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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. - Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission Executive Director Christopher Becenti welcomed officials with the Universal Service Administration Company Lifeline Phone and Internet Assistance Program to the Navajo Nation July 22 to promote their program to help Navajo families reduce or eliminate the cost of telecommunication services for qualified households.

“This federal program is a great opportunity to help many Navajo families acquire affordable communications services. Many people throughout the Nation are not aware of Lifeline Service, which can help many students, Navajo entrepreneurs, educators, and many others gain access to the internet,” Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez pointed out.

Individuals are considered eligible for a Lifeline benefit if they are currently enrolled in one of the following programs:

• Medicaid

• SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps

• Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

• Federal Public Housing Assistance

• Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit

• Reside on tribal lands and participate in one of the federal or state assistance programs listed above or one of the following Tribal-state programs – Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Head State, Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Food Distribution Program

• Income based eligibility at or below 135% of the federal poverty guidelines

The federal program offers assistance up to $34.95 to those residing on tribal lands for home phones, cell phones, mobile and home internet, or internet-phone bundles.

To get started, a consumer must select a participating Lifeline provider in their state and the provider then supports the consumer through an application process and verifies eligibility.

Becenti added, “Lifeline is crucial within the Navajo Nation, however, there have been several changes in the verification process and hindered the number of beneficiaries applying or renewing Lifeline services. Their visit to the Nation can help the program understand and improve our unique challenges with the verification process.”

During the visit, the program also met with Navajo Nation Division of Social Services, Navajo Veterans Administration, and Pueblo of Zuni to discuss methods to expand the program’s benefits on the Navajo Nation.

“On behalf of the Office of the President and Vice President, we extend our appreciation to Lifeline for making the commitment and efforts to work with the Navajo Nation,” Vice President

Lizer said.

For more information regarding the Lifeline Phone and Internet Assistance Program visit www.LifelineSupport.org or call (800) 234-9473 .

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