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July 27, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation Proclamation



Top, Navajo Nation Vice President Jonathan Nez runs into Pine Springs, Ariz. for the second day of Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation. Bottom, Ettie Anderson carries the staff up the hill during the run from Oak Springs to Pine Springs. (Photos by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—
The annual relay run across the Navajo Nation has begun.

For the fifth year, the Office of the President and Vice President, along with the Department of Health and Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project, has coordinated the Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation relay run to provide awareness on diabetes, obesity

and other chronic diseases afflicting the Navajo people.

“We encourage our tribal employees to take an hour or two out of their work schedule to run and support this annual event,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye.

“This is a great cause to support by joining in the run across the Navajo Nation. We even have 54-year-olds running,” he said.

Vice President Nez joined the runners and participated in the event since the start at White Rock, N.M. on Saturday. He invites the general public to join the run.

Many of the runners are running for a cause, whether it is for child abuse, overcoming health issues, to running for the families and communities. Vice President Nez said he is running for suicide awareness, a taboo Navajo subject that must be addressed to stop the rash of suicides that have occurred across the Nation.

“Our administration is making a stand for healthy living and an active lifestyle. Join us in Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation,” said Vice President Nez.

President Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez issued a proclamation in honor and recognition of the relay run on July 25. The relay run is scheduled from July 25 to August 1, 2015.

The route for the 2015 Running for a Stronger and Healthier Navajo Nation is a distance of 435 miles and will circle the Navajo Nation, reaching the states of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah.

According to Eddie Scott Yazzie, public information officer for NNSDP, since 2011, the run focused on reaching the 110 chapters of the Navajo Nation to promote healthy living, diet and exercise to combat diabetes and obesity on the Nation.

“In five years, 95 percent of

the chapters have been reached during the relay run,” Yazzie said.

This year, the run will circle through 28 Navajo communities before its conclusion. In previous years, the relay run was from the four cardinal directions of the Navajo Nation.

The communities for this year’s run include White Rock, Naschitti, Tohatchi, Mexican Springs, Twin Lakes, Rock Springs, Tsayatoh, Oak Springs, Pine Springs, Wide Ruins, Greasewood, Steamboat, Cameron, Tuba City, Tonalea, Tsa’ Bi Kin, Naatsis’áán, Dennehotso, Mexican Water, Teec Nos Pos, Beclabito, Gad’iiahi, Shiprock, Hogback, San Juan, Nenahnezaad, Upper Fruitland and Lake Valley.

President Begaye issued a memorandum on July 27 to the divisions within the Executive Branch to allow tribal employees anywhere from one to four hours off from work to participate in the relay run.

The staff of the NNSDP will track involvement through a form developed to include the date, time and location of the run for participating employees. All runners receive a t-shirt commemorating the relay run for their participation.

