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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: Wednesday, March 25, 2020

NAVAJO NATION JUDICIAL BRANCH RELEASES GUIDELINES FOR NAVAJO COURTS DURING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

Chief Justice of the Navajo Nation JoAnn B. Jayne issued an administrative order to provide guidance to the courts of the Navajo Nation and the public during the public health emergency due to the coronavirus. Associate Justices Eleanor Shirley and Tina Tsinigine concurred in the order to allow the courts to continue functioning during the current emergency.

The administrative order encourages the courts to continue proceedings where possible, and to hold proceedings through telephonic or videoconference means when a continuance is not possible. Telephonic hearings allow for limited close contact between parties and court staff, which is recommended under current public health guidelines to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

To protect the public, including potential jurors, all criminal jury trials are postponed through May 1, 2020; however, a jury trial that is currently scheduled may proceed at the discretion of the presiding judge.

The administrative order states that the courts are tasked with protecting the individual rights of each person as enumerated in the Navajo Bill of Rights and as recognized under Diné Bi Beenahaz'áanii and that the courts will not suspend essential services. The Navajo courts will continue to hear cases and will prioritize cases which affect these enumerated and recognized rights, including:

- (1) All criminal proceedings concerning an incarcerated defendant (i.e., arraignment, bail hearings, revocation hearings, etc.)
- (2) All proceedings concerning detained juveniles, abused or neglected minors (i.e., shelter care hearings);
- (3) Habeas corpus actions;

- (4) Involuntary commitment hearings (i.e., mental health commitments, guardianships, and other civil commitments);
- (5) Extraditions and federal detainees;
- (6) Order to Show Cause proceedings;
- (7) Applications for orders of protection and matters of enforcement; and
- (8) Applications for injunctive relief.

The courts will also hold proceedings that are essential to the public health state of emergency.

To further limit close contact, the administrative order temporarily suspends requirements for pleading, filing, in-person and other related requirements under the courts' rules of procedure. This suspension of court rules allows for people to file documents electronically or by fax rather than in-person. As a result, the courts will accept filings by mail and may accept filings by email or fax during the current emergency. People are asked to call the court before attempting to email or fax to ensure that documents are received. Those who are unable to submit a filing by email or fax should call the court to arrange for alternate filing instructions.

An application form for Domestic Abuse Protection Order is available on the Judicial Branch website. Additional forms will be posted on the website as they become available.

Exterior doors to the courts and court-related programs under the Judicial Branch will be locked at all times and only a minimum number of staff will be at the courts and/or offices to ensure essential services are available. Some judicial employees will be permitted to work from home to allow the continued work of the Judicial Branch.

The administrative order is effective beginning March 25, 2020, at 8 a.m. until amended or withdrawn. Any changes will be announced on the Judicial Branch website at www.navajocourts.org.

Contact information for the courts of the Navajo Nation is as follows:

Tuba City District Court

Telephone: (928) 283-3140

Fax: (928) 283-3158

Email: nntccourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Window Rock District Court

Telephone: (928) 871-6626

Fax: (928) 871-7560

Email: nnwrcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Kayenta District Court

Telephone: (928) 697-5549
Fax: (928) 697-5546
Email: nkycourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Alamo District Court

Telephone: (575) 854-2668
Fax: (575) 854-2660
Email: nalcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

To'hajiilee Court

Telephone: (505) 908-2817
Fax: (505) 908-2819
Email: ntocourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Chinle District Court

Telephone: (928) 674-2070
Fax: (928) 674-2089
Email: nchcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Shiprock District Court

Telephone: (505) 368-1270
Fax: (505) 368-1288
Email: nsrcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Crownpoint District Court

Telephone: (505) 786-2072
Fax: (505) 786-2086
Email: npcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Pueblo Pintado Circuit Court

Telephone: (505) 655-3268
Email: nppcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Dzil YiJiin District Court

Telephone: (928) 725-3781
Fax: (928) 725-3786
Email: ndycourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Dilkon District Court

Telephone: (928) 657-8140
Fax: (928) 657-8146
Email: mndkcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Ramah District Court

Telephone: (505) 775-3218
Fax: (505) 775-3399

Email: nrmcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Aneth District Court

Telephone: (435) 651-3545

Fax: (435) 651-3546

Email: anethcourt@navajo-nsn.gov

Supreme Court

Telephone: (928) 871-6763

Fax: (928) 871-7016

Email: nnsupremecourt@navajo-nsn.gov

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