



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 15, 2012

**MEDIA CONTACTS**  
Jerome Clark | 928.637.5603  
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428  
nnlb.communications@gmail.com

## **22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council continues to honor past Diné leaders with commemorative horseback ride**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Riding into the fairgrounds on horseback, select members of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council on Sunday afternoon continued a tradition to honor past Dine leaders who used to ride their horses into Window Rock from various regions across the vast Navajo Nation for council sessions.

“The horseback ride was started to commemorate our past leaders who journeyed great distances by horseback to get to Window Rock during every season of the year,” Speaker Johnny Naize stated.

Former council delegates, Larry Noble and Leslie Dele, initiated the first horseback honor ride years ago when the idea to organize one was sparked by a discussion the two had regarding community development and restoration.

Council delegates participating in the commemorative horseback ride to Window Rock every summer “gain a deeper sense of respect and appreciation for the challenges that past leaders regularly endured on their journey to the Council Chambers,” Speaker Naize remarked.

Among the delegates who participated in the trek to Window Rock either by horse or bicycle were Delegate Jonathan Nez, Delegate Jonathan Hale, Delegate Duane Tsinigine, Delegate Dwight Witherspoon, and Delegate Elmer P. Begay.

“It takes a lot of energy to ride long distances on horse or by bike,” said Delegate Jonathan Nez, “but it is a good way of promoting healthy living.”

Activities such as horseback riding or bicycle riding helps to combat illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease, Delegate Nez said. He commended all ride participants for encouraging others to live a healthy and active life.

Delegates imparted special recognition to Diné youth bike riders who rode their bikes to Window Rock. Some were a part of a 1,000-mile long community service ride called “Tour de Rez,” organized by the Navajo Nation Youth Empowerment Services, a non-profit organization based out of Teec Nos Pos, Ariz.

Council Delegates Joshua Lavar Butler and Edmund Yazzie were also in attendance at the gathering of the ride participants at the fairgrounds. Each delivered messages of appreciation for the efforts of everyone involved in the successful event.

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, July 16, council delegates will depart on horseback from the fairgrounds to the Navajo Nation Council Chambers, where they will convene for the start of the Summer Council Session. Delegates, along with other horse and bike riders, will be escorted by Navajo Nation police.

###