



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Navajo Nation Council Chamber selected for Arizona's prestigious cultural preservation award



PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates accepts the Arizona Governor's James W. Garrison Heritage Award on behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for the restoration of the Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Scottsdale, Ariz. on June 7, 2018.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) had the honor of accepting the Arizona Governor's James W. Garrison Heritage Award in recognition of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council's efforts to restore and preserve the historic Navajo Nation Council Chamber, during the 2018 Awards in Historic Preservation ceremony held in Scottsdale, Ariz. on Thursday.

The Arizona Preservation Foundation and the State Historic Preservation Office sponsored the awards ceremony, which is held on an annual basis to award individuals, businesses, organizations, and/or projects in recognition of outstanding preservation achievements. This year,

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey personally selected the Council Chamber renovation project as the prestigious James W. Garrison Heritage Award winner, for the exceptional achievement in preserving Arizona's historic and prehistoric cultural resources.

"I am honored to receive this award on behalf of the 23rd Navajo Nation Council and I thank Governor Ducey, the Arizona Preservation Foundation, and the State Historic Preservation Office for their work in preserving our state's most precious cultural sites, which includes many that are significant to the Navajo people," said Speaker Bates.

Approximately two years ago, the Navajo Nation Council directed Speaker Bates to renovate the Council Chamber, which was constructed in the early 1920's to hold official meetings and functions of the Navajo government. In 2004, the Council Chamber was declared a National Historic Landmark.



PHOTO: The Navajo Nation Council Chamber in Window Rock, Ariz.

The renovations included the replacement of the entire floor, roofing, and rearrangement of seating for the Council members and the general public.

According to Speaker Bates, aside from addressing the structural integrity of the facility, the renovations were intended to create an atmosphere that welcomes all people including the elderly and disabled. Access to the Council Chamber was limited for disabled people until new ramps were installed along with a wheelchair lift and a newly designated seating area for people in wheelchairs.

In the early 1930's, Navajo artist Gerald Nailor painted murals on the interior walls of the Council Chamber, which depict significant historical events of the Navajo people. The Office of the Speaker is currently assessing options to restore and preserve the mural paintings.

At Thursday's awards ceremony, officials with Stroh Architecture, Inc., which completed the architectural planning and design for the renovations and Keyah Construction, which oversaw the construction work, joined Speaker Bates as the Office of the Governor presented the prestigious award to the Navajo Nation Council.

Throughout the month of June, the Office of the Speaker is providing free tours of the Council Chamber to the public. For more information, please contact the Office of the Speaker at (928) 871-7160.

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