



The Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Muscogee Creek Nation welcomes Navajo Nation Honor Riders, appreciate efforts to strengthen advocacy for veterans

OKMULGEE, Okla. — The Muscogee Creek Nation welcomed Navajo Nation Honor Riders with a police escort by Oklahoma State Troopers May 19 as a show of appreciation for their efforts to strengthen veterans' advocacy for all of Indian Country.

The five-day trek across the United States began May 17 from Window Rock, Ariz., with plans to spend time advocating issues and presenting a position statement to congressional representatives in Washington D.C. while also attending various events during the Memorial Day weekend beginning May 22.

Motorcycle riders roared into the local Muscogee Nation Travel Plaza where riders topped off their gas tanks courtesy of the Muscogee Veterans Association.

An evening program organized by the local veterans' association was well attended as honor riders were given a tour of their newly constructed building. An honorary posting of the Navajo Nation flag was conducted as well — a show of respect for intertribal cooperation.

George Thompson, member of the Muscogee Veterans Association, also welcomed the honor riders in his native language.

"Welcome, we are very honored to have you here with us," he said. "We are blessed of the message you are carrying to Washington, D.C."

The Muscogee Council Mound was the site of an evening program and dinner reception on behalf of the honor riders where Thomas Yahola, speaker of the National Council of the Muscogee Creek Nation, greeted the Navajo Council delegates.

"It's good to have you all here with us and I am glad the creator made a safe trip for you," Thompson said. "You are always welcome to our Muscogee Nation, so I wish you God speed and safety for the remaining part of your trip."



The Muscogee Creek Nation welcomes Navajo Nation Honor Riders May 19, 2009, in Okmulgee, Okla. Top photo, Muscogee Creek Nation display a welcome sign for honor riders. Left photo, George Thompson of the Muscogee Veterans Association, conducts the posting of flags. (Photos by Christian Bigwater)



Navajo Council Delegate Raymond Maxx (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi) appreciated the hospitality and explained the purpose of the honor run.

"We have a local run in our area called 'Carry the Flame' where other tribes participate," he said. "We will continue the run to Washington, gathering support of other tribes along the way and represent all the tribes on our way to Washington, D.C., as we strengthen veterans' advocacy efforts."

"We are all one and we represent the whole nation to advocate for our people who sometimes often suffer," said Navajo Council Delegate Roy Laughter, a U.S. Army veteran. "We appreciate the hospitality of the Muscogee Nation – thank you!"

Ken Davis, director of the Muscogee Veterans Association, appreciated the scheduled stop to his part of the country.

"We are honored to receive the Navajo Nation Honor Riders and we look forward to seeing them again next year," he said. "In fact, it is mandatory that they come back through."

Council delegates on the trip include: Ray Berchman (Oak Springs/St. Michaels); Roy Laughter (Chilchinbeto/Kayenta); LoRenzo C. Bates (Upper Fruitland), Raymond Maxx (Coalmine Canyon/Toh Nanees Dizi), Curran Hannon (Oak Springs/St. Michaels) and Omer Begay Jr. (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins).

Apache County Sherriff Joseph Dedman and Frank Dayish Jr., former Navajo Nation vice-president are also traveling with the group. The honor riders are scheduled to arrive in Washington D.C. on Friday, May 22.



Navajo Nation Honor Riders tour the newly constructed building for the Muscogee Veterans Association on May 19, 2009, in Okmulgee, Okla. Left photo, an honorary posting of the Navajo Nation flag was conducted.



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