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President Ben Shelly Announces 'Seasons of Change, Brings New Beginnings' for the 65th Annual Navajo Nation Fair



Window Rock, AZ—Our theme, *Seasons of Change, Brings New Beginnings*, is resonant of our leaderships' call to prosperity.

"The Navajo Nation fair is our showcase to the world," said President Ben Shelly. "It's a time of celebration, a place where we come together to share and exchange, to renew and enrich our lives."

As the president made the announcement today, he appointed Navajo Nation Museum Director Manuelito Wheeler as the new director of the fair, giving praise for his work in directing the nation's museum. This year's fair is September 5-11, Monday through Sunday.

"Tourism is a huge undertaking and we need to focus on more economic development to create more jobs. It is also an opportunity for the Navajo Nation Fair to gain momentum from resources the arts and culture of the Navajo Nation Museum has to offer," said the president.

On July 5, 2011, Frederick H. White, executive director of Navajo Division of Natural Resources re-organized the responsibilities of the fair grounds and facilities, sports center, wellness center, and all special events including the Navajo Nation Fair and Treaty Days Celebration to the Museum. Currently, the NPRD and the Museum are reorganizing staff and duties, including transferring the Special Events staff to the Museum.

"The transition will be smooth, proactive, cost effective and more in the right direction," stated Executive Director White. "It is an opportunity for the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department to capitalize on tourism dollars and focus on facility improvements. Our annual fair is a showcase of the Navajo Nation. The Museum and the Navajo Nation Fair have a synergetic relationship with their arts and culture programs. There are benefits with this change and we will see harvest."

The Navajo Nation Fair has been with NPRD for many years. Since appointed in 2001, to oversee the Special Events Section as NPRD Department Manager Ray Russell has had many accomplishments and proud moments.

“The change brings new opportunities to grow for both NPRD and the Navajo Nation Museum. I fully support the re-organization,” stated NPRD Manager Russell of the re-organization. “The quality of parks and their facilities will be greater than before. There are many positive things this change will make happen.”

The Shelly-Jim Administration was looking for a more effective and streamlined operation of the Navajo Parks and Recreation Department.

President Shelly concluded, “Our goal is to beautify our parks and recreation areas, and maintain them to the highest standards possible. We appreciate the Museum’s cooperation and support to take on this economic endeavor. Through Mr. Manny Wheeler’s leadership, we are confident this transfer will be successful.”

Mr. Manuelito Wheeler and his staff stand ready to take on the extra responsibility to produce a successful fair.

“We are taking on the new responsibilities of the fair at the eleventh hour,” said a confident Mr. Wheeler. “We are making the necessary precautions to ensure that the fair will happen on time. There are other tribal departments that we will be calling upon for help. This is the Navajo Nation’s highest profile event. I anticipate that people would want to be part of this change.”

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