



The 21st Navajo Nation Council

Contact: Alastair L. Bitsoi, Public Information Officer

Phone: (928) 871-7228

Cell: (928) 255-2943

Fax: (928) 871-7255

abitsoi@navajo.org

www.navajonationcouncil.org

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Navajo Nation Council welcomes Lt. Gov. Denish of New Mexico to the Navajo Nation, hears report from Human Rights Commission

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. –The 21st Navajo Nation Council welcomed New Mexico Lt. Gov. Diane Denish to opening day of its 2010 summer session and accepted written reports from President Joe Shirley Jr. and Speaker Lawrence T. Morgan.

President Shirley's address on the state of the Navajo Nation and Speaker Morgan's report to the Council can be received in oral and written form, but this time were accepted as written reports. After accepting the president and speaker's report, the Council immediately went down to business and heard reports from Lt. Gov. Denish, the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission and Navajo Tribal Utility Authority among other reports.

Lt. Gov. Denish, accompanied by New Mexico State Sen. Joe Pinto (D-District 3) and New Mexico State Rep. Sandra D. Jeff (D-District 5), arrived with staff to address the Navajo Council on her bid as governor for the State of New Mexico.

"If I am elected as governor in the great state of New Mexico, our relationship will be based on a government-to-government relationship," she said adding that collaboration is a key component to the state's relationship with the Nation. "I will listen to your needs and priorities. I want to ensure the Nation has infrastructure in place."

Council Delegate Raymond Joe (Tachee/Blue Gap/Whippoorwill) thanked the lieutenant governor and the State of New Mexico for their role in working well with the Navajo Nation. The Council accepted the lieutenant governor's report, 54-1.

Along with Lt. Gov. Denish, candidates running for various office seats in the state of Arizona also presented their campaign messages to the Council.

In addition, the Council heard from the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission regarding its report, "Assessing the Race Relations between Navajos and Non-Navajos: A Review of Race Relations."

The commission said that it held 25 public hearings at different locations on or near the Navajo Nation and collected data from a survey it conducted, which was presented to the Council. Results from the survey found that the most vulnerable Navajo to experience discrimination or racism is one who is generally older, has little or no English education, physically challenged, on fixed income, indigent and without adequate transportation.

To alleviate discrimination and/or racism, the commission plans to educate people.

"I think if we really begin to address race relations, we need to begin educating people so that Non-Navajos

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will have a better understanding of our position,” Council Delegate Edward Jim (Greyhills/Sheep/Springs/Newcomb) said in agreement with the commission.

The commission’s survey results also revealed that border towns such as Flagstaff, Ariz., Gallup and Farmington, N.M., are the leading towns benefiting the most from Navajo government dollars. From October 2008 to June 2010, the Navajo government spent \$99 million in border towns.

The commission was created by the Navajo Nation Council to investigate written complaints involving discrimination of Navajo citizens, educate the public of human rights, network with local, state national and international groups and conduct hearings in or near boarder towns. The Council accepted the commission’s report, 45-3.

Day two of the summer session will resume tomorrow with legislative action items. For more information regarding the agenda and pieces of proposed legislation, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org.

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