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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Ts'ah Bii Kin Chapter House leaders and community members reclaim traditional name

TS'AH BII KIN, Ariz. – Navajo Medicine Man Buck Navajo blessed the legislation for the former Inscription House Chapter House to change its name to its original, indigenous name description of “Ts'ah Bii Kin,” Chapter House during Saturday morning, April 28.

Ts' ah Bii Kin Chapter President Larry Goodman said area community members wanted to reclaim their indigenous name instead of the non-Indian assignment name of “Inscription House.”

Area community members gathered Saturday morning to celebrate the reclaiming of their original, indigenous Navajo name – Ts'ah Bii Kin.

Goodman pointed to his fellow community leader, Keith Begay, and said that Begay knows the story of how this rural out-of-the-way community of approximately 1,500 people became “Ts'ah Bii Kin” which translates from the Navajo language to “House in the Sage Brush.”

Begay who was born and reared in the Ts'ah Bii Kin community about 70 years ago said that when Navajo ancestors lived in the area, there was a log building structure built surrounded by a bountiful amount of sage brush.

“In olden days there was a lot of sage brush here,” Begay said, noting that the former name, “Inscription House,” was assigned by the federal government and non-Indians who are describing an inscription scribed on ancestral ruins by a Spaniard during the 1600s.

“It's the right name, it's what the community wanted to be called,” Goodman said. “It's a historic name and we wanted to carry it on.”

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Former council delegate, Willie Grayeyes, served as Master of Ceremonies during the celebration.

Currently, Grayeyes is the chapter project manager, and is working on securing another 50 miles of waterlines installed and to expand electrical power to some of the most isolated parts of the Ts'ah Bii Kin community which is located near Navajo Mountain, Utah.

"This is a good day," said Delegate Lena Manheimer, who replaced Grayeyes as the delegate for Ts'ah Bii Kin and Navajo Mountain. "It's good to have the original name. That name has been used by the community for years."

Ts'ah Bii Kin Secretary/Treasurer Martha Tate said an effort to change the name began more than a year ago, when Grayeyes was still the delegate. When he gave up his council seat, he asked Council Delegate Evelyn Acothley (Bodaway-Gap/Cameron/Coppermine) to co-sponsor the legislation and help Manheimer get it passed.

New Delegate Jonathon Nez (Shonto) is a strong supporter of the name change, and said the ability of the chapter to reclaim its original, indigenous name is indicative of the Local Self-Governance at work.

Nez traveled from the nearby community of Shonto to attend the ceremony and feast of mutton stew, frybread, fresh fruit and a special cake with the Ts'ah Bii Kin name created on top.

"This name was here before the Navajo Nation central government was even put in place," Nez said.

Tate said that the name change is not the only new project that community members are working on.

Within a year, the chapter hopes to have the local Indian Health Service facility and the "Inscription House Market," change their signage and names using the original "Ts'ah Bii Kiin." Additionally, she said that community members hope to have its own post office.

Another new development is Manheimer, chapter officials and community members are working toward the LGA- certification.

"We're working on our five-management plan," Goodman said. "We hope to do that and our land use plan together, maybe by the end of the year."

For more information on the Ts'ah Bii Kiin Chapter, call (928)672-2337.