



THE NAVAJO NATION

RUSSELL BEGAYE PRESIDENT
JONATHAN NEZ VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JANUARY 6, 2016

Communication Office
Office of the President and Vice President
The Navajo Nation

Email: mjcrank@navajo-nsn.gov

Phone: (928)871-7000

Fax: (928)871-4025

PRESIDENT RUSSELL BEGAYE AND VICE PRESIDENT JONATHAN NEZ FILL CABINET SEATS WITH NAVAJO SCIENTIST AND ENGINEER

Window Rock- December 30, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council confirmed two cabinet seat selections, candidates selected by President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez, Dr. Donald Benn and Garrett Silversmith are official members of the Begaye/Nez administration.

Legislation, sponsored by Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd, confirming Benn as the Director for the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency, was selected in May 2015. Benn is originally from Lukachukai, Arizona; he is Tsinaajinii (Black Streak Wood People), born for Dzilt'ahnii (Mountain Cove Clan).

Benn came to the Begaye/Nez administration at the heels of the Gold King Mine Spill with an extremely impressive educational and work research background; Benn received his Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from the University of New Mexico, Masters of Science in Chemistry from New Mexico State University completing with his Doctor of Philosophy in Chemistry, New Mexico State University.

During the Gold King Mine Spill Benn immediately responded by visiting numerous communities impacted by the spill provided as much updates and information to farmers and ranchers while continuing to remind the U.S. EPA of its responsibility to the Navajo Nation to provide solutions and resources.

"I appreciate that Navajo Nation President Begaye and Vice President Nez both agreed to allow me to serve as the Division Director for the new Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (Nahasdzaan Baa Áháyá, NBA). As the new NBA on Navajo, our main priority is to serve those community members who need help the most and who are the true VIPs on the reservation. They are the ones who live out there on the reservation and they are the ones who make up our One Voice, One Nation," stated Dr. Benn.

Council Delegate Benjamin Bennett sponsored legislation to confirm Garrett Silversmith as the director of Navajo Nation Division of Transportation appointed by President Begaye and Vice President Nez in May 2015. Silversmith is Tachii'nii (Red Running into Water Clan) born for Ashiihi (Salt People clan) originally from Fuzzy Mountain, New Mexico.

Silversmith obtained his Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering from New Mexico State University, formerly employed with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Chinle, Arizona.

"I want to thank our partners the Navajo Nation Council for confirming two highly qualified and experienced Navajo professionals in our cabinet," Vice President Nez said.

"Dr. Benn is a scientist with an impressive career in chemistry that has brought his knowledge home to help the Navajo people. Garret Silversmith is an engineer that has worked with the BIA for many years and will help move our nation forward in transportation. We look forward to our continued work with the Legislative and Judicial branches of government to improve the quality of life for the Navajo people," he added.