



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2015

MEDIA CONTACTS

Jared Touchin (928) 221-9253

Jolene Holgate (928) 380-4174

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

Speaker LoRenzo Bates welcomes President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez



PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates provides the Welcome Address during the inauguration of President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez on May 12, 2015.

FORT DEFIANCE, Ariz. – On behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) stood before chapter, tribal, state, and county officials, and thousands of Diné Citizens on Tuesday, to welcome newly-elected Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez at an inauguration ceremony held in the Bee Hóldzil Fighting Scouts Events Center in Fort Defiance.

Speaker Bates briefly acknowledged the challenging and unprecedented circumstances surrounding the presidential election while referencing the will of the people and the importance of prayer in overcoming adversity and move forward.

“It is during times of uncertainty and challenge that I am reminded just how resilient the Navajo People are,” said Speaker Bates. “We should always remain mindful that the resiliency of our people is only made possible and made stronger through the practice and belief in prayer.”

Speaker Bates also urged the Navajo Nation Council and the Office of the President to work cooperatively to address the Nation’s issues, referencing housing needs for elderly people and veterans, the need for resources and funding for first responders, and funding for schools.

“We share a common ground in that we are called to serve at the will of the people who have placed us in office,” said Speaker Bates. “It is our obligation to develop and to maintain a cooperative working relationship to work through the issues.”

Other dignitaries in attendance included New Mexico Senator John Pinto (D-Dist. 3), Arizona Senator Carlyle Begay (D-Dist. 7), New Mexico Representative Sharon Clahchischilliage (R-Dist. 4), Coconino County Supervisor Lena Fowler (Dist. 5), New Mexico State Senator William Sharer (R-Dist. 1), and BIA Navajo Regional Director Sharon Pinto.

Former Vice President Rex Lee Jim, conducted a dedication and blessing ceremony prior to the inaugural speeches from President Begaye and Vice President Nez, who also emphasized the need for the branches of government operate cohesively to overcome issues and to move forward.

Six newly elected members of the Navajo Nation Board of Election Supervisors also took the oath at Tuesday’s inauguration event including, Dennis M. Dedman (Chinle Agency), Rodger Martinez (Eastern Navajo Agency), Dawn A. Yazzie (Fort Defiance Agency), Sam Ahkeah (Shiprock Agency), Shirlee A. Bedonie (Western Navajo Agency), and Ray Gilmore (Chinle Agency).

Vice President Jonathan Nez resigned from his elected position as Council Delegate on Tuesday as well. A special election will be held to fill the vacant position, representing the communities of Shonto, Naa’tsis’Áán, Oljato, and Ts’ah Bii Kin.

Tuesday’s event marks the second time an inauguration was held in the Bee Hóldzil Fighting Scouts Events Center, following the inauguration of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council in January.

According to the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, over the 5,000 people attended Tuesday’s inauguration including the public, specials guests, and event coordinators.

###

For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit www.navajonationcouncil.org or find us on Facebook and Twitter, search for keywords: Navajo Nation Council