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VICE PRESIDENT NEZ INSPIRES CHAPTER OFFICIALS AT GOVERNANCE CONFERENCE



Vice President Jonathan Nez provides the keynote address at the 2017 Navajo Nation Governance Conference Banquet for elected chapter officials.

ALBUQUERQUE – On Feb. 28, Vice President Jonathan Nez provided the keynote address at the 2017 Navajo Nation Governance Conference banquet for elected chapter officials. Vice President Nez reminded the officials the importance of their role and the path to true sovereignty: self-reliance.

“I would like to say welcome back to those chapter officials that were re-elected and congratulations to the new officials. It’s encouraging to have younger faces in the audience,” he said.

As a former chapter vice president for Shonto, Vice President Nez acknowledged that it was the community people who promoted him into leadership and he imparted this wisdom to the chapter officials.

“To our young adults, step far from that entitlement mindset, you can accomplish a lot through hard work. Continue to move for-

ward and be productive. You can make a difference within your family, community, and nation,” he said.

Vice President Nez also emphasized the importance of retaining cultural knowledge from Navajo elders and encouraging chapter constituents.

Knowledge will empower our people to battle the monsters of the 21st century, he said, noting that these monsters are in the form of alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, suicide, and others.

“In 2018, it will be the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of 1868. This is significant because it exemplifies over 150 years of strength, courage, and resiliency within the Navajo Nation. The strength of resilience comes from our ancestors, and that in itself, is inspiring,” Vice President Nez said.

He defined sovereignty as the ability for a nation to take care of its people without outside influence.

“The first step to reaching true sovereignty is taking care of ourselves. Only then will we be able to take care of our families, our communities, and ultimately, our nation,” Vice President Nez said.

Utilizing this community approach to improving the Navajo Nation creates internal change from the local level to the top levels of leadership. In that spectrum are Navajo youth, many of whom are becoming more involved in the tribal government and demonstrating that they are the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Youth must be vigilant in what they bring back to the Navajo Nation, he said, adding that the Navajo way of life is not a victim mindset, but one of resilience and strength. This will tighten the generation gap between Navajo youth and elders ever closer and foster the intergenerational traditional teachings that are vital to

capturing the essence of Navajo self-reliance, he said.

“On behalf of President Begaye and I, we look forward to working with each of you. In closing, I leave you with my favorite Bible verse that changed my life.

“Christ shidziilgo ásósinii bee t’áá altsoní ádeeshl’iigo bineesh’a. – Philippians 4:13,” Vice President Nez said. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Let this verse strengthen and empower you to do the same, my fellow public servants.”

Chapter officials from across the Navajo Nation participated in the governance conference, which was organized by the Navajo Nation Ethics and Rules Office, Navajo Nation Election Administration, Administrative Service Centers, and Division of Community Development.

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