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President Ben Shelly Declares June 17-18, 2011 as Navajo Nation Veterans Stand Down

Window Rock, AZ—Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly announced today that he has issued a proclamation declaring June 17 and 18, 2011 as “Navajo Nation Veterans Stand Down.”

“We are calling on all Navajo Nation citizens to join us and volunteer to support our veterans at this event and through out the year,” stated President Shelly. “The Shelly-Jim Administration is working hard to create the Navajo Division for Veterans Affairs and a Title 27 Navajo Nation Code that will focus on veterans issues.”

The Navajo Nation Department of Veterans Affairs (NNDVA) will be hosting the National Stand Down event at the Chinle Community Center on June 17 and 18. Preliminary ceremonies including a flag raising and opening prayer to start at 8:00 a.m. each day.

“The main thing I want people to understand is that they need to give back or help any way they can to these warriors that served our country,” David Nez, department manager for NNDVA said.

The Stand Down event will provide basic medical exams, clothing, food, access to experts in veteran and family rights and benefits legal advice, counseling by traditional practitioners as well as western counseling. Mental health counseling for post-traumatic stress disorder will also be available.

The full text of the proclamation is listed below.

The Navajo Nation proclaims June 17-18, 2011 as NAVAJO NATION VETERANS STAND DOWN. This national campaign is designed to honor and recognize the efforts and contributions of veterans from the U.S. Armed Forces.

Whereas, the original Stand Down for Veterans was modeled after the Stand Down concept used during the Vietnam War to provide a safe retreat for units returning from combat operations. At secure base camp areas, troops were able to take care of personal hygiene, get clean uniforms, enjoy warm meals, receive medical and dental care, mail and receive letters, and enjoy the camaraderie of friends in a safe environment. Stand Down afforded battle-weary soldiers the opportunity to renew their spirit, health and overall sense of well-being; and

Whereas, the Navajo Nation honors all Prisoners of War (POW), those Missing in Action (MIA), or Killed in Action (KIA); including those killed in the line of duty; and

Whereas, the Navajo Nation commends all Navajo Veterans who have earned medals for heroism, valor, gallantry, combat action, and other commendations; and

Whereas, the Navajo Nation asserts that it is in the best interests to afford due respect to its Veterans for their courage, sacrifices, and dedication; and

Whereas, the Navajo Nation embraces a 2011 Navajo Nation Veterans Stand Down for all Navajo Veterans, in which the Department of Navajo Veterans Affairs and the five agencies will sponsor in partnership with over 100 volunteers to provide free services and goods including food, shelter, clothing, haircuts, medical and legal services, substance abuse counseling, treatment options, job training, counseling, and housing referrals for Navajo Veterans.

Now, Therefore, Let It Be Proclaimed the 2011 Navajo Nation Stand Down for Navajo Veterans will be held on June 17 and 18, 2011 in Chinle, Arizona, which will provide an opportunity to honor and celebrate all those who served in the uniform of the U.S. Armed Forces.

All individuals, family members, communities, tribal programs, businesses, governmental agencies are hereby called upon to assist and support the Navajo Nation Veterans Stand Down event and activities; and to extend the due respect, appreciation and recognition for the service given by our Veterans.

We, the undersigned, hereby express our appreciation and pay tribute to all Navajo Veterans as they have placed themselves in harm's way to defend this Nation in order to maintain freedom and our way of life.

ATTEST:

Johnny Naize, Speaker
The 22nd Navajo Nation Council

Herb Yazzie, Chief Justice
Navajo Nation Supreme Court

Sharon Pinto, BIA Regional Director
Navajo Area

John Hubbard, Jr., IHS Area Health Director
Navajo Area

Signed at the Executive Office on this day of 10th day of June, 2011

Witness my hand and the Great Seal of The Navajo Nation

Ben Shelly, President
The Navajo Nation

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