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Vice President Nez Says 2020 Census Will Be Critical To Funding and Legislative Districting



Top officials from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Navajo Nation convened at the Navajo Department of Transportation on Monday, Sep. 19 to have a tribal consultation regarding the 2020 Census. Left to right: Dee Alexander, U.S. Census Bureau Tribal Affairs Coordinator, Vice President Jonathan Nez, John Thompson, U.S. Census Bureau Director, Navajo Nation Council Speaker LoRenzo Bates, and Cathy Lacy, Census Bureau Regional Director.

Tse Bonito, N.M. – During the 2020 Census Tribal Consultation that took place on Monday, Sep. 19, at the Navajo Department of Transportation, Vice President Jonathan Nez said that an accurate count will result in increased funding and power in legislative districting for the Navajo Nation.

The consultation hosted opening remarks from Cathy Lacy, Director from the Denver Regional Office, John Thompson, U.S. Census Bureau Director and Vice President Nez.

“Because the Navajo Nation is located within three states and 13 counties, we would like to have sub-offices,” Vice President Nez requested during the consultation. “We would also like to be designated to have our own local Census Office that would cover all of Navajo in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.”

The vice president also requested that the area management team should be comprised of Navajo tribal members and that there should be a local recruitment of enumerators.

The day’s agenda included overviews of Planning, Geography, Enumeration and Partnership by staff members from the Census Management Division.

Discussion included Navajo Chapter Boundaries relating to redistricting and how boundaries might exclude tribal members who live outside of current chapter boundaries; breaking up census blocks into no more than 100 persons per block; how under-counting adversely affects the Nation and how it can be reduced; and if “private owners” of non-trust lands and fee lands can be accounted as part of the Navajo count.

Tribal Affairs Coordinator for Office of Intergovernmental and Congressional Affairs, Dee Alexander said one goal of the meeting was to facilitate open, two-way communication between tribal governments and the Census Bureau.

Alexander said that the meeting’s objective was to gain input on effective ways to implement tribal-specific programmatic and operational activities. She also said the meeting was clarity Census Bureau programs and the activities related to the 2020 Census.

“When it comes to the 2020 Census, we need to make sure that our numbers are accurate as it is critical to our funding and legislative districting. Today we are here to help facilitate the process in hopes of making sure the Census represents us accurately,” Vice President Nez said.

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