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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DATE: Monday, April 20, 2020

**NAVAJO NATION COURTS TO CONTINUE TO PROVIDE
ESSENTIAL SERVICES ONLY**

Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne authorized telecommunication for Judicial Branch executive staff and administrative leave for other branch employees to May 29, 2020, due to the public health emergency related to the coronavirus. All employees on administrative leave may be called upon for delivery of essential services as needed; however, all courts and programs of the Judicial Branch must operate with minimal staff to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

With the administrative order issued by the Chief Justice, all Judicial Branch facilities remain closed to the public to May 29, 2020. However, the Judicial Branch courts and programs must still provide essential services through electronic and teleconference means. This is done to maximize safety for the public and employees.

To further promote public health safety, the Chief Justice ordered that all Judicial Branch employees shall wear a face mask or face cloth covering at all times when in a Judicial Branch facility with no exceptions.

Documents may be filed with the Navajo Nation courts by mail, fax or email. Please call the court to ensure that documents have been received. For those unable to file by any of those means, please contact the respective court for information on how to proceed.

A downloadable petition for a temporary protection order is available on the Judicial Branch website at www.navajocourts.org. Normal protocol for emergency protection orders outside normal court hours is still being followed where people may contact the local Navajo Nation police department.

The public should also be aware that Pueblo Pintado Circuit Court is currently operating from Crownpoint Judicial District Court until further notice. Also, faxes to Shiprock District Court are being routed through Aneth District Court at fax number (435) 651-3546 until further notice. Any other court closures or relocations will be announced on the www.navajocourts.org website.

For any questions regarding the delivery of essential services, please contact the respective court or program. The Judicial Branch asks for the patience of the public as the courts and programs are operating with minimal staffing and messages may have to be taken and returned at a later time.

Essential services are outlined in a previous administrative order and include:

- (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.

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