



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navajo Nation leaders implore City of Page Mayor Levi Tappen to unite communities, not divide people

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer are calling on city of Page Mayor Levi Tappen to work together with the Navajo Nation to unite efforts to fight COVID-19, following stereotypical and insensitive comments that were posted on social media by Mayor Tappen regarding alcoholism in the city of Page, along with a photograph of what appears to be a group of Native Americans standing along a street.

“We, as elected leaders, should be working together to unite our people especially when we are losing so many relatives to COVID-19, not tearing each other down and singling out Native Americans in regards to alcohol issues. Yes, we recognize that there is a problem and we stand ready to work with Mayor Tappen to address the issues rather than writing insensitive comments to our constituents on social media. As the Mayor of the city of Page, his comments have far reaching implications and influence on the relations between Navajo people and the city of Page. I invite Mayor Tappen to work with the Navajo Nation. Let’s come together and show our children a better path, one based on mutual respect and love for all people,” said President Nez.

In early April the Page Police Department arrested a Page resident for creating a post on social media blaming the spread of COVID-19 on Navajo people encouraging people to commit violence against Navajo people.

Over 30-percent of residents in Page are Navajo. In addition, members of the Navajo Nation contribute millions of dollars in revenue each year to businesses and the city that help to provide public safety, EMS personnel, and other essential services for all people.

“The Page City Council previously established a task force to help address social issues. We respectfully request Mayor Tappen and the City Council to re-establish this task force and work with the Navajo Nation to improve relations and identify and resolve the root of the problems. We have much to gain for all of our people when we work together and so much more to lose if we allow negativity to guide our leadership,” said Vice President Lizer.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer also encourage all Navajo citizens to be respectful in their comments to one another and not feed into negativity on social media.

“Let’s set an example for all people by being respectful with our comments as well. Yes, let’s be firm and stand our ground, but let’s also remember the teachings of our elders and be thoughtful with our words. Words have power and we must use them carefully,” added President Nez.

He added that he and Vice President Lizer appreciate Farmington Mayor Nate Duckett and Gallup Mayor Louis Bonaguidi for reaching out to the Navajo Nation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’ve spoken to Mayor Duckett and he’s willing to work with us. We also thank Mayor Bonaguidi for closing down the city of Gallup even though it will negatively impact their economy,” President Nez added.

President Nez and Vice President Lizer invite Mayor Tappen and his administration to join the Nez-Lizer Administration this week, as they distribute food, water, and other supplies to elderly and high-risk members of the Navajo Nation in several communities near the city of Page.

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