



23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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Council invites Navajo Nation Youth Council to Spring Session



Photo: Members of the Navajo Nation Youth Council presented a report to Council on April 19, 2016. (Left to right: NNYC advisor Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar, NNYC members Lyla Hatathlie and Jacqueline Johnson.)

WINDOW ROCK – The Navajo Nation Youth Council provided a report to the 23rd Navajo Nation Council on the second day of Spring Session, highlighting their goals, youth council structure, and their desire to be involved with their Navajo government and policymaking.

The Youth Council received recognition by Council members and were given encouragement through advice on leadership, participation in the Navajo governmental process, and to reach out to peers to increase involvement with community and central government issues.

Speaker LoRenzo Bates (Nenahnezad, Newcomb, San Juan, Tiis Tsoh Sikaad, Tse'Daa'Kaan, Upper Fruitland) invited the Youth Council to address his Council colleagues and provided time for questions and answers following the report.

NNYC members Jacqueline Johnson and Lyla Hatathlie provided the report to Council along with youth council advisor Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar, outlining the NNYC's membership, structure, and goals. They stressed the importance of obtaining funding that would go towards a youth center in Tuba City, Arizona for meeting, event, and activity space.

According to the report, the NNYC is proposing to have six regional youth councils throughout the Navajo Nation in the communities of Chinle, Crownpoint, Fort Defiance, Shiprock, Tuba City, and representation of youth residing off the Navajo Nation. Each region would select one male and one female to sit on the NNYC.

Additionally, the six youth councils will be overseen by the Navajo Nation Office of Diné Youth and the Office of Miss Navajo Nation, which would request funding for operational purposes.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáoz't'í) said she supports the NNYC's initiative to officially establish their council and encouraged the youth members to begin reaching out to their peers to develop innovative ways to involve them with the Youth Council.

"How can we get Navajo youth to respond? Can it be done through live Internet sessions and social media? These are very important questions that can help create a strong and effective youth council," said Delegate Crotty.

She also requested that the NNYC members return to Council with a succinct report that would include specific information on the youth council's plans, mission, funding proposals, and detailed needs. Delegate Crotty also suggested that the NNYC present the report to the Council's Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, who serve as oversight for the Office of Diné Youth.

Council Delegate Dwight Witherspoon (Black Mesa, Forest Lake, Hardrock, Pinon, Whippoorwill) commended the Youth Council members for their commitment to be a part of their Navajo Nation government and reminded them the importance of their cultural heritage, language, and prayer, as leaders in their communities.

"Our kinship system is one of the important components of our identity that we don't use enough of to try to establish relationships. Certainly, our ceremonies, our philosophies, our humor, our language, our songs, our family history, and oral stories speak to our identity – the history of our clans and family foster that identity and contributes to our resiliency as a people," said Delegate Witherspoon.

Several Council members took turns recognizing and honoring the Navajo youth, as well as encouraging the Youth Council to reach out to the 23rd Navajo Nation Council for guidance and aid regarding their endeavors.

Speaker Bates informed the NNYC that Council is very interested in establishing a relationship with them.

“If and when you have questions, feel free to contact the Council members. They are a very diligent and hardworking group of council delegates, regardless of what may be said about them out there in the world. We recognize the youth as our future leaders, so keep up the good work and we look forward to working with you,” said Speaker Bates.

Youth council members invited the Council to their Youth/Elderly Summit scheduled for July 18-20, 2016 at Diné College. For more information regarding the summit, you may contact Theresa Hatathlie-Delmar at ms_thathalie@msn.com.

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