



NOVEMBER 11, 2015  
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## PRESIDENT BEGAYE AND VICE PRESIDENT FEED VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY

WINDOW ROCK-Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez honored all Navajo Veterans today by serving them an honorary meal at the Veterans Day event held at the Window Rock Sports Center.

“When I hear the National Anthem it stirs a feeling in my heart and it’s because of all of you here today,” President Begaye told the gathered veterans.

Navajo people have a long history of protecting this country, its citizens and the land, he said. As a Nation, he said, we owe veterans of all branches a debt of gratitude for protecting our freedom.

Throughout the many wars and conflicts, Navajo Veterans have always gone above and beyond in their military service. From World War II to Vietnam, Navajo Veterans have been an integral part of the success of the military.

“To our Code Talkers, we thank you for your service,” he said. “Our soldiers actually were the cause for us winning the war.”

The Begaye-Nez Administration has consistently pushed for the construction of homes for veterans. As such, the Navajo Nation will be one of ten tribes to use NAHASDA funds to build homes for veterans.

President Begaye told the veterans that he spoke last week with Secretary Castro, Administrator for HUD, who has approved the use of these funds to construct veteran’s homes.

Veteran Liaison for the Office of the President and Vice President, Jamescita Peshlakai is a veteran herself who served in the United States Army.

Peshlakai has recently been working the Four Corners Power Plant to facilitate employment of 300 Navajo veterans for a retrofit project the power plant is undertaking within the next three years.

“I didn’t realize the life I was signing up for when I joined the U.S. Army,” she said. “When I signed that dotted line, I didn’t know that I would be serving on behalf of such a great nation.”

Peshlakai said that in her position as Veteran Liaison, she is dedicated to making the lives of veterans easier while giving them the dignity they deserve.

Vice President Nez thanked the veterans for their service and their families for their support. Everyday is Veterans Day, he said, and OPVP has prioritized their support for Navajo Veterans to advocate on their behalf.

“We need your support as well,” he said. “We need you to be at hearings so that your voice is heard at the highest level.”

Both President Begaye and Vice President Nez called upon the Navajo people to come together to support veteran’s causes.

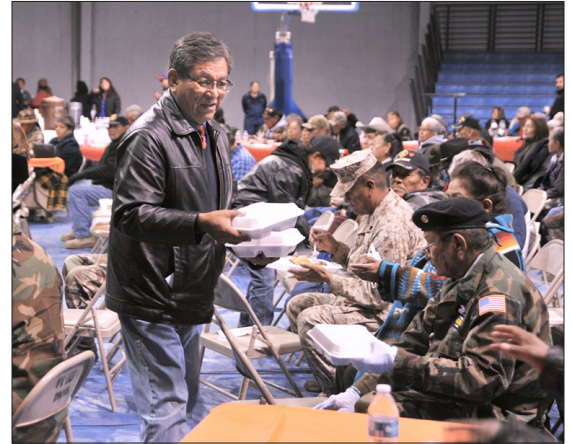
More recently, the two leaders joined together with the Veteran’s Service Office in Tuba City to volunteer their assistance in helping to renovate the home of Navajo Code Talker Dan Akee.

This advocacy for community based assistance efforts is rooted in Navajo culture, President Begaye said.

“This is how we, as Navajos, do things. We help each other,” he said. “We need to be willing to help one another and we need to do this for our veterans.”

As the noon hour hit and the agenda broke for lunch, both President Begaye and Vice President Nez helped to serve the veterans lunch. Along with OPVP staff, they handed out plates of roast beef and made sure every veteran was fed.

James and Ernie entertained the lunch crowd while Vice President Nez and other attendees participated in a 5K run for Navajo Veterans.



President Begaye showed his appreciation to Navajo Veterans by serving them lunch on Veterans Day.



Vice President Nez said he was honored to serve lunch to the veterans in attendance.



“We need to be willing to help one another and we need to do this for our veterans,” President Begaye said.