

Contact: Karen Francis, Public Information Officer
Navajo Nation Council Office of the Speaker
(928) 871-7160
karenfrancis@navajo.org
www.navajonationcouncil.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan released the following statement:

As Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council, I express congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected leaders of the Navajo Nation as determined by the Navajo people.

Congratulations to President Dr. Joe Shirley, Jr. and to Vice President-elect Ben Shelly, and congratulations to the members of the 21st Navajo Nation Council. While many of the current Council delegates retained their seats, the Navajo Nation is expecting a change of 21 delegates. The delegates of the 20th Navajo Nation Council have mutual respect for each other and we certainly are thankful for the service of the 21 delegates who will not be returning. However, in the Navajo way, it is said that once a leader, always a leader. You took on the challenging role to represent your people and to advocate on their behalf. Ahe'hee` for your service.

Furthermore, I would like to extend appreciation to each of the candidates this election season for taking an active role in our government. The ideals and the visions that the candidates spoke of across the Navajo Nation are worthy of working toward and achieving. Let us all work together in a spirit of cooperation to make our vision for a better Navajo Nation a reality for our people.

I commend the voters for turning out in record numbers for this election. A record 100,000 people registered to vote and of that, 64 percent voted in the elections on Tuesday. It is your votes that determine the direction our nation will be led each election cycle. Thank you for coming out in numbers and for ensuring that your friends and relatives made it to the polls.

The right to participate in our government and the freedom we have to choose our leaders would not be possible without the men and women of the Armed Forces. Throughout the year, we honor their service by participating in democracy and our Navajo Nation government.

At this time, we offer our most heart-felt appreciation for their service. The 20th Navajo Nation Council has remained committed to advocating for our veterans. Most recently, the Council acted to establish a set-aside for the Veterans Trust Fund. The legislation, which was proposed by Fort Defiance delegate Larry Anderson and overwhelmingly supported by the Council, would for the first time set aside 4 percent of projected

revenues for the Veterans Trust Fund. It is the intention of Council that the interest generated from the fund will be used to directly benefit veterans at the local level.

This is the most appropriate way to thank veterans who have served and future veterans – by setting aside funds and giving them the resources to ensure that they are taken care of when they return to our sacred homeland. Thank you to our veterans and servicemen and -women for protecting our rights with your service. The members of the Navajo Nation Council will continue to advocate on your behalf even as we enter a new term.

On behalf of the 20th Navajo Nation Council, thank you and happy Veterans' Day.