact them at (928) 871-6574.



June 24, 2015
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President Begaye announces \$6.7 million settlement for mitigation projects



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye announced a \$6.7 million settlement for Navajo Nation environmental mitigation projects near Shiprock, N.M. President Begaye met with Arizona Public Service in Window Rock recently to discuss the Four Corners Power Plant. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Earlier today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Justice announced a federal Clean Air Act settlement regarding the Four Corners Power Plant.

The agreement requires an estimated \$160 million upgrade to the power plant's sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollution controls. A portion of the settlement funds, \$6.7 million, will be utilized for three health and environmental mitigation projects for the Navajo Nation, near Shiprock, N.M.

Arizona Public Service Co., primary owner of FCPP, along with former and current co-owners, El Paso Electric Co., Public Service Company of New Mexico, Salt River Project, Tucson Electric Power Co. and Southern California Edison Co. funded the settlement.

The settlement agreement

is the result of past power plant violations, including lack of prevention for significant deterioration requirements and new source review standards under the CAA.

“We appreciate that the health of the Navajo people was considered,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye. “While \$6.7 million will provide many needed improvements for the Navajo people affected by the power plant emissions, we still have much more that needs to be addressed.

“We applaud the tenacity and dedication of the grassroots organizations that remained united throughout this process and never gave up, for the health and wellbeing of their people,” he added.

By continuing to work together, the Navajo Nation and federal government will address the numerous health concerns associated with air quality and need for pollution control

technology.

In June 2011, Earthjustice, a non-profit environmental law organization, filed a complaint on behalf of Dine' Citizens Against Ruining the Environment, To' Nizhoni Ani, Sierra Club and the National Parks Conservation Association.

The complaint alleged that FCPP did not properly obtain permits for major modifications made to the power plant from 1985 to 1986.

When Earthjustice filed the complaint, the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency expressed concerns to the federal agencies that any monetary penalties assessed to the power plant by the U.S. would exclude any benefits to the tribe.

Navajo EPA recommended a number of mitigation projects to the U.S. EPA.

The projects included a coal burning stove replacement program, home weatherization,

installation of solar panels at tribal buildings, funding an allergist position at Northern Navajo Medical Center, funding tribal programs for asthma screening, and subsidizing a study to investigate health risks from exposure to biomass combustion in homes.

The \$6.7 million settlement agreement will fund three tribal mitigation projects for the stove replacement program, home weatherization and a health trust fund for medical treatment.

The medical treatment will include physician visits, equipment and medication for people affected with upper respiratory disease.

The mitigation projects recommended were based upon the potential to directly and measurably improve public health and local employment.



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

June 26, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye, Vice President Nez announce OPVP Veterans Liaison, attend Navajo Nation Veterans Services and Benefits Summit



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez attended the Navajo Nation Veterans Services and Benefit Summit at the UNM-Gallup Branch on June 24 and shared their vision to have all divisions across the Executive Branch to provide services to Navajo veterans. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

GALLUP, N.M.—Navajo veterans are the number one priority for the Begaye-Nez administration.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez conveyed that fact to the veterans in attendance at the Navajo Nation Veterans Services and Benefits Summit at the UNM-Gallup Campus on June 24.

They shared the four pillars of the administration: Navajo Veterans, Elders and Youth, Infrastructure and Job Creation.

“The way we see it, veterans are first because they are the protectors, they keep us safe,” said President Begaye.

Elders are second on the priority listing because they are the keepers of Navajo way of life and the Navajo language, he added. The youth are included with this pillar because of the intergenerational opportunities that exist between the two age groups.

“Then come the things we make a life with: roads, facilities,

electricity and water. Infrastructure,” President Begaye said.

Finally, it’s how we are going to make a living for ourselves, providing food, shelter and transportation to our families. Job creation, he added.

He said the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President met with the 23rd Navajo Nation Council to align priorities for the nation to ensure one voice on issues nationally and internationally.

