

Steven Begay wins District 14 NN council delegate seat

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 01 July 2016 06:27



Theresa Becenti-Aguilar takes second place

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Steven Begay of Naschitti Chapter was elected June 28 to fill the remaining one-and-half-year term of the Navajo Nation Council Delegate District 14 seat vacated by Mel Begay. Steven Begay, an administrator at Gallup Indian Medical Center, won the race with 731 votes.

There were 2,534 total ballots tallied from Coyote Canyon, Naschitti, Mexican Springs, Tohatchi, and Bread Springs chapters. Council delegates earn \$25,000 annually and serve four-year terms. They are not limited in terms of how long they can serve, meaning they can serve as many terms as they win.

Who else ran?

Theresa Becenti-Aguilar, from Coyote Canyon and a former member of the state Public Regulation Commission, took second place with 564 votes, and Nathan Notah of Tohatchi garnered 344 votes for a third place finish.

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“It was a tough race and obviously Steven Begay was the winner,” Brent Detsoi, 27, a council delegate candidate who finished in sixth place, said. “But there are some things that should be looked at.”

Detsoi, who is from Twin Lakes, said as far as he knows, the election went off well. He said though, the Tohatchi Chapter experienced a big problem with paper ballots.

“There weren’t enough actual ballots at Tohatchi, and that delayed voting and counting,” Detsoi said. “That should never have happened. We all must take something from this.”

Detsoi, a Gallup mayoral candidate in 2011, continued, “Where was the pre-planning and planning for the unexpected when it came to Tohatchi?”

Kimmeth Yazzie, a Navajo Nation Election Administration official who distributed District 14 results to the media, said he couldn’t comment on the Tohatchi ballot situation until the end of this week and after at least one election board meeting.

“I can’t comment on Tohatchi right now,” Yazzie said. “That’s all I can say about that.”

Mel Begay was removed from office by the Navajo Nation Election Administration after a conviction by the Window Rock District Court on conspiracy and making or permitting false Navajo Nation vouchers charges that totaled more than \$33,000. Begay was sent to prison for three years because of the crime.

There are 24 delegates who represent various chapters in the Navajo Nation. A new law passed a few years ago took the total delegate amount from 88 to 24.

Candidate

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Bahastl’a’a’

Coyote Canyon

Mexican Springs

Naschitti

Tohatchi

Total Votes

Cast for Candidate

Elvis Bitsilly

13

7

4

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7

44

75

Edison A. Begay, Jr.

13

19

7

12

27

78

Ansley L. Curley

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18

48

33

9

20

128

Tom Ranger

4

15

3

4

2

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28

Theresa Becenti-Aguilar

136

215

90

36

87

564

Bob Begaye

14

4

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36

9

8

71

Anthony K. Howard

94

14

18

4

11

141

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Brent A. Detsoi

82

6

13

2

16

119

Harrison Plummer

17

49

13

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4

20

103

Nathan Notah

42

24

42

89

147

344

Willis Nez

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6

5

6

57

18

92

Karen E. Bedonie

9

7

19

16

9

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60

Steven Begay

122

75

66

275

193

731

The unofficial vote tallies for the Navajo Nation District 14 Council Delegate seat vacated by Mel Begay. **Graph Credit:** Navajo Nation Election Administration

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