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Vice President Nez Meets with Lt. Gov. Cox During Native American Summit



Vice President Jonathan Nez shares the priorities of the Begaye-Nez administration for Utah Navajos.

OREM, UTAH—The 2016 Governor’s Native American Summit, hosted by the Utah Division of Indian Affairs, was kicked off on Aug. 8 at Utah Valley University.

It was the 11th year that tribal leaders met with the Utah Governor’s Office, along with state officials, to strengthen government-to-government relations between the state and the nine Indian tribes of Utah.

“Weaving Our Future Together: Love, Family and Community” was the theme of this year’s summit, which was a patchwork of community building breakout sessions, youth track sessions and opportunities for tribes to network.

Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez met with Lieutenant Governor Spencer Cox and shared the priorities of the Begaye-

Nez administration for Utah Navajos.

“Partnering for a New Tomorrow: Five Focus Areas for Tribal and State Success” was the title of the position paper from the Office of the President and Vice President.

The priority areas for Utah Navajos included the Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement Agreement, education, transportation, economic development and natural resources.

He said the tribe and state working together to get the support of the senators and congressmen in Washington, D.C. was important.

“Time is of the essence, especially with Obama administration winding down. We need funding for water infrastructure development,” Vice President Nez said.

The vice president said the underperformance of

Navajo schools in Utah was another issue that needed to be addressed. Students must become better equipped for the rigors of high school and higher education, he said.

Improving the education of Navajo students in Utah will be priority for the second year of the Begaye-Nez administration, he noted.

“We invite you to have an education summit on the Navajo Nation, perhaps somewhere in the San Juan School District area,” Vice President Nez said. “We need to sit down and discuss what would be beneficial to improve our students’ standards.

“Studies indicate that if tribal and indigenous nations begin to incorporate culture, language and tradition into their curriculum, their education process in improved,” he added.

The education summit

resonated with Spencer.

“I love the idea of a summit and getting together with state leaders and our office. That would be an opportunity and something that we could look at,” Spencer said. “I’d be very interested in coming down and making that work.

“And (including) the governor’s educational adviser and the state school board,” he added.

Vice President Nez said funding for road infrastructure was also crucial, especially for school bus routes.

“When students miss school because of roads that are not maintained properly, we need to step up with gravel projects to address the need,” he said.

Working with the State of Utah, the Navajo Nation will weave a new future for the benefit of Utah Navajos through partnership and steady communication.