



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

CONTACTS:
Jared Touchin, Communications Director
(928) 274-4275

Crystalyne Curley, Sr. Public Information Officer
(928) 274-2758

nnopvp.communications@gmail.com

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Navajo Nation communities receive food donations from the State of New Mexico and Arizona's St. Mary's Food Bank



PHOTO: St. Mary's Food Bank delivers three semi-truck loads totaling 2,000 food boxes to the Tuba City community on April 14, 2020.

WINDOW ROCK – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer commend the state of New Mexico and St. Mary's Food Bank for coordinating the donation of essential food items to Navajo communities to help families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On Wednesday, the state of New Mexico delivered 9,720 food boxes that include more than 80,000 pounds of rice, beans, potatoes, watermelons, apples, and onions to a designated staging chapter area to help those directly impacted by COVID-19. Communities will prepare the food boxes for delivery to elders and high-risk individuals to New Mexico residents. The New Mexico Indian Affairs Department coordinated the multi-agency efforts that led to several deliveries in Sheep Springs, Thoreau, Standing Rock, and other communities to be distributed regionally.

"On behalf of the Office of the President and Vice President, we express our appreciation to New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs, and Arizona's St. Mary's Food Bank for working closely with the Navajo Nation's leadership and local governments during the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic is affecting thousands of our Navajo people in profound ways, including the loss of work, lack of medical care, and the need for food and household supplies. The outbreak has significantly impacted families and elders that live in isolated areas of the Navajo Nation, especially those who do not have transportation," said President Jonathan Nez.

"The state of New Mexico will do everything in its power to support the sovereign tribes and pueblos of this state during this pandemic," said New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. "My administration has been in constant contact with tribal leaders and partners -- we will continue deliveries of food, water and other necessary resources in addition to the work the Department of Health has done in testing and providing for medical needs. I am grateful for this response and expect more to come in the near- and long-term future."

On April 14, St. Mary's Food Bank delivered three semi-truck loads totaling 2,000 food boxes to the Tuba City community, where many local and surrounding residents had the opportunity to pick-up the food boxes through a no person-to-person contact procedure. All personal and volunteers wore Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure the safety and well-being of elders and families.

Through the Nation's partnerships, the Nez-Lizer Administration continues to seek resources for Navajo citizens, patients, elders, and high-risk individuals with necessities such as PPE's, food, water, sanitizing products, and household items. The distribution of these items also helps families to stay home and to self-quarantine for longer periods of time to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"The effective partnerships have helped us to ensure families know how to find food while schools and senior centers are closed and making sure our children and elders are getting three meals a day. Helping one another will allow us to slow the spread of the virus in the Navajo Nation. As leaders, we will continue to provide resources to help lessen the economic and educational impact of the virus," said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Health Command Operation Center will utilize the strike teams, Community Health Representatives, Public Health Nurse, and first responders, to deliver food boxes to elders and individuals with serious underlying medical conditions.

"Tó Nanees Dizi Local Governance is setting a good example for all communities. They have been proactive in working collaboratively with the Navajo Health Command Operations Center and other entities to secure items to help their residents. I thank them and many others for working together," added President Nez.

For more information regarding donations, please contact the Navajo Nation Health Command Center at (928) 871-7014.

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