

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SPEAKER ENCOURAGES NAVAJO PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MEMORIAL WALK

Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council Lawrence T. Morgan and Vice President Frank Dayish have been asked to lead an honor motorcycle ride to the memorial walk planned for September 2nd in Farmington, N.M.

The motorcycle honor ride will begin in Shiprock prior to the planned memorial walk. They will meet up with the walkers at 9 a.m. on Harper Hill at the intersection of U.S. 64 and Kerney Street. The walk extends for 1.2 miles along U.S. 64 where a rally is scheduled to take place.

The memorial walk “will commemorate the abuse and violation of Dine and Indigenous Peoples who have been victimized through racist hatred and intolerance,” according to Duane H. Yazzie, president of Shiprock Chapter and one of the main organizers of the walk.

Tribal leaders from throughout the region are expected to attend, and leaders such as Congressman Tom Udall and Governor Bill Richardson have expressed interest in participating.

The Speaker’s office was directed by the Navajo Nation Council to assist in the planning of the march. Council delegates and Office of the Speaker staff members have been in frequent contact with organizers since the Council directive was issued on June 23, 2006.

“I encourage all our Navajo people to take time to be a part in this effort to support those who have suffered from cultural, racial, national, gender, class or other differences. We must work together to bring attention to the issues of racism that our people are subjected to in border towns,” Speaker Morgan said.

He especially encourages those who have been subjected to racial intolerance to participate in the walk.

Participants are being asked to honor the plan that only official flags, banners and poster-size photos of victims be displayed during the walk.

While participation in the memorial walk is being encouraged, the Speaker is also working on enabling legislation that would develop a human rights commission to address the situation.

“Right now, there is work moving to address the Council’s directive to look into development of a commission on human rights and to address the concerns that led to the Council’s involvement in the memorial walk in Farmington,” Speaker Morgan said.

During a report issued to Council on July 17, 2006, the Speaker had recommended the creation of such a commission, as well as public education on racism and prejudice to the Navajo people so they may be able to identify when it happens to them, as long-term solutions to the ongoing problems with racial tensions in border towns.