



## The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **President Nez delivers message of hope and resilience to “Tour de Sih Hasin” youth bike riders**

**LEUPP, Ariz.** – On Sunday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and First Lady Phefelia Nez joined youth community members, families, Council Delegate Elmer P. Begay, and volunteers at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort for a kick-off event for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour de Sih Hasin bike ride, which is scheduled to begin on Monday.

The annual bike ride began in 2012 to raise awareness and to help prevent suicide, substance abuse, domestic violence, and environmental issues in our communities. It also provides an opportunity for Navajo youth and families to be engaged in a fun activity to help build self-esteem and confidence while promoting health and wellness.

“Life can be tough, especially for our children. In those challenging times it’s important that we remember the teachings of our elders — their words teach us to be strong, and to overcome the modern-day monsters like alcohol, drugs, depression, suicide, and other issues. Events such as this bike ride help our communities come together and inspire hope and resilience in our young people,” said President Nez.

President Nez also commended the organizers for helping to promote the “Buy Navajo, Buy Local” initiative by keeping families and sponsors on the Navajo Nation by hosting the events in Navajo communities year after year.



**PHOTO: President Jonathan Nez speaks at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour de Sih Hasin kick-off event at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort in Leupp, Ariz. on July 7, 2019.**

Event organizer and founder Claudia Jackson also spoke at Sunday's kick-off event, and explained that the annual bike ride began in 2012 as a result of several suicides that occurred in the legislative district that Council Delegate Elmer P. Begay represented as a member of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council. Together, they began working with sponsors, chapters, and many others to coordinate the bike ride to help inspire and empower Navajo youth.

Jackson stated that she also focused her efforts on involving more girls and women in this year's bike ride and was successful in securing the donation of 32 bikes for girls and their mothers.

Working together with the Navajo Nation Division of Behavioral and Mental Health Services, President Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer have made behavioral and mental health a top priority for their administration, as well as for First Lady Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer.

The weeklong 200-mile challenge will begin at 7:00 a.m. on Monday from Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, which will take the bike riders through the communities of Grand Falls, Tolani Lake, Teesto, Dilkon, Greasewood, Cornfields, Ganado, and conclude in Window Rock on July 14.

This year, the Navajo Nation is also partnering with the Zuni Tribe to host the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Running for a Healthier and Stronger Navajo Nation event, which begins on July 8 in the community of Ramah, N.M. and will proceed westward to Pine Hill, Zuni Pueblo, Kamp Kiwanis, Chichiltah Chapter, Bread Springs Chapter, Red Rock Chapter, Manuelito Chapter, Tseyatoh Chapter, and then to Lupton Chapter, Houck Chapter, Pine Springs Community, and St. Michaels Chapter.

On July 14, the participants will proceed to Window Rock where they will join horseback riders, the Tour de Sih Hasin bike riders, and others to commemorate the start of the 2019 Summer Council Session, which begins on July 15.

The Nez-Lizer Administration thanks all of the sponsors of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour de Sih Hasin including Claudia Jackson, Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, Girl Scouts, Navajo Nation Council, chapters, Navajo Health Education Program, Winslow Indian Health Care Center, IHS Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative, Community Health Representatives, Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, Apache County Sheriff's Office, and more.

For more information on this year's bike ride, please visit: <http://www.sihhasinbikeride.com>.

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