



Seth Damon elected to a second term as Speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council

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PHOTO: Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne (left) administers the oath of office to Speaker Seth Damon outside the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. Speaker Damon (middle) took the oath on Monday, assisted by Council Delegate Eugene Tso (Chinle).

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — In the first business item of the 2021 winter regular session of the Navajo Nation Council, Speaker Seth Damon was elected by Council delegates to the Speakership for a second term on Monday. Legislation No. 0007-21, put forward by Council Delegate Rickie Nez (T'iistsoh Sikaad, Nenahnezad, Upper Fruitland, Tsé Daa K'aan, Newcomb, San Juan), facilitated the nomination and election of the Speaker under Title Two of the Navajo Nation Code.

“The Speaker’s Office is here to work for you,” said Speaker Damon during a presentation following his nomination by Council Delegate Eugenia Charles-Newton (Shiprock). “Some things we can’t change immediately, but what we can change are the options for the next seven generations to have a better hope for the future.”

Speaker Damon's platform message to the members of the Council began with an emphasis on stopping the spread of the coronavirus (Covid-19) through advocacy, transparency, funding and working together. Overall, Speaker Damon also drew attention to public safety needs, veterans services, economic development and the need for a responsible roads plan.

"It is my greatest honor to be entrusted with the Speaker's role for the Great Navajo Nation for a second term," said Speaker Damon. "I want to thank Honorable Rickie Nez for sponsoring this legislation and Honorable Eugenia Charles-Newton for providing her nomination and heartfelt words."

The full day one of the 2021 winter regular session can be viewed online at: <https://vimeo.com/503589991>.

The election, including the production and collection of voting ballots, was facilitated by the Navajo Election Administration. Though no other delegate was nominated before the Council voted to close nominations, the election proceeded with one name on the ballot.

The Office of Legislative Services then announced 24 delegates voted, 19 in person and 5 through email. 23 ballots voted for Speaker Damon and one ballot was left blank.

The oath of office for the Speaker of the Navajo Nation was administered immediately following the election. Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne administered the oath for Speaker Damon in front of the Navajo Nation Council Chamber.

Special requirements for coronavirus testing and preventative measures for mitigating the spread of infectious diseases were in place on Monday at the Navajo Nation Council Chamber. For delegates not attending the session in-person, ballots and discussion took place from their respective vehicles or remotely.

The election took place in accordance with Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code, which requires the election of the Speaker as the first order of business at the winter regular session in every odd-numbered year. The Speaker of the Navajo Nation Council's authority is enumerated in Title 2 of the Navajo Nation Code.

Speaker Damon is Bit'ahnii born for Naaneesht' ézhi Táchii'nii. His maternal grandparents are 'Áshjijí and his paternal grandparents are Tsé Nahabiłnii.

Day two will resume Jan. 26 at 10 a.m. (MT).

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