



# THE NAVAJO NATION

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer officially take office



**PHOTO:** Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez (center), First Lady Phefelia Herbert-Nez (right), and their son (left) following the oath of office at the Bee Hóldzil Fighting Scouts Events Center in Fort Defiance Ariz., on Jan. 15, 2019.

**FORT DEFIANCE, Ariz.** – Joined by their families and thousands of Diné citizens during an Inauguration Ceremony held on Tuesday, Jonathan Nez officially became the youngest Navajo Nation President as he and new Vice President Myron Lizer were administered the oath of office to assume the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President.

Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Herbert-Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer stood at their side, as Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnne B. Jayne administered the oath of office at noon at the Bee Hóldzil Fights Scouts Events Center in Fort Defiance, Arizona.

In his inaugural address, President Jonathan Nez focused on Unity, Hope, and Resilience for the Navajo people, individually and collectively. He also addressed the need for positive change within the Navajo government.

“Our team ran a grassroots campaign in which we welcomed and embraced our people from every corner of our great Nation and beyond. We met many people with unique perspectives who brought a wide variety of matters to our attention, but it was apparent that they had one common notion in mind when it came to our Nation’s leadership and our Nation’s government – the need for change. I believe that’s why we see so many new faces among the leaders who took the oath of office with us today,” said President Nez.

He also called for the Navajo Nation government to be more fiscally responsible, especially when the Nation may face a sizeable decrease in annual revenue in the coming months. In addition, he said that working together, the Nation can move in a positive direction if we also focus on making positive changes as individuals.

“Change presents opportunity – the opportunity to work together to strengthen and empower ourselves as individuals and as communities. Along the way, we talked with many elderly, youth, single parents, working families, students, and many others seeking the change that we all deserve and desire,” added President Nez. “What I saw was hope. Despite the many challenges we face, our people still have hope – a hope for a better tomorrow for all of us as Diné people!”

President Nez used part of his Inaugural Address to recognize cabinet members for the Nez-Lizer Administration who were seated in the audience. Among the new and returning appointees in attendance included the following:

- Chief of Staff for the Office of the President and Vice President Paulson Chaco
- Attorney General Doreen Nanibaa McPaul
- Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim
- Division of Community Development Dr. Pearl Yellowman
- Division of Transportation Executive Director Garret Silversmith
- Division of Economic Development Executive Director JT Willie
- Division of Public Safety Executive Director Jesse Delmar
- Navajo Nation Washington Office Executive Director Santee Lewis
- Division of General Services Executive Director Lomardo Aseret
- Division of Human Resources Executive Director Dr. Perphelia Fowler
- Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency Executive Director Oliver Whaley
- Navajo-Hopi Land Commission Office Executive Director Robert K. Black, Jr.
- Division of Natural Resources Executive Director Dr. Rudy R. Shebala

“We set out to have our team in place by Inauguration Day. Today, we are proud to announce that we have our team in place, and that we are ready to get to work to bring change to the Navajo Nation!” President Nez stated.

Vice President Myron Lizer focused on supporting small business development and Navajo entrepreneurs who are aspiring to become business owners.

“As a business person, I want to help our Diné entrepreneurs who are working hard to create economic opportunities through their own ingenuity, creativity, and dedication. Historically, our people have proven to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining and today, many of our young Navajo people are striving to carry that forward by developing businesses and by testing the limits of

their potential. As Vice President, I will make it a priority to help our small business owners and entrepreneurs,” stated Vice President Lizer.

He also put forth a challenge to the Navajo people to commit to buying locally during the week of Navajo Sovereignty Day in the month of April.

“I am a strong advocate for “Buy Navajo, Buy Local.” The Navajo people are an economic giant. We are an economic force when you look at the amount of dollars that we pour into border towns outside of the Navajo Nation. We need to change that mindset and support our Navajo entrepreneurs!” stated Vice President Lizer. “Come the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>, as our Nation recognizes Navajo Sovereignty Day, let us all be challenged to resist the long trips to our nearest border towns and commit to staying home and deliberately making all purchases locally!”



**PHOTO: Navajo Nation Vice President Myron Lizer takes the oath of office beside Second Lady Dottie Lizer at the Bee Hóldzil Fighting Scouts Events Center in Fort Defiance Ariz., on Jan. 15. 2019.**

First Lady Phefelia Herbert-Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer also addressed the audience. The First Lady delivered a passionate address in which she encouraged Navajo families to show compassion for one another and for parents to love their children, and to strengthen their families through prayer.

“Prayer has the power to clear obstacles, to change us, to protect us, and to give us breakthroughs in our lives. As a parent, I encourage all parents to pray with their children. Let your children see that it’s a time to spend time with God,” said First Lady Phefelia Herbert-Nez.

Second Lady Dottie Lizer also emphasized the importance of family, while also focusing on issues impacting Native American women and called for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act by Congress.

“The issue of domestic violence and violence against women needs to be addressed. By taking a stand, the victims, survivors, their children, families, friends, and communities can heal and our Diné society would have the capability to break the cycle,” she stated.

Following the Inauguration ceremony, President Nez and Vice President Lizer met with key cabinet members to begin implementing a path forward for the Navajo Nation.

The Nez-Lizer Administration also congratulates members of the 24<sup>th</sup> Navajo Nation Council, Navajo Nation Board of Education, Navajo Board of Election Supervisors, and Kayenta Township Commissioners who were also sworn-in to office.

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