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Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial Parade provides opportunity to hear Navajo concerns



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye makes his way to the Ceremonial parade entry point alongside Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez. (Photo by Mihio Manus)



Both Navajo Code Talker Thomas H. Begay and Navajo President Russell Begaye accommodated interviews with journalists and podcasters as they walked the parade route. (Photo by Mihio Manus)



Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye greeted everyone along his path during the 94th Annual Ceremonial Parade. (Photo by Mihio Manus)

GALLUP, N.M.—For Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez, walking the Gallup Ceremonial parade route was an opportunity to stay connected with the Navajo people.

Along the route, the President and Vice President shook hands with the crowd while listening to concerns brought forth by the people.

One pillar of the Begaye-Nez administration is to enhance services for Nation veterans. President Begaye said many veterans spoke with him about housing.

“Housing for our veterans is a big request. It’s a consistent concern,” he said. “As a member of the 22nd Council, we did set aside monies to build 75 houses a year. We are going to be aggressive in making sure those houses are built.”

President Begaye said veteran’s health services were a concern as well.

“Veterans aren’t getting the services they deserve. We are going to try and bring services for them by declaring the Navajo Nation a veteran’s service center. Then they can have their own VA.”

The President and Vice President stopped to speak with local radio stations that were broadcasting live from the Ceremonial parade. They also fielded questions from journalists in brief intervals.

Vice President Nez said he heard concerns regarding streamlining the regulations within many Navajo Nation policies.

“Some people mentioned how tedious our home site leasing process is,” he said. “People want homes on the Navajo Nation but our internal process takes a long time.”

Vice President Nez said there needs to be a reevaluation of some of those policies regarding home site leasing.

“People want to build their own homes and they have the resources to do it. Many are just waiting on a home site lease.”

Other concerns included education and the need for more scholarship resources for Navajo college students.

This year’s 94th Annual Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial hosted a night parade, night performances, an INFR Tour Rodeo and a queen pageant among many other events.

Parade attendees were treated to performances by the Fernando Cellicion Traditional Zuni Dancers, The White Mountain Apache Dance Group, the Azteca Dance Group and the Zuni Olla Maidens.

Among the dignitaries and representatives in the Ceremonial parade were New Mexico District 3 Senator John Pinto (D-N.M.) and Navajo Code Talker and Silver Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Thomas H. Begay.