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## **VICE PRESIDENT NEZ PROMOTES COLLABORATION AT 2017 NAVAJO NATION PUBLIC SAFETY SUMMIT**



Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez provides opening remarks at the 2017 Navajo Nation Public Safety Summit.

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz.—Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez provided opening remarks at the 2017 Navajo Nation Public Safety Summit, which was held at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino and Resort on January 30, 2017.

He expressed appreciation for the work of law enforcement and courts, for working together to combat social ills that are plaguing the Navajo Nation.

“Thank you to the Attorney General, Division of Public Safety (DPS) and Department of Behavioral Health Services (DBHS). Working together and bringing resources to the table is what will move our nation forward,” said Vice President Nez.

Public safety is an all-encompassing service that is important to all Navajos, regardless of age. A strong public safety is necessary to spur development for the tribe.

“The summit this week will provide the necessary empowerment tools

to combat drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and other social problems that negatively affect the wellbeing of Navajo people,” Vice President Nez said.

He explained that Indian Country is in a time of uncertainty, especially with a Republican-controlled White House and Congress, and that collaboration to leverage resources will be more important than ever before.

“We must continue to work together to help our people and align ourselves to utilize these tools for self-reliance. That is our future,” Vice President Nez said.

“This summit will provide a clear path forward for how to leverage our limited public safety resources to maximize service delivery to the Navajo People so that our communities and families are safer,” said Branch.

The three-pronged approach of the action plan will focus on how to stabilize the tribal system; how to coordinate and strengthen the system;

and how to expand the system.

Collaboration is an essential element of the Tribal Action Plan, an effort that began in the 1990s and was revived by the Begaye-Nez Administration to establish services.

“We will do the best we can to ensure protection of our families and communities. We are working on the Tribal Action Plan for the Navajo Nation as we speak,” said Yvonne Kee-Billison. “The last Tribal Action Plan was created in 1990.”

“This conference was created to bring all the key players into one room. We face dire public safety challenges on the Nation. Inadequate and shrinking resources require that we be as strategic as possible in making use of our resources and require that we collaborate as much as possible,” said Branch.

The summit focused on public safety and providing effective behavioral health services for offenders with drug or alcohol related offenses.

Theresa Galvin, director Navajo Nation Department of Behavioral Health Services, said the group is reviewing methodology to provide preferred services to patients and law enforcement.

“We will also address capacity of what they have and strategize how we can assist each other in the delivery of service,” Galvan said.

The week-long summit was made possible by the Office of the President and Vice President, Judicial Branch, DPS, Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Prosecutor, Office of the Public Defender, DBHS, and Division of Social Services.