



## THE NAVAJO NATION OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## President Nez calls for the creation of a Navajo Food Policy

**TSAILE, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez recently had the honor of being a guest speaker during the annual Diné Bich'iiya' Summit at Diné College in Tsaile, Arizona, in which he spoke about the importance of healthy living, strengthening the Navajo Nation's food sovereignty, revitalizing farming among families, and the need to develop and implement a Navajo food policy.

The three-day summit, which was open to the public, was presented by Diné College in collaboration with the Office of the President and Vice President and included presentations and hands-on demonstrations on several

topics including backyard gardening, soap making, the four traditional foods, traditional horse harvesting, Hopi organic slow foods, and beekeeping.

President Nez touched on several issues that included the need for the Nation to develop its own food policy, to establish a food regulatory office, which would allow more local Navajo farmers and ranchers to sell their products on the Navajo Nation while having their products inspected in accordance with the policy.

"If we could create a food industry on the Navajo Nation that feeds all of our people then we could even expand to provide foods around the country and maybe even to other countries around the world – that would be true sovereignty at the highest level," said President Nez.

He also spoke about the need for more Diné people and families to grow their own healthy foods through farming, as well as the need for the Nation to increase its overall capacity to farm its own lands. Doing so would allow the Nation to become less dependent on outside food sources and further strengthen the Nation's sovereignty, he added.



**PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez speaks at the 2019 Diné Bich'iiya' Summit at Diné College at Tsaile, Ariz. on March 29, 2019.**

“This winter season we were blessed with vast amounts of snow and rain, so our lands are ready for farming. Our people have a great opportunity to grow our own foods, healthy fruits and vegetables, to help fight diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other health problems that affect our Diné people,” President Nez stated.

President Nez also noted that through the Healthy Diné Nation Act, which implemented a two-percent sales tax on unhealthy foods and beverages and eliminated the overall sales tax on healthy fruits and vegetables on the Navajo Nation, local chapters are empowered through the tax revenue to develop more running/walking trails, basketball courts, and other outdoor facilities that enable our people to become more active.

Vice President Myron Lizer said that as the Nation increases its food sovereignty it will enable individuals and families to become more self-sufficient and less dependent on border towns for their food products.

“Every family should have their own greenhouse to grow their own food for themselves and to increase the number of farmers’ markets in our own communities,” added Vice President Lizer.

The Diné Bich’iia’ Summit is held annually in partnership with Diné College and the Office of the President and Vice President. President Nez and Vice President Lizer thank Diné College administrators, students, and all participants that made this year’s summit a great success.

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