



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council showcases Diné College's *Navajo Cultural Arts Program*



Navajo basket maker Wacey Harvey demonstrates basket-making techniques during the Navajo Nation Council's "Diné Cultural Night" at the Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz. on June 6, 2018.

WINDOW ROCK – Last Wednesday, the 23rd Navajo Nation Council held its first "Diné Cultural Night" in recognition of the 150th Anniversary of the Naaltsos Saní, or the Treaty of 1868. Each Wednesday during the month of June, the Council and the Office of the Speaker are hosting events to showcase the talents, progress, and success of Navajo people since the time of the Long Walk and captivity at Fort Sumner. The theme of the events is, "A Journey of Strength, Growth, Healing, and Resilience."

The Office of the Speaker collaborated with the Diné College's Navajo Cultural Arts Program, which is a 24-credit hour certificate program that offers enrolled members of the Navajo Nation

the opportunity to enhance their cultural arts practices and for master artisans to share their unique knowledge and skills with others.

“I extend my appreciation to all the talented artisans that participated in Wednesday’s event, which is intended to show how strong we are as Navajo people, and to show how our people have persevered and progressed since the time of the Long Walk,” said Speaker LoRenzo Bates. “We are a strong people and we will continue to become stronger for many years to come.”

Last week’s event included demonstrations from Navajo artisans including moccasin maker Brent Toadlena, sash belt maker Aaron Begay, Navajo rug weaver Heather Williams, Navajo basket maker Wacey Harvey, and silversmith Delia Wauneka.

The event drew over 40 people from the general public ranging from youth, elderly people, and tourists from around the country and internationally. Many of the tourists said the event offered them greater insight into Navajo traditions and provided a unique perspective that they had never experienced prior to attending the artisan showcase event.

“We want to engage the public and we want them to feel welcomed to the Council Chamber and this event offered that opportunity. We welcome all Diné citizens and others to come to the upcoming events throughout the month of June,” added Speaker Bates.

Each of the artisans is enrolled in Diné College’s Navajo Cultural Arts Program, which will allow them to become a certified Navajo artisan upon completion of the required 24-credit hours.

Students are provided several incentives through the program including paid travel for regional cultural arts museums, festivals, and events, participation in the program’s traveling exhibit, the opportunity to exhibit their artwork in the Diné College Museum, priority access to cultural arts demonstrations and workshops, and the opportunity to attend Navajo master artisans lectures.

The upcoming Diné Cultural Nights events include a traditional talent show on June 13, traditional food demonstrations/storytelling on June 20, and a traditional fashion show on June 27. All events begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chamber in Window Rock.

Throughout the month of June, the Office of the Speaker is also offering free tours of the Council Chamber Monday thru Friday at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. daily. For more information or to schedule a tour, please contact the Office of the Speaker at (928) 871-7160.

For more information on the Navajo Cultural Arts Program, please contact Diné College at (928) 724-6658 or visit www.navajoculturalartsprogram.org.

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