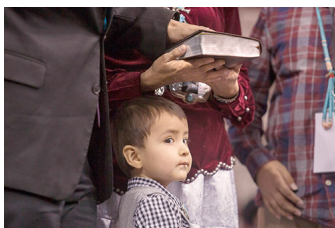


Navajo Nation President, Vice President sworn in

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
Friday, 25 January 2019 04:57



Enthusiastic crowd welcomes Nez-Lizer

Hundreds of excited guests filled the Fighting Scouts Events Center in Fort Defiance Jan. 15 to welcome in the newly minted Navajo Nation leadership.

In return, they were treated to the musical stylings of the Navajo Nation Band, flutist Travis Terry, the Rehoboth Choir, along with special performers, Roxyanne Harvey, and Miss Western Navajo Raquel Whitehair.

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Of course, the bustling crowd was there to witness Jonathan Nez be sworn in as Navajo Nation President by Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne, who also swore in Vice President Myron Lizer and the 24th Navajo Nation Council on Jan. 15.

The event formally kicked off with the procession led by Kayenta Township Commissioners, Navajo Nation Board of Education, and Navajo Nation Board of Election Supervisors.

Once the Posting of Colors, National Anthem, Pledge of Allegiance, and special tribute for Navajo Veterans concluded, Amber Crotty of the 24th Navajo Nation Council gave the invocation.

“[We] work on behalf of our family and the people,” she said in her address, urging the audience to be receptive to others. “Be a part of the solution. Hear [the people’s] cries, and give knowledge and wisdom.”

After she finished, Tom Chee of the 24th Navajo Nation Council gave the welcome address.

Chee spoke about how culture has remained important for the Navajo people, especially through their language that was given to them by the Holy Ones.

“We are truly a blessed nation, to be able to maintain our culture,” he said.

The elders transferred their knowledge and culture onto us, Chee said, and these are powerful tools that the Navajo people have as a nation. The lessons that were taught to him as a child are what can be used to raise the current generation of children and make them into good people, he added.

He then spoke about how it is up to the newly elected leaders to serve their people well.

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“Being elected doesn’t mean you’re a leader, it means you’re an elected official,” Chee said. “[You have to] become leaders.”

Once Chee finished his address, Nez officially took the Oath of Office. He was followed by Lizer, the Navajo Nation Council, and the Navajo Nation Board of Election Supervisors, Board of Education, and the Kayenta Township Commissioners.

After taking the oath, Nez gave his inaugural address to the crowd, one that was filled with calls for hope and change. He spoke in both English and Navajo as he went.

“You believed it was time for change,” Nez said. “Change could be a good word, but it can also be a scary word.”

The Navajo people are tired of the same rhetoric, Nez continued, not just in Window Rock but across the entire reservation.

“But the change we’re talking about, is let’s not be fearful,” he said. “Let’s grasp the change and move forward together, all of us.”

Nez said that three words defined every step of his and Lizer’s campaign from the start: unity, hope, and resilience.

“From day one, it was about the Navajo people,” Nez said. “Not any one segment or particular group of people, but all our Navajo people united.”

Segregating people into various groups has been what led to trouble for the tribe, which led to the campaign’s goal to keep everyone together, he added.

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“If we’re together, we can accomplish a lot,” he said.

Change is an opportunity to work together, a chance to improve and empower ourselves as individuals and communities, Nez said.

“I saw hope in many of your eyes,” he said. “Despite the many challenges we face, our people still have hope. They hope for a better tomorrow for all of us as Diné people.”

Lizer also stressed the importance of unity as a people in his inaugural address.

“We look to unite the wisdom and new ideas that will help us to resolve old problems,” Lizer said. “The need to push the envelope and take advantage of the latest technology has never been greater.”

As a business owner himself, Lizer said that he wants to help other Diné business owners and entrepreneurs with economic development opportunities, which includes urging the Navajo people to buy local.

“The Navajo people are an economic giant,” he said. “We are an economic force when you look at the dollars we pour into border towns outside our nation.”

The crowd cheered and clapped as the newly elected leaders shared their goals, a sentiment that was shared by the other members of the platform.

“I believe that president, now I can say ‘president,’ not ‘elect’, and vice president are capable of delivering that purpose,” Second Lady Dottie Lizer said in her address.

The opening day of the 2019 Winter Council Session is set for Monday, Jan. 28.

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