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SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

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## PRESIDENT BEGAYE AND VICE PRESIDENT NEZ CONGRATULATE NEW MISS NAVAJO 2016-2017, RONDA JOE



Newly-crowned Miss Navajo 2016-2017, Ronda Joe, gets a hug from former Miss Navajo Alyson Shirley moments after it is announced that she is this year's winner. Shirley placed the crown on Joe, passing on an heirloom of royalty from one Miss Navajo to the next.

WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ-The grand stands at the Dean C. Jackson Arena were packed last Saturday night for Cultural Night and the coronation of Miss Navajo 2016-2017. When the envelope was opened and the winner announced, it was Ronda Joe from Rock Point, Ariz., who was crowned the new Miss Navajo.

Vice President Jonathan Nez took part in the coronation by announcing the winners.

"All the women that competed for Miss Navajo are champions. I'm sure we'll see them doing great things in the future," the vice president said. "At the end of the day, there is only one person who can be Miss Navajo and this year that person is Ronda Joe. We congratulate her, her family and her community."

President Russell Begaye attended many of the pageant events during the week of the Navajo Nation Fair and said that every contestant did a great job.

"I'd like to congratulate all the contestants as they put their best efforts forth in competing for the title of Miss Navajo 2016-2017. These ladies were put through the wringer but showed they can gracefully butcher and make bread while also articulating traditional talents and contemporary skills," he said.

This year's pageant consisted of eight contestants who hailed from Central, Northern, Eastern and Ft. Defiance Agencies.



As it came down to the last two contestants, Vice President Jonathan Nez opened the envelope to announce that the new 2016-2017 Miss Navajo Nation was Ronda Joe from Rock Point, Ariz.

The Office of the President and Vice President would like to congratulate outgoing Miss Navajo Alyson Shirley for representing the Nation with poise and grace during her reign. Shirley set the bar high for the those who will come after her.

“She wore the crown with style and took her title as Miss Navajo to a whole new level,” said Vice President Nez.

President Begaye and Vice President Nez said they see great potential in new Miss Navajo Ronda Joe and were impressed by how well she spoke Navajo.

Outgoing Miss Navajo Alyson Shirley said there wasn’t a doubt in her mind that Joe would take the crown.

“I saw how well she butchered and heard how well she spoke Navajo,” she said. “She did a very awesome job. I want to congratulate the incoming Miss Navajo and the community of Rock Point for taking the crown back.”

At the end of the night, as the crowd moved from the grand stands to the arena floor to catch a glimpse or a selfie with the new Miss Navajo, the newly crowned Ronda Joe surrounded herself with family and friends.

“It is an amazing honor to be crowned the new Miss Navajo 2016-2017,” she said. “It has always been a childhood dream to become Miss Navajo. The reality of it is such an honor. Words cannot express how I feel right now.”

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