



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Navajo leaders honor the arrival of the Navajo Treaty of 1868 to the capital of the Navajo Nation

**WINDOW ROCK** – Members of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, President Russell Begaye, Vice President Jonathon Nez, and Chief Justice JoAnn B. Jayne were in attendance on Thursday, as the Navajo Nation Museum unveiled the original Treaty of 1868, also known as Naaltsos Saní, at the “Year of Naaltsos Saní – 150<sup>th</sup> Year of the Treaty” reception ceremony in Window Rock, Ariz.

In 1864, the Navajo people were forcefully removed from their homelands and moved 300 miles east to Bosque Redondo, N.M., which is known as Hwéeldi. The signing of the Treaty of 1868 allowed the Navajo people to return to their homelands and established a government-to-government relationship between the Navajo people and the U.S. government.

During the event, Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse’Daa’Kaan, Upper Fruitland) stated that the Naaltsos Saní acknowledges and reflects on the strength, growth, healing, and resiliency of the Navajo people in the past, present, and future.

“The Naaltsos Saní is the final treaty that Navajo people signed with the U.S. Government and marks a shift in Navajo history from a time of despair to the reclamation of our independence, sovereignty, and self-determination. Today, we remember the deprivation that our past Navajo leaders and people experienced and their perseverance to retain our homelands, culture, tradition, and language,” said Speaker Bates.

“Moving forward as a sovereign Nation, we continue to emphasize the importance of our Navajo way of life. Each day, we are blessed and fortunate to practice our way of life within our sacred



**PHOTO: Speaker LoRenzo Bates delivering his remarks at the “Year of Naaltsos Saní – 150<sup>th</sup> Year of the Treaty” reception ceremony at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Ariz. on May 31, 2018.**

homelands. This time allows us to rededicate ourselves as sacred people, and remember that we overcame many obstacles and that we will continue to overcome many challenges that are before us,” he added.

The Treaty of 1868 exhibit will be on display at the Navajo Nation Museum for the entire month of June. The exhibit was achieved through an agreement between the Navajo Nation and the Smithsonian’s National Museum, thanks to the efforts of the Navajo Nation Museum staff.

To assist in bringing the original treaty back to the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Nation Council approved legislation, sponsored by Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichíí, Steamboat), approving supplemental funding in the amount of \$350,000 to allow the Navajo Nation Museum to exhibit the treaty for the public to view and acknowledge the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the treaty signing.



**PHOTO: Council Delegate Steven Begay explaining the Treaty of 1868 to his daughter, Kaci Dawn Begay, during the soft grand opening of the “Naaltsos Sani” exhibit at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Ariz. on May 31, 2018.**

Jocelyn Billy-Upshaw emceed the reception, Diné Bi Ohta students of Window Rock Unified School District

delivered the Pledge of Allegiance, Talibah Begay sang the National Anthem, Chief Justice Jayne and Miss Navajo Nation Crystal Littleben also provided welcome remarks, and Avery Denny of Diné College provided the keynote address. Following the event, tribal leaders cut a ribbon for the soft grand opening of the “Naaltsos Sani” exhibit.

During the month of June, the Legislative Branch will host Diné cultural nights every Wednesday evening and daily tours of the Council Chamber in coordination with the treaty exhibit.

“On behalf of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Navajo Nation Council, we extend an invitation to our visitors and Navajo people, families, and communities to join us and recognize the Navajo Nation’s journey of strength, growth, healing, and resilience,” said Speaker Bates.

The Navajo Nation Legislative Branch Treaty of 1868 event schedule can be found at [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org).

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For news on the latest legislative branch activities, please visit [www.navajonationcouncil.org](http://www.navajonationcouncil.org) or find us on Facebook and Twitter, keywords: Navajo Nation Council