



25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL

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## **Council Delegates recognize achievements and contributions of community leaders and student athletes**



**PHOTO: (L to R) Coach Charlene Chischillie, student athletes from Seba Dalkai Boarding School and Council Delegate Cherilyn Yazzie**

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – The second day of the 2024 Fall Session began with meaningful recognitions that honored community leaders, athletes, educators, and dedicated public servants. The recognitions showcased the Council’s ongoing commitment to uplifting the achievements and resilience of the Diné people.

The session recognized Seba Dalkai Cross Country Team, led by Coach Charlene Chischillie. The team, representing Seba Dalkai Boarding School, has excelled in local competitions, earning a spot in the upcoming National Youth Championship in Lexington, Kentucky. These achievements underscore not only athletic skill but also a profound connection to Diné culture, where running is seen as a sacred act of resilience, spiritual growth, and honoring tradition.

Coach Chischillie, a Special Education Technician at Seba Dalkai Boarding School, has been instrumental in guiding her team, which includes runners as young as eight years old. The team continues to fundraise to cover their travel and competition expenses throughout the school year.

The youth athletes recognized include K’Leta Martinez, Bailey Begay, Kai Martinez, Kalayla Begay, Kaileigha Nez, Petah Chezumpena, Kiana Lee, Chasity Begay, Landen Nez, Colby Jesus, Riley Dahozy, and Lymen Grey.

Council Delegate Cheryl Yazzie praised the young athletes stating “Your journey reflects the spirit and strength of our heritage. May you carry this with you as you represent Navajo at the national championship.”

Budget and Finance Committee Chair Shaandiin Parrish and Controller Sean McCabe celebrated the career of John Kennedy, who retired after three decades of service as an auditor and advisor to the Navajo Nation. Honored for his dedication to financial integrity, Kennedy was presented with a Pendleton blanket as a symbol of gratitude from the 25th Navajo Nation Council.

Council Delegate Parrish highlighted Kennedy’s impact on Navajo financial transparency, stating, “John’s unwavering commitment to the Nation has set a high standard for accountability.” Council Delegate Parrish said. “Your service has been invaluable to our progress and community trust. Ahéhee.”

Four-time PGA Champion Notah Begay III, a proud Diné, addressed the Council, emphasizing the importance of investing in youth development and community empowerment. “This Council is the epicenter of our community. Investing in our young people is critical to preserving Diné culture and advancing our global presence,” Begay said.

Delegate Dr. Andy Nez extended recognition to the Six Directions Indigenous School from Gallup, New Mexico, applauding the school’s dedication to educational excellence and cultural preservation. This acknowledgment was part of the Council’s broader commitment to supporting educational initiatives that inspire the next generation of leaders.

The 2024 Fall Session recognition ceremonies exemplify the spirit of resilience, unity, and cultural pride that define the Diné people.

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