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Begaye-Nez administration announce new cabinet appointments



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez sit with their cabinet members during a recent division directors meeting at Quality Inn. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

Two more individuals have joined the awakening of a new dawn.

Today, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye announced the appointment of Jesse Delmar as the executive director of the Division of Public Safety.

"We congratulate and welcome Jesse Delmar as our new executive director of the Navajo Division of Public Safety," President Begaye said. "His extensive background in law enforcement and education in criminal justice will complement the team we have assembled."

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed and said, "Our administration has selected Jesse Delmar because of his education, experience and knowledge of issues facing law enforcement officers across Indian Country. We are happy to have him aboard."

Delmar is a graduate of Northern Arizona University with a bachelor's degree in administration of criminal justice with a minor in psychology. He is also a graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Academy and FBI National Academy.

He served as an executive fellow with the FBI Executive Fellowship Program in

Washington, D.C. and served as vice president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police Indian Section and served as president of the Indian Country Intelligence of Arizona.

In addition, Delmar served many terms as chief of police for the Ft. McDowell Yavapai Nation Police Department.

Serving in these various capacities over the years not only gave him the experience in dealing with the many issues facing Indian Country, but also the opportunity to share these concerns on a national level.

"I'm deeply humbled and honored to be asked by the Begaye-Nez administration to serve as executive director for the Navajo Division of Public Safety," Delmar said. "I do buy into what they have to offer the Navajo people.

"I'm very impressed by their direction and I do want to be part of the awakening of this new dawn," he added.

Delmar is not stranger to the Navajo Nation, especially since he served more than 26 years for the tribe.

His recent decision to retire was to be closer to family, in particular, his grandson, Mason. Delmar has been married for more than 31 years to his wife, Marjorie. The couple has three daughters, Audrey, Melody and Josselyn.

"I feel I can contribute my wisdom, experience, and knowledge in advancing the nation and going forward in helping my people with regard to matters with the Navajo

Division of Public Safety," Delmar said.

The second appointment by President Begaye was Dr. Donald Benn to serve as executive director of Navajo Environmental Protection Agency.

"We proudly announce the selection of Dr. Donald Benn as the director of Navajo EPA. His education in chemistry is extraordinary and we know he will do a good job leading an important division for the Navajo Nation," said President Begaye.

Vice President Nez was also excited with the selection for Navajo EPA.

"We have a scientist joining the team, a man who has worked with NASA during his professional career. We are excited to see his leadership style with Navajo EPA," Vice President Nez said.

Benn earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of New Mexico in 1997. He obtained a master's degree in chemistry from New Mexico State University in 2000. In 2005, Benn earned his doctoral degree in chemistry at NMSU.

Benn said he was thankful for the selection to work with President Begaye and Vice President Nez and that he has returned home to help the Navajo people.

From July 2010 to May 2015, Benn worked as a research science consultant for Nihidah Nidii DaL, LLC in Lukachukai, Ariz. from May 2010 to July 2010, he successfully wrote

and received a NASA-MIRS research grant to use at the Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, N.M.

From May 2009 to May 2010, he worked as director of the Native American Research Laboratory at the University of Montana in Missoula. From August 2008 to May 2009, Benn taught chemistry, biology and nutrition at Diné College in Tsaile, Ariz.

He did post-doctoral work for UNM from May 2005 to August 2008. From Jan. 1997 to May 2005, he worked for the NMSU as a lead research manager.

"Historically, Native Americans did not need an environmental protection service because we were not destructive, but now that we have one it is my pleasure to serve as its director with the Begaye-Nez team," Benn said. "I came back to the reservation to help Diné people and thanks to both President Begaye and Vice-President Nez, I am have been given the unique opportunity to do just that."

Over the years, he has received a number of academic awards and honors, including the GK-12 National Science Foundation Inquiry Based Scientist Award from NMSU from 2003 to 2004, designation as an Alfred P. Sloan fellow for NMSU from 1997-1999, and the Presidential Scholar Award from UNM from 1987-1989.