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For Immediate Release
June 1, 2011

President Ben Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly Kick Off 2nd Annual Churchrock Treaty Days Festival



Churchrock, NM—As parade grand marshals, Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly and First Lady Martha Shelly today kicked off Churchrock Chapter’s 2nd Annual Treaty Days Festival, greeting about 200 community members along the parade route and at the chapter house. The festival was also named ‘Robinson Kelly Day,’ in honor of the late chapter vice president.

“First Lady Shelly and I are very happy to be here with you all to celebrate Navajo Nation Treaty Days and in remembrance of the late Robinson Kelly,” said President Shelly. “We commemorate June 1, 1868 as the day a treaty was signed between the United States and Chief Barboncito and other Navajo chiefs, giving us sovereignty status to help protect our language, way of life, and ceremonies.”

President Shelly also explained the significance of the Navajo Nation Tribal Seal to the youth in the audience, “As you can see this Great Seal of the Navajo Nation, it is a sacred symbol representing our sovereignty. The arrowheads symbolize all 50 U.S. states and connect us with all peoples. The three circles of turquoise, yellow, and red, represent the rainbow and the hogan that faces eastward, where all life begins. The two green corn stalks and pollen symbolize the vitality of our land and expresses the prayers of our people. Within the corn are four sacred mountains- *Sisnaajini* in the east, *Tsoodzil* in the south, *Dook’o’oostiid* in the west, and *Dibé Nitsaa* in the north. The horse, cow, and sheep are symbols of wealth. The mountains are white, turquoise, yellow, and black and above them our father, the Sun shines upon our prosperity.”

After the parade and welcome address, the festivities started with a wellness walk and run, Navajo traditional song and dance, frybread contest, volleyball games, a western dance and the coronation of Miss Churchrock to be held later in the afternoon.

“We are very excited President Shelly and First Lady Shelly joined us for our celebration today and his

message about the tribal seal was great for our young kids to hear,” Festival organizer Julie Livingston added. “The community as a whole agreed to dedicate our festival to the late Robinson Kelly, who was a humble and great leader who guided us, that’s why we honored him.”

The Navajo Nation Treaty Days Celebration continues through June 1-5, 2011 in Window Rock, Arizona.

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