

Candidates for president to attend Times' forum

By Candace Begody
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WINDOW ROCK - With the primary election approaching, the question now is who will best serve the Navajo people as the next leader?

The Navajo Times will be hosting the 2006 Navajo Nation Presidential Candidates Forum Aug. 1 at the Window Rock Sports Center from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

KTNN AM-660 Radio will be providing live coverage of the forum, which will begin promptly at 6 p.m. The doors will open to the general public at 4:30 p.m.

The forum will begin with five-minute opening statements from all confirmed presidential candidates according to a random drawing of names.

After the opening remarks, three rounds of the questions-and-answers will follow.

In the first two rounds, each candidate will be given three minutes to respond and in the last round each will have two minutes.

A panel of six Navajos from various backgrounds will be asking questions, in Navajo or English, on a number of topics related to the Navajo Nation and the Navajo people.

The six panelists are: Duane Beyal, Navajo Times editor; LA Williams, KTNN announcer, of Whitecone, Ariz.; Mark Maryboy, Aneth council delegate; Dr. Deborah Dennison, Ganado Unified School District superintendent, of Tohatchi, N.M.; Jason Allison, also known as "DJ Abel" entertainer, of Fort Defiance; and Derrick Watchman, vice president of Native American Banking with JPMorgan Chase Bank of Phoenix.

At the end of the final round, the forum will proceed with closing statements from the candidates. Again, this will be according to a random draw.

"Whatever they (panelists) want to ask, they will ask," said Tom Arviso Jr., CEO and publisher of the Navajo Times. "And the subjects discussed will range from just about everything that affects the lives of the Navajo people.

"The Navajo Times is hosting this forum as a public service," Arviso said, "for the people and the voters of the Navajo Nation."

Arviso said the forum has advantages for both the voters and the candidates.

"The voters can observe and hear what they (candidates) have to say about issues concerning the Navajo Nation," Arviso said, "so that they are better informed on who's who when they go to vote.

"It's a great chance for the candidates to present themselves and their platform in a public setting where thousands of people are watching and listening," Arviso said. "They can engage and exchange ideas, thoughts, and philosophies regarding being the next president of the Navajo Nation."

As of July 26, presidential candidates Ernest Harry Begay, Hoskie Bryant, Frank Dayish Jr., James Henderson Jr., Lynda Lovejoy, Joe Shirley Jr., Harrison Todacheene, Vern R. Lee, Wilbur Nelson Jr., and Calvin Tsosie, Sr. have confirmed they will attend the forum.

"Anything and everything goes at this forum," Arviso added. "It's going to be exciting, interesting and entertaining."