Since then, the administration has met with all divisions under the Executive Branch and stressed the need to include Navajo veterans in their division strategy, whether for employment, training or other forms of assistance.

“Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs is not the only entity that will be working with veterans, it’s going to be the entire Executive Branch,” said President Begaye.

Veterans employ a common sense approach to overcoming challenges, he said, and their primary objective in all things is to get the job done.

Vice President Jonathan Nez said they went to Washington, D.C. and met with 18 members of Congress and the Senate.

They shared veteran issues with housing, employment and health care, in particular, mental health counseling services for post traumatic stress disorder.

“The reason why we’re here is for passage of the Navajo Nation Veterans Act. We want to know what our veterans think,” Vice President Nez said.

He said a meeting with U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro was productive and that a housing voucher system for veterans is available to assist with paying their rent and utilities.

“This isn’t the only veterans summit we’ll have. We’re going to meet again on the Navajo Nation for the duration of the administration,” said Vice President Nez.

The administration will be focused on three areas during the term of office: passage of the Navajo Nation Veterans Act, veterans housing and veterans health care through the creation of regional service center for the Veterans Administration on the Navajo Nation.

“We’re going to create partnerships with the Veterans Administration, HUD and IHS. We want to bring these three agencies into one, so the restrictions between the three can be minimized,” President Begaye said.

Vice President Nez introduced former Ariz. Rep. Jamescita Peshlakai as the veteran liaison for OPVP.

“We brought a new individual on to our team, the Begaye-Nez administration. She is a veteran and former state representative for Arizona,” Vice President Nez said. “President and I felt that she could bridge that gap between Office of the President Vice President and Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs.”

Jamescita Mae Peshlakai is a U.S. Army veteran who served with the 403rd Combat Support Hospital in the Persian Gulf War. She was stationed in the neutral zone between Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

She has a bachelor’s degree in history and philosophy and a master’s degree in educational psychology.

“I worked with the workforce investment act programs. I served in the public safety, military and regulatory affairs committee and the veterans caucus,” Peshlakai said of her service as a state representative.

“I hope that I serve in the capacity that you all so deserve,” she added.

Prior to the summit, President Begaye and Vice President Nez met with the commander and vice commander of the Northern Agency Veterans Organization to discuss issues facing veterans from that region.

Many of the priorities there fell in line with the topics presented during the discussions at the summit. Their interests were to identify veteran initiatives endorsed by the administration and how they could be a part of the process.



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez said the Office of the President and Vice President has come through on the commitment to appoint a veterans liaison within the office to work on veterans affairs. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Edsel Pete, department manager for the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs, said the Chinle and Eastern Agencies have completed their 15 veterans homes for 2014. The other agencies will be done in mid-July. (Photo by Rick Abasta)



Nick Brokeshoulder of UNM-Gallup Branch said he works on behalf of native veterans attending school at the university. He said 80 percent of the student body is comprised of natives and 70 percent are Navajo. (Photo by Rick Abasta)





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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 29, 2015

Navajo Nation Museum Launches Children's Cultural Arts Summer Program

WINDOW ROCK, AZ. – Navajo youth can enrich their summer with cultural arts.

That's the goal of the Navajo Nation Museum here in the capital of the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Nation Museum Director Manuelito Wheeler, stated, "We want to reach out to the Navajo youth especially during the summer season. We have great staff who have developed a host of unique events and activities for the Navajo people and the public at large."

One such series of events includes month-long cultural arts workshops and activities for the summer. On July 1st, a workshop titled "Navajo Relationship with Nature, Land and Dinétah" will be presented by Navajo Cultural Speaker Ben Sorrel from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

On July 6th, Navajo Nation Museum Curator Clarenda Begay will feature side walk art based on the theme, "An Important Diné Value You Cherish" from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Youth will engage in cultural arts and crafts with the assistance of Navajo Artist Lisa Richards on July 8th, 20th and 22nd.

