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MARCH 7, 2016

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## Begaye-Nez appoint first Native woman to lead the Division of Economic Development

WINDOW ROCK – After a months-long search, President Russell Begaye and Vice-President Jonathan Nez have appointed Ms. Crystal J. Deschinny to lead the Division of Economic Development. Ms. Deschinny has over 20 years of expertise in finance, investment analysis, and management. She will be the first woman to hold this position.

“We are proud to announce that Ms. Deschinny will join the Begaye-Nez team,” said President Begaye. “She has a solid background in finance and investment management, and has managed capital infrastructure project development for various tribal governments. She has also managed large construction projects. With her experience and background, I have full confidence she will create jobs, develop infrastructure, and help diversify our economy.”

“Ms. Deschinny has the drive to expand and grow economic development for the Nation, she has proven that she can diversify our revenue portfolio, grow and bring in new investment opportunities, we are excited to welcome her to our team” said Vice-President Jonathan Nez.

Ms. Deschinny, who is currently chief executive officer for the Tolowa Dee-Nation, a tribe near the California-Oregon border was appointed from many applicants. “I am honored and excited to be a part of the Begaye-Nez administration’s economic development effort. This is a great opportunity,” she said.

Crystal J. Deschinny holds an MBA and an MA in American Indian Studies Tribal Policy and Law from the University of Arizona in Tucson, Ariz. She also has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Finance from San Diego State University, San Diego, Calif. She worked seven years as a financial investment manager for the Forest County Potawatomi tribe, a 1,500-member tribe located in northern Wisconsin. The tribe received federal recognition in 1988, established a profitable casino, and in recent years the tribe began an effort to diversify its economy. In 2002, a few years before becoming the investment manager, the tribe established the Potawatomi



Business Development Corporation to diversify its economic development. She strategically realigned the PBDC. The Potawatomi tribe is now the largest employer in Forest County.

She was also an active participant in the management of over \$500 million investment portfolio where she “wrote, reviewed and analyzed policy, by-laws, governing documents and manager contracts.”

Ms. Deschinny, a member of the Forest County Potawatomi tribe is married to Daniel Deschinny, Jr., a Navajo electrical engineer who works for the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority. They have one son Jaiden. She is also an avid marathon runner; having completed eight marathons.

She begins on March 21.