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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

21st Navajo Nation Council members gain insightful information during two-day work session

GALLUP, N.M. – Council delegate Jonathan Nez (Shonto) said the two-day work sessions held Thursday, June 7 and today, Friday, June 8, expanded his knowledge about how great the Navajo Nation is.

“This is giving me a better understanding of how powerful we are as a nation as how we are a role model for other Native Nations,” Nez said.

Nez along with members of the 21st Navajo Nation Council participated in the litigation briefing meetings that are closed to the public. The meetings were held in executive session for the council delegates.

“This is good for us,” said Ernest D. Yazzie Jr. (Baahaali/Church Rock). “This is to keep us updated; we need to have this frequently. It’s good information so that we are ready and alert for anything that comes our way.”

The council members learned about a number of litigation cases involving the Navajo Nation.

“What we get is new information,” said Orlanda Smith-Hodge (Cornfields/Greasewood Springs/Klagetoh/Wide Ruins). “The information impacts our future. This allows us to make better decisions because we’re doing this on behalf of the Navajo Nation.”

The work session each lasted approximately from 9 a.m. to about 4:30 p.m. each day.

Cases range from natural resources, the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe, gaming, human services and government and tax were discussed.

“It’s an eye-opener and educational,” said Davis Filfred (Mexican Water/Aneth/Red Mesa) who is serving his first term as a delegate. “We need more time on this. I have a lot of gratitude and faith in the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.”

Another first-term council delegate, Herman Morris, (Tohatchi) added, “it’s a good update.”

Council delegate Thomas Walker Jr. (Birdsprings/Leupp/Tolani Lake) said the work session “helps us as a legislative body.”

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“It assists us in resolving issues with the outside world and entities. Some issues are complicated and long-standing, and it helps us get a clearer view of the situation,” Walker said. “We have this unique relationship with sovereign entities, and other sovereign Nations, this updates us to the minute.”

Walker and Filfred wanted to thank the Navajo Nation Attorney General’s Office, the Navajo Nation Department of Justice and the Navajo Nation Legislative Branch for their work, dedication and contributions to the betterment and upward mobility of the Navajo people.

“There’s value in the outcome, and this helps us be more conscious of corporations and outside entities with vested interest in the Navajo Nation,” Walker added.

“This allows us to learn from our previous mistakes,” said council delegate Leslie Dele (Tonalea) who noted that in previous years Navajo leaders didn’t participate in work sessions like this to adequately prepare each leader for important decisions affecting the Navajo Nation.

The two-day work sessions are intended to inform council delegates in order to prepare each of them for their various work projects and work commitments.