



## The 22<sup>nd</sup> Navajo Nation Council — Office of the Speaker

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### **Navajo Hopi Honor Run Finishes in Window Rock**

*Annual event honors military service both active and veterans*

**Window Rock, AZ** — On Thursday evening, the thunderous roar of motorcycles and choppers announced the arrival of the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Navajo Hopi Honor Run in Window Rock and completed a three-day ride around the Navajo Nation that began in St. Michaels on Tuesday. Riders and their bikes filled the Window Rock Veterans Park parking lot as the threat of rain moved festivities under a large tent.



“It’s important we recognized all our brave sons and daughters through the years who have bravely served their country and the Navajo Nation,” said Navajo Nation Speaker Johnny Naize. “Especially those who gave the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedom and keeping us and the nation safe.”

Navajo Nation Council Delegate Mel R. Begay (Coyote Canyon, Mexican Springs, Naschitti, Tohachi, Bahastl'a'a') opened the ceremony by welcoming the bikers to Window Rock.

“On behalf of the Navajo Nation government, we welcome you to Window Rock,” said Delegate Begay. “Your mission to provide healing and comfort to military service persons and their families is admirable.”

The Navajo Hopi Honor Riders began their journey Tuesday morning at the Indian Health Service Headquarters in St. Michaels, Arizona. After a rousing prayer delivered by Chinle Council Delegate Leonard Pete, the pack departed at 9 a.m, and headed west on Highway 264 and visited the communities of those killed in the action during the current War On Terror.

“Our activities honor everyone who have served our country through all our wars,” said, Larry Noble. “But we make stops at the families who recently lost a son or daughter because those families are likely still in mourning and attempting to heal.”

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The first day saw stops in Ganado, the Hopi Veterans Park, and Birdsprings before staying overnight in Flagstaff. On Wednesday, the group stopped in Cameron, Page and finished in Kayenta for the night.

On the third day the riders visited Beclabito for the dedication of a new memorial for Army Sergeant Troy Tom, the son of Council Delegate David Tom (Toadlena/Two Grey hills, Red Valley Tse'alnaozt'i'i', Sheepsprings, Beclabito,

Gadiiahi/To'Koi), who was killed in 2009 in Afghanistan. Afterwards the riders stopped at the communities of Shiprock and Red Valley before ending up in Window Rock.

Among the riders from the Council this year, included Council Delegate LoRenzo Bates (T'iistoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tse' Daa' Kaan, Newcomb, San Juan) and former delegate Raymond Maxx and former Navajo Nation Vice President Frank Dayish, Jr.

The Annual Navajo Hopi Honor Run is held each May and honors all fallen warriors both past and present. The group also supports all active military personnel and their families and honors all veterans.

The Navajo Hopi Honor Riders coordinates the event. The organization was founded and made their first motorcycle run in 2003 to honor the service and sacrifice of U.S. Army Specialist Lori Ann Piestewa, who was killed in Iraq earlier that year. Besides the annual honor run, the Honor Riders also organize welcome home escorts throughout the year for those returning home from military duty.

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