A cultural workshop will also be presented by Sorrel on July 13th titled, "What is the Past Made of?" from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. He will also present another workshop on July 27th titled "What Does it Mean to Me to be Navajo?" from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.



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“Who R U?” is the name of a July 29th activity that will be facilitated by Curator Begay from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Participants are requested to bring a pair of white loafers or sneakers for their canvas.

On August 12th, a Young Men’s Sweat Purification Ceremony will be held for young men ages 13 to 18 and is limited to 10 participants. Sweat Lodge Instructor and Chanter Ronald Largo, will teach young men about The Hero Twins and sing purification songs. The sweat lodge is located north of the Navajo Nation Museum.

Curator Begay, explained, “We have already had a couple of cultural activities for the youth and interest is slowing increasing. We want to invite the youth to come and join us. The Navajo Nation Museum is a great venue to learn about Navajo culture.”

The free children’s cultural arts program are for children kindergarten through sixth grade, with the exception of the Young Men’s Sweat Purification Ceremony, which is for young men between 13 and 18-years-old.

Wheeler added, “The Navajo Nation Museum is unlike many other museums in the U.S. as exemplified in the host of unique Navajo cultural activities that are specifically designed to help educate the youth about the Navajo culture and preserve the Navajo heritage. We hope you are able to visit the Navajo Nation Museum and enhance your understanding of the Navajo people and embrace the rich legacy of the Navajo Nation.”

Located in northeast Arizona just off Arizona Highway 264, the Navajo Nation Museum is a great venue to retrace early Navajo history while captivating the contemporary yet traditional spirit of the Navajo people.



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The Navajo Nation Museum is open on Monday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Tuesday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information about other cultural events and unique exhibits, contact the Navajo Nation Museum at (928) 871-7941 or via their website at www.navajonationmuseum.org



June 30, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye announces new appointments to Dine' College Board of Regents



Greg Bigman was selected by Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye to serve on the Dine' College Board of Regents representing the Northern Agency. He said teachers and faculty are instrumental. (Courtesy photo)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On June 29, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye made two new appointments to the Diné College Board of Regents.

According to the Diné College website, the eight-member board is the college's guiding light, helping to establish a direction for the future and directing the college in the process of establishing educational programs and institutional goals.

"They help us to strengthen our personal foundations for responsible learning and living consistent with *Sa'ah Naagháí Bik'eh Hózhóón*," the website states.

President Begaye said the selection of two new board members was a deliberate and thoughtful process, allowing the administration to take the necessary time to select qualified

applicants to guide the college with a positive direction for the future.

"We want to be clear: Our selections were made to restore stability, student enrollment and focus on the educational credibility of Diné College's accreditation rating," said President Begaye.

Johnson Dennison was selected to serve on the Diné College Board of Regents for the Chinle Agency and Greg Bigman was also selected to the board to serve the Northern Agency.

Dennison has a master's degree in educational administration from the University of New Mexico, which was obtained in 1978. In 1973, he obtained his bachelor's degree in education from UNM.

Since 1999, he has served as an adjunct faculty at Diné College, instructing Diné educational philosophy for the teacher education program. He also taught school law for college seniors.

"I believe that I am well qualified. I have more than two decades of experience in higher education as a dean of instruction, cultural consultant and instructor," Dennison said. "I have more than three decades experience in K-12 schools as a principal and teacher."

He said most importantly, he is diligent, patient, balanced and honest.

"I believe that these skills are much needed at Diné College and that I can make a difference for that institution's stakeholders and for the Navajo Nation," Dennison said.

Bigman, 34, is also an educator who served four years as a high school teacher.

"In any educational institution, the teachers and faculty provide a direct service and are instrumental in improving the organization," Bigman said. "I want to be a part of making Diné College an even greater institution for Navajo."

He added that he has proven ability to build relationships, identify objectives and needs, including creation of strategies to solve problems with decisiveness and integrity.

He previously served as a senior executive analyst with a Navajo Nation owned company. Prior to that, Bigman was the sole proprietor of Impressions, LLC.

"The Vice President and I vowed to bring young, educated Navajo professionals back to help make us an even greater Nation," said President Begaye. "Mr. Bigman would bring the needs, thinking and the voice of the younger generation to the table."

In 2004, Bigman obtained his bachelor's degree in biochemistry from UNM. In 2010, he completed the alternative teacher licensure program at San Juan College.



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President Begaye appoints two new members to Diné' Board of Education



President Begaye announced two new appointments today. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.— On June 29, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye appointed two individuals to the Diné Board of Education.

“We have selected two highly educated and qualified applicants to the Diné Education Board,” said President Begaye. “These individuals have the education and experience to make a difference for the Navajo people.

“We did not enter into these selections hastily and ensured we did our due diligence to bring high caliber educators back home to help our nation,” he added.

Dr. Manley Alan Begay Jr. and Dr. Benjamin Jones were appointed to the Diné Board of Education.

Begay has more than 35 years of professional educational experience and was previously serving as a tenured professor at Northern Arizona University for the Department of Applied Indigenous Studies College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

He also worked for the College of Education for the

Department of Educational Leadership at NAU.

He obtained his doctoral degree in education for administration, planning and social policy from Harvard University in Nov. 1997. He also obtained his master’s degree from Harvard University in education for administration, planning and social policy in June 1989.

In August 1985, he received an education specialist degree from Brigham Young University in educational administration. He was selected as valedictorian, but deferred the honors to the salutatorian.

Begay did not want to repeat the honors because he was previously selected as valedictorian and gave the commencement address when he obtained his master’s degree in educational administration with emphasis in community education from BYU in August 1983.

In August 1977, he received his bachelor’s degree in secondary education with emphasis in social studies

from the University of Arizona. Prior to that, he obtained his associate’s degree from Navajo Community College and was the valedictorian commencement speaker.

Begay’s academic focus is Indigenous Nation-Building, with specific emphasis on economic development, leadership, education and governance.

“My recent work includes executive education sessions and research, with and relevant to, First Nations and organizations in Canada and Native nations and organizations in the United States,” Begay said.

He plans to expand his work and research to include the Navajo Nation, Australian Aborigines and the Maoris of New Zealand.

“I have professional interests in putting theory into practice regarding issues of Indigenous education, Navajo history and philosophy, and development,” Begay said.

The second individual selected to the Diné Education Board by President Begaye is Dr. Benjamin Jones.

Jones said his professional objective is to continuously advance in all areas of professional knowledge, skills and experience necessary to facilitate organizational success.

He obtained his education, both graduate and undergraduate, from NAU.

In Dec. 1985, he obtained his doctoral degree of philosophy in political science. In May 2007, he obtained his master’s degree in political science. In Dec. 1994, he obtained his master’s degree

in business administration. In Dec. 1985, he obtained his bachelor’s degree in business administration with an emphasis in accounting.

“The world is undergoing a paradigm shift in economic growth with the need for balance to temper the instability of climate change,” Jones said. “The Navajo Nation is uniquely positioned to reinvent their educational framework recognizing their strong beliefs in maintaining harmony and adapting their skills to changes in the environment.”

He noted that Navajo education has been addressed in an isolated vacuum concerned primarily with shifting curriculum to improve the outcomes of standardized testing.

Instead, Navajo youth deserve a new approach that refocuses on strengthening Navajo economic livelihood, he said, and building value in the Navajo homeland that coincides with the Navajo educational ambitions.

“I believe Navajo education works best grounded in academia that integrates our culture and language,” Jones said. “The uniqueness in combining these parameters of education not only makes us more holistic, but provides the most effective means in how we apply and adapt ourselves to the challenges of today’s changing world,” said Jones.

Jones previously served as the entrepreneurial director of Navajo Technical University since Jan. 2015.