



The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President

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Navajo Nation welcomes top FEMA officials and Arizona Department of Emergency Management



PHOTO: Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez discusses COVID-19 response efforts with FEMA Administrator Peter T. Gaynor, Regional Administrator for FEMA Regional IX Robert J. Fenton, Arizona Division of Emergency Management Director Allen Clark, and other state and federal officials in Window Rock, Ariz. on Oct. 1, 2020.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – On Thursday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer welcomed FEMA Administrator Peter T. Gaynor, Regional Administrator for FEMA Region IX Robert J. Fenton, Arizona Division of Emergency Management Director Allen Clark, and other officials to Window Rock, Ariz. to discuss the ongoing efforts with federal and state partners to mitigate and reduce the spread of COVID-19 on the Navajo Nation.

The Office of the President and Vice President and Navajo Department of Health established the Health Operations Command Center to help lead the efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the guidance of Navajo Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim and HCO

Commander David Nez, a Unified Command Group was created to unify and streamline coordination efforts, planning, and communication among the tribal, county, state, and federal officials. FEMA has played a vital role in the Unified Command Group by stationing several emergency response experts at the command center during the pandemic.

“The war against COVID-19 continues and we appreciate the assistance and support that’s being provided by FEMA. They have been instrumental in securing and coordinating resources for healthcare facilities, chapters, and for our Navajo people. FEMA has also provided training and expertise to help build our Nation’s own capacity to respond to emergencies and address challenges. We appreciate the support provided by Administrator Gaynor, Regional Administrator Fenton, Incident Management Assistance Team Lead Joshua Allan, and all of our HCOC team members for their hard work and dedication during this pandemic,” said President Nez.

Among many mitigation efforts, the Navajo Nation worked closely with FEMA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Team Rubicon, Navajo Area IHS, and HCOC officials to establish Alternative Care Sites in the communities of Chinle, Shiprock, and Gallup to serve as isolation sites for positive COVID-19 patients to help prevent the further spread of the virus. FEMA and other officials also assisted with the coordination of essential food and supply items for communities on the Navajo Nation.

“Our efforts are focused on reducing the number of COVID-19 cases on a consistent basis until there is a safe vaccine available. We appreciate everything that FEMA and many others are doing to help prioritize the health and well-being of our Navajo people, particularly those with underlying health conditions and our elders. We may have won a few battles against COVID-19, but the war continues,” said Vice President Lizer.

Administrator Gaynor and Regional Administrator Fenton commended the Navajo Nation for taking preventative measures through public health orders and reaffirmed their continued support for COVID-19 response and mitigation efforts.

For more information, including helpful prevention tips, and resources to help stop the spread of COVID-19, visit the Navajo Department of Health’s COVID-19 website: <http://www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19>. For COVID-19 related questions and information, call (928) 871-7014.

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