

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

## Division of Community Development Newsletter

### In this Issue

- “Navajo Nation Census Month” proclaimed by Nation’s leaders
- Ganado community to receive new senior citizens and veterans center with approval of S’hasin Fund appropriation
- Hogans offer solution to veterans’ housing crisis
- San Juan School District working to expand internet access to students on the Navajo Nation
- Verizon provides expanded connectivity to Navajo Nation to aid in Covid-19 response
- New agreement could bring 5G coverage to rural Navajo Nation communities
- Navajo youth, Alyssa Williams, wins Arizona license plate seal design contest
- Bulletin Board
- Personnel News
- Navajo Nation Census Information Center News
- The 2020 Census: 4 Ways to Respond
- Stop the Spread of Dikos Ntsaaígíí-19 (COVID-19)
- Avoid Traveling Outside the Navajo Nation During The COVID-19 Pandemic
- Help with Dealing with Stress or Emotional Effects of COVID-19

### Did You Know..

Prairie dogs are tough. Prairie dogs may look a bit like actual Chicken McNuggets, but in reality they’re fast, skilled fighters armed with sharp claws and powerful teeth. “The worst animal bite I’ve ever gotten was from a prairie dog,” said Jessica Alexander, a program associate in WWF’s Northern Great Plains office. “It takes a while for black-footed ferrets to learn how to catch them. Prairie dogs fight back.”

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/8-surprising-prairie-dog-facts>

### Events:

**September: Bini’antááts’ózí, which means Ripening of Early Crops**

September 7: Labor Day

September 11: Patriot Day

September 13: Grandparents Day

September 22: Autumn Equinox

September 25: Native American Day



### “Navajo Nation Census Month” proclaimed by Nation’s leaders

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed a proclamation recognizing the month of September 2020 as “Navajo Nation Census Month,” to encourage the Navajo people to participate in the 2020 Census to ensure a complete count of all citizens on the Navajo Nation.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau is required by the U.S. Constitution to conduct a count of the U.S. population. The federal government shortened this year’s census count by one month by imposing a deadline of Sept. 30, 2020. As of the signing of the proclamation, only 17.9-percent of households on the Navajo Nation had been counted.

“The 2020 Census Count is a prime opportunity to improve the future of our communities for generations to come. The Navajo people’s participation and response will shape how billions of dollars in federal funds are distributed each year for tribal programs and grants for the next 10 years. The census also determines how congressional, state, county redistricting is determined. We have had several challenges in recent years in regards to redistricting, but our Nation’s goal is to strengthen our representation at all levels of government to benefit our citizens and communities,” said President Nez.



The Nez-Lizer Administration is also working closely with Census Area Office Manager Arbin Mitchell, to reach as many Navajo elders as possible, especially those residing in rural areas, to fully inform them and to provide guidance to ensure they are counted in the census process.

The proclamation states, “The Census efforts on the Navajo Nation have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Navajo Nation experienced a high COVID-19 infection rate in the country, and in response to the pandemic, the Navajo Nation has diverted many resources to ensure the safety and well-being of the Navajo People.”

“The census count is very critical for our political representation and our ability to advocate at every level of government. We need more Navajo people to run for office at every level of government, but we also need the voting districts to support them. To create change and implement new policies that help our communities, we need the political capital to move in that direction and the 2020 Census is a key part of that,” said Vice President Lizer.

The Navajo Nation also created the Census 2020 Complete Commission to coordinate and promote the census. The commission has met periodically throughout the year to mobilize census activities and to disseminate census information, participate in events that raise awareness of

the census, provide advocates to speak to local government chapters and local events about the importance of the census, support census staff, and encourage all Navajo citizens to participate.

“I hope the signing of the Navajo Nation Census Month proclamation will motivate our people to continue to report their household information to the 2020 U.S. Census. Every 10 years we are tasked with the responsibility of participating in the Census and when we report we directly become a part of history. When I was in college, I would often refer to the general population statistic of the Navajo Nation in my papers, but now that data is 10 years old. As a Nation we have grown so much, so please, fill out the Census; mail it in, call the Census number, or fill it out online. We can still provide accurate numbers to the Federal government safely. This data will help our future generations!” stated Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish.

The proclamation “recognizes the month of September 2020 as the “Navajo Nation Census Month,” to grow and build our future on our traditions and culture taught to us from the beginning of time, and we must ensure the Navajo Nation remains strong to carry us for many more generations, and to ensure our Navajo People are counted to make an impact in the 2020 U.S. Census.”

You may self-respond for the 2020 Census online at <https://2020census.gov> or by calling (844) 330-2020. For more information, please visit the 2020 Census website.

August 2020

## Ganado community to receive new senior citizens and veterans center with approval of Síhasin Fund appropriation

**GANADO, Ariz.** — On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed into law Resolution CJY-57-20, which appropriates approximately \$1.4 million from the Navajo Nation's Síhasin Fund for the design and construction of a new 4,800 square-foot senior citizens and veterans center in the community of Ganado, Ariz. The ceremony was held outdoors with social distancing and COVID-19 prevention protocols in place.

“In a time of adversity and challenges brought upon the Navajo Nation by the COVID-19 pandemic, the approval of these funds inspires renewed hope within our communities and our Navajo people. Today, we celebrate a milestone for the community of Ganado. This new senior citizens and veterans center will not only provide services, but it will also be a place of healing. We were taught to take care of our parents, grandparents, and all of our elders and those are the teachings we must pass on to our young people. I congratulate the community of Ganado for working together to bring change for their people. This initiative took many years of hard work and perseverance to be where we are today,” said President Nez.

Last year, President Nez and Vice President Lizer attended the Ganado community's elder day celebration, where they voiced their support for the construction of the new center to support services for elders and veterans. They were joined by Division of Community Development Executive Director Dr. Pearl Yellowman and Department of Health Executive Director Dr. Jill Jim during Wednesday's signing ceremony.

“We were here in Ganado several months back and we assured you then that the Nez-Lizer Administration would do everything we can to move this project forward. This new center will be the pride and joy of Ganado for many years to come and it will also strengthen and help to build the economy and the community. Thank you to all of the veterans and elders who are with us today — you make us proud to who we are and you are what makes us a strong people. We thank all of you for everything you have done for our Nation and our country. God bless all of you,” said Vice President Lizer.

During the signing ceremony, local elders and veterans including Lók'aa' Niteel Veterans Organization Vice Commander Andrew Lynch, Isabelle Shondee, and Carolyn Holmes offered their words of encouragement and appreciation. Long-time Ganado resident and Gold Star Mother Carolyn Holmes, urged those in attendance to continue working together to make progress for all Navajo communities. Holmes, a grazing permit holder who allowed for 10-acres of land to be withdrawn within her grazing area for the project, also stated that other grazing permit holders should not stop projects from progressing especially when they benefit entire communities and many people.

Council Delegate Vince R. James, who represents the Ganado community as a member of the 24th Navajo Nation Council, sponsored the legislation that was eventually approved by the Council by a vote of 22-0 during the summer session on July 22, 2020. During the signing ceremony, he spoke about the years of dedication it took to develop the plans and secure the funds for the project. He also thanked the local grazing permit holders for allowing a 10-acre area of land to be designated for the project, which is located nearly one-mile west of the Ganado Chapter house.



The former senior center operated out of a modular home for years before it was ordered to close due to deficiencies with the structure of the facility. The new center will provide meeting rooms and space to provide services for local elders.

“Not only does this project symbolize hope, but it exemplifies the resiliency of our Navajo people. During a worldwide pandemic and public health emergency, we have local leaders who continue to move our communities forward and to inspire hope for our future generations. Thank you to the 24th Navajo Nation Council for their support and approval of the funds as well,” added President Nez.

The funding for the project is separate from the Navajo Nation's CARES Act funds. On July 31, the 24th Navajo Nation Council approved a CARES Act expenditure plan, which will be considered by President Nez and Vice President Lizer once the resolution is finalized/certified by the Legislative Branch and delivered to the Office of the President and Vice President.

**READ MORE AT:** <https://www.facebook.com/NezLizer2018/posts/2564825817116279>

# Hogans offer solution to veterans' housing crisis

By Arlyssa Becenti | Aug 6, 2020 | Culture |

## WINDOW ROCK

The idea of a modern hogan, or octagon, being built to ease the housing shortage on the Navajo Nation has only been an idea that has been touted – until now.

Inside a warehouse in Tse Bonito, Navajo Veterans Administration director Jim Zwierlein is helping to build the prototype of a 1,236-square-foot modern hogan, which has two bedrooms, a kitchen, and a full ADA-accessible restroom. “The homes are being designed with energy efficiency in mind,” said Zwierlein.

This first home, if all goes well, will be headed to Tuba City. The homes will be given to homeless Navajo veterans who meet qualifications. Right now there are over 1,000 applications from veterans in need of a home and Zwierlein and President Jonathan Nez believe this modern hogan will be the answer.

“If they all are qualified, meaning they are legitimate veterans and they are in fact homeless, and not possessing a second home on Navajo, off Navajo or anywhere else, then they would receive a home in our program,” said Zwierlein. “We hope that we will be able to do 150 veterans homes by end of the year.”

The vision for the homes doesn't stop with veterans. The Housing Improvement Program under the Division of Community Development could use this modern hogan plan for non-veterans as well. A fund management plan is also being developed for people who decide to buy the home. “This is going to be the start to the larger proposal for the housing manufacturing facility,” said Nez. “This is what we envisioned at the beginning and to see it now is pretty awesome.”

Nez said this type of home manufacturing was something he had wanted to see when he was still vice president, but there had never been follow-through on it until Zwierlein was given the task. About a year ago, designer Dan Nakai came to Nez's office to show the three house designs he had drawn up. For simplicity, Nez said this current design was the best one. The design allows for walls to be taken off in order for the homeowners to add on to the structure whenever or if ever they choose.

“With a simple octagon like this you can knock down a wall and add on more to the house if you want,” said Nez. “Once they learn how to do it they can do it themselves and this is the sweat equity part about it.”



This project will also provide jobs for veterans to build these homes. Within the construction contracts there is a provision stating the contractor has to recruit veteran labor forces, and if the veterans are able and willing they can be hired. Prior experience in construction or home building isn't required.

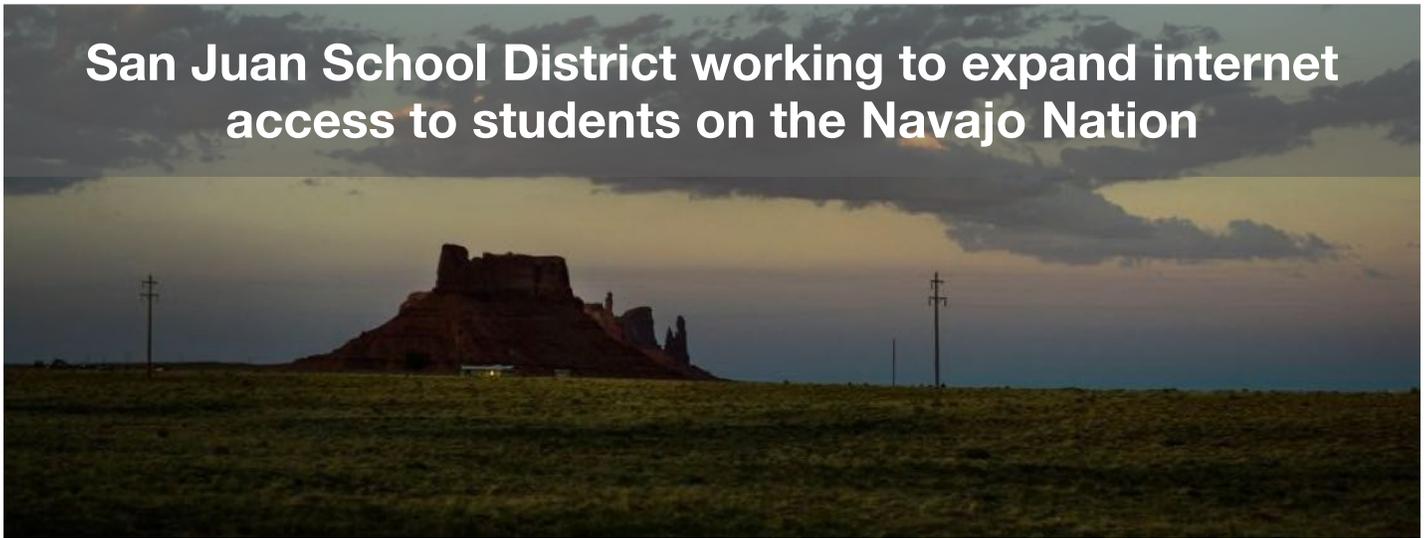
In order to begin building these homes for the Navajo VA, Zwierlein said he's waiting on the Navajo Nation Council to correct the Veterans Housing Program bill. The original bill stipulates that only Navajos can be hired for the program, and there was a dollar limit on the value of the homes. “In today's market the costs that were set seven years ago are no longer valid,” said Zwierlein. “Home construction is more expensive.

Once they take it for action and pass it through we'll have the green light to start building.” The cost for the prototype added up to \$65,000 to \$70,000, plus the cost of labor and transportation to move the home to the site. Along with concrete to build the foundation, this two-bedroom home will cost up to \$130,000. The veterans' homes are being paid for out of the veterans' trust fund.

“In the last administration Jim and I talked ... he pitched this idea and it was always on my mind,” said Nez. “We had a new opportunity now since we have a new administration. Look at what we have right now. Once these homes are being built people will be happy. “During the campaign,” he said, “we asked ‘how many of you would be content with a simple octagon?’ A lot of people said they would.”

READ MORE AT: <https://navajotimes.com/ae/culture/hogans-offer-solution-to-veterans-housing-crisis/>

# San Juan School District working to expand internet access to students on the Navajo Nation



(Leah Hogsten | Tribune file photo) Lights shines from within a home at the break of dawn on the Navajo Nation, June 23, 2020. Many students on the Navajo Nation in San Juan County lack home internet access, a problem which has presented learning challenges during the coronavirus pandemic.

BY ZAK PODMORE

Months before COVID-19 was discovered in China in late 2019, Aaron Brewer, the technology director for the San Juan School District in southeast Utah, was working to connect more students to home internet.

A lack of broadband and internet service providers on the northern Navajo Nation in San Juan County meant many students could only access the internet at school, limiting home learning opportunities and constraining the types of homework teachers were able to assign.

"We started to work on [a program] last summer with Whitehorse High School [in Montezuma Creek]," Brewer said. "We bought all of the eighth graders there a hotspot with data to see if we would be able to get [more home] connectivity."

The hotspot devices use cell tower signals to bring students online, but speed and connectivity remained a problem for some homes in the rugged, rural landscape of San Juan County where cell service can be hard to come by.

"If you're in one place, you get great reception and sometimes even 100 yards down the road, or certainly down into a canyon or behind a geographical barrier, you lose that signal," Brewer said.

The program increased use of home internet learning tools among the eighth graders, Brewer said, and plans were made to expand hotspot availability. But when the coronavirus pandemic arrived in Utah in March and schools in the district closed their doors, the program became a top priority for both parents and educators.

"I fear kids like mine will be impacted the most by all of this," Renae Cly, a parent in Monument Valley with two students in district schools, told The Salt Lake Tribune in March. "It's all dirt roads, and it's hard to get a hold of people. There's a signal here and there. But where we live on the reservation, there's no Wi-Fi access."

For several weeks, teachers hand-delivered paper packets to students via the bus route, but that system presented its own challenges and was phased out later in the spring.

Brewer and his colleagues, meanwhile, scrambled to increase internet access so that students could log on for virtual lessons. In addition to providing more hotspots, the district set up access points in public places such as parking lots where students could connect to Wi-Fi and download lessons to take home.

Despite the challenges families faced with at-home learning, nearly 90% of parents on or near the Navajo Nation said they preferred holding classes virtually this fall, according to the results of a recent district survey.

San Juan County has the highest per capita rate of the coronavirus in the state of Utah, and many parents in the southern part of the county felt it was not safe for students or staff to return to the classroom when the school year starts later this month.

At a Wednesday school board meeting, Superintendent Ron Nielson presented a plan to begin the semester with 100% virtual instruction for schools in Navajo Mountain, Monument Valley, Montezuma Creek and Bluff, citing support from numerous elected leaders on the northern Navajo Nation, including chapter leaders and the Utah Navajo Commission. (Over 70% of parents whose students attend school in Monticello and Blanding, on the other hand, said they preferred in-person learning, and classes are scheduled to start there on Aug. 24.)

Nielson said that this fall all students learning remotely will have access to a computer. "We are prepared to provide laptops, Chromebooks, and we've purchased over \$170,000 worth of hotspots, so many, many kids will have hotspots in their homes," Nielson told the Utah Navajo Commission on Tuesday.

"But hotspots still don't work for all kids," he acknowledged.

Bringing internet access to the remaining homes is a challenge. A \$17.5 million, multiagency project is underway to bring fiber optic-based broadband to schools in the southern part of the county for the first time, which currently rely on slower, microwave connections. The project will increase speeds and bring the internet to more homes, but it won't provide comprehensive coverage.

To fill the gaps, the school district requested bids for private companies to broadcast the filtered, local area network (LAN) from area schools to homes where hotspots don't work.

Solectek, a California-based company that analyzed the feasibility of the project, said the network could be expanded to reach all student residences for \$3.9 million.

"Solectek is looking at all of the towers, all of the mesas, that we could possibly use ... to make our LAN internet network more far reaching than just the walls of our building," Nielson said.

It's an innovative solution, but Nielson noted that the district would likely not be able to fund the project without outside financial assistance. He mentioned possible partnerships with the Navajo Nation and the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development as well as the potential for assistance from federal CARES Act funds.

Brewer said that although it's expensive, the LAN project would help students long after the coronavirus pandemic.

"This project would be one of those things that has longevity far beyond the immediate need," Brewer said. "We have such a need for connectivity for us to be able to deliver all of the educational opportunities that exist in the district to all of our students."

READ MORE AT: <https://www.sltrib.com/news/2020/08/15/san-juan-school-district/>

# Verizon provides expanded connectivity to Navajo Nation to aid in Covid-19 response

## Deployable devices are on site in Chinle and Window Rock, Arizona



WINDOW ROCK, AZ – The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, in coordination with the Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission, today announced that Verizon is providing supplemental cellular coverage for Window Rock and Chinle, Arizona in response to requests for assistance during the Covid-19 crisis. The coverage will support operations at the local hospital, Chapter houses and the Navajo Nation Government Campus complex, enabling continuation of essential activities.

Two mobile units, called Satellite Cell on Light Truck (satCOLT), provide 4G LTE cell service for up to 1,000 users.

“We are grateful that Verizon has stepped up to assist Navajo Nation Department of Health Services and the Department of Community Development with these valuable assets,” said Vice President Myron Lizer. “By providing connectivity in a few key areas where it is needed most, we’re able to continue serving our 175,000 citizens.”

“Since the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, Verizon has been committed to helping communities adapt to their changing needs,” said Andrés Irlando, senior vice president and president, Public Sector and Verizon Connect at Verizon. “Working with Navajo Nation to boost connectivity that enables them to carry out critical functions is just another example of Verizon working in partnership with governments to deliver for their constituents.”

**READ MORE AT:** <https://www.verizon.com/about/news/verizon-connectivity-navajo-nation>

# New agreement could bring 5G coverage to rural Navajo Nation communities



by: KRQE Staff

Posted: Aug 25, 2020 / 02:42 PM MDT / Updated: Aug 25, 2020 / 03:13 PM MDT

NAVAJO NATION (KRQE) – Sacred Wind Communications, Inc. and Navajo Technical University announced Tuesday a new agreement to explore the expansion of broadband connectivity in tribal communities and remote homes on the Navajo Nation.

“In times of COVID-19, connecting more Navajos at their homes to high-speed Internet is more important than ever, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us,” said Jason Arviso in a SWC news release Tuesday, NTU’s Vice President of Operations. “NTU has a strong history in designing fixed wireless systems and is eager to demonstrate the value of this spectrum for all of our students across Navajo Lands.”

According to the same news release, the unassigned 2.5 GHz spectrum will deliver greater capacity and coverage at a longer range, which will enable the provision of fast and reliable 5G wireless internet service to rural unserved and underserved communities in the Navajo Nation.

“We are honored to have been chosen by the Navajo Nation to test broadband equipment using this spectrum,” said John Badal in the same news release, Sacred Wind’s CEO, “and we are excited to see how much farther this technology can carry Internet service to even more Navajo homes.”

SWC says the FCC has assigned the Navajo Nation with provisional and temporary access of the 2.5 GHz spectrum for the expansion of broadband services throughout the Nation, to encourage Tribal nations to obtain 2.5 GHz licenses to provide services in rural Tribal areas. SWC says the Navajo Nation has agreed to enable SWC and NTU to collaboratively deploy the 2.5 GHz band at seven geographically diverse tower sites around Eastern Navajo Agency in New Mexico to test its efficacy and impact on broadband accessibility to approximately 70 rural locations over a two-month period.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.krqe.com/news/new-mexico/sacred-wind-communications-navajo-technical-university-collaborate-to-make-5g-available-in-rural-communities/>

# Navajo youth, Alyssa Williams, wins Arizona license plate seal design contest

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. — Flagstaff High School senior Alyssa Williams is just at the beginning of her graphic design career, but already she has notched two big wins — she was part of the pair who won the Vans Custom Culture Contest in 2019, and now her design has won the Code Talker Seal Design Contest that will be featured on an Arizona specialty license plate.

The contest was held in partnership with the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Governor's Office on Tribal Relations to design a seal to reflect the historical and unique contributions made by the Code Talkers of many different tribes across the United States.

The Code Talkers Seal Design Committee selected five designs based on artwork and an essay describing how the design honors all Code Talkers and how it has impacted them personally.

Williams' design won with 61 percent of the 20,565 votes cast.



Alyssa Williams was part of the winning team for the Vans Custom Culture Contest in 2019. (Photo/Kevin Moriarty)

Williams, a senior at Flagstaff High School, said her design was inspired by looking at photos and statues that were made for the Code Talkers. While her inspiration came from a photo, everything about the design came from Williams' own creativity and vision.

"I wanted to show everything they were wearing in the war," she said.

The design itself didn't take long for Williams to come up with — about four hours all together.

"The Code Talker in the middle took me awhile because of all the details I included on him, but everything else followed shortly after. It was easy. I knew what I wanted on the outside — it was just what I

wanted to be the center because that's the important part."

Williams said the ideas for her designs come to her in parts. She sees the main idea and then, generally, everything else just comes together.

"It's not like I see it right away," she said. "I have to think about it, draw it out — the different ways to lay it out — and it changes along the way because I get better ideas as I go along in my process. At the end there's five or seven that I like and I have to pick from them. When I'm done I get this feeling of 'Wow, I just made this.' When I feel like I can show everyone, that's when I know I'm done."

Williams learned about the history of the Code Talkers from her culture and in school at Puente De Hozho Elementary School in Flagstaff.

"The Code Talkers were one of the main things we learned about in our history," Williams said. "It was a really cool experience. We got to learn Navajo there, our history... stories and all that. That school is really different than many other schools — we were taught Navajo, English and Spanish."

Alyssa Williams' design (right) won the Code Talker Seal Contest and will be featured on an Arizona specialty license plate.



Since Williams and Nicole Dougherty won the Vans Custom Culture contest in May of last year, Williams has decided that graphic design will be her future.

"I want to make it into a business, just because I have so much love and passion for it," Williams said. "I want to learn how to build myself and create stuff from my own mind. I wanted to become a successful graphic designer when I grow up. That's one of my dreams."

Right now, she is still researching schools that she may want to attend in the fall. But the competitions have given her a way to get her name out there ahead of when she may attend school.

Williams said she is still amazed about how many votes she received for her design.

"Within those five days, I managed to get 20,565 votes, that just blows my mind," she said. "My supporters are a big part of the start of my career right now. This is my second time getting all this support and love. But every time it just amazes me how much people believe in me."

One of the people who believe in Williams is her graphic design teacher at Flagstaff High School, Kayley Quick.

"It's been really beautiful to watch Alyssa's passion unfold," Quick said. "This is my third year as her teacher and every year she takes a giant leap in both her creative work and her professionalism. Alyssa has a unique fearlessness about her. Her fearlessness, coupled with her articulate eye for design and self-confidence, is what makes her unstoppable!"

Quick said Williams is also unique because she has a strong sense of who she is.

"Which is rooted in her connection to her devoted family and her culture. I feel like I am learning from my students all the time. This is a trait I admire about Alyssa and work towards emulating in my own life."

Williams said she wants to make sure her fans know how appreciative she is.

"My passion and love comes from all my supporters," she said. "You guys make me so incredibly happy and I want you to know that you are a big part of my life and the start of my career. Thank you for coming together and being there for me for me to reach this goal."

The Governor's Office of Tribal Relations has not announced the release date for the new license plate.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.nhonline.com/news/2020/aug/25/navajo-youth-alyssa-williams-wins-arizona-license/>

# Bulletin Board

## Diné woman will be Kansas' youngest sitting legislator

Aliyah Chavez  
Indian Country Today



All four Native candidates running for office in Kansas won their primary elections Tuesday, including one who is the presumptive winner of a state House seat, and will become Kansas' youngest sitting legislator, after no one filed to run against her in November.

Twenty-six-year-old first-time candidate Christina Haswood, Diné, won her Democratic primary with 70 percent of the vote.

"It's still surreal," Haswood said Tuesday night. "I just want to thank my voters for supporting me in this important election."

On Wednesday morning, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez rang praise for Haswood.

"Change is happening with this election, and Christina Haswood is part of that change," Nez said. "I am very proud of her and all that she has accomplished to this point. She is truly an inspiration to our people, especially our young people."

U.S. Rep. Sharice Davids, Ho-Chunk, of Kansas, ran unopposed in her bid for a second term in Congress, and will advance to the general election.

She will face Amanda Adkins, former chairwoman of the Kansas Republican Party, in November. The Republican primary was a race between five candidates.

In Kansas' 86th district, Stephanie Byers, Chickasaw, won the Democratic nomination for a state House seat. If elected in November, Byers would be the first transgender woman in the state's Legislature.

Ponka-We Victors, Tohono O'odham and Ponca Tribe, currently serves in the Kansas House as the only Native legislator. She won the primary Tuesday in her bid for a fifth term.

Tuesday's primary elections included five states that were narrowing the field in statewide and legislative races.

Indian Country Today has been following 21 Native candidates seeking various offices Aug. 4 in Arizona, Kansas, Michigan and Washington.

As of early Wednesday, a handful of races had not been called.

Also holding a primary Tuesday was Missouri, though no Native candidates appeared to be seeking office in that state.

Read more at: [https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/din%C3%A9-woman-will-be-kansas-youngest-sitting-legislator-LvjdBixm3UqsAP51yflkmw?fbclid=IwAR3wc3An9P-o-gYkMWirDOSheLgwWVmWXiBd0FLoLnazFLbWX\\_f9SaeZh9M](https://indiancountrytoday.com/news/din%C3%A9-woman-will-be-kansas-youngest-sitting-legislator-LvjdBixm3UqsAP51yflkmw?fbclid=IwAR3wc3An9P-o-gYkMWirDOSheLgwWVmWXiBd0FLoLnazFLbWX_f9SaeZh9M)

## Politics and bedfellows: Nez, Lizer address Democratic, GOP conventions

WASHINGTON - If anyone thought it strange that the top two elected officials in the Navajo Nation were speaking at competing political conventions, Navajo Vice President Myron Lizer said they have not been paying attention.

"There's no secret we are a split ticket," Lizer said during a Navajo town hall Tuesday with President Jonathan Nez. "We are working both sides, and we are well represented in Washington."

Lizer's comments came as he was getting ready to address the Republican National Convention, just one week after Nez was featured as a "rising star" who helped deliver the keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention.

In a prerecorded prime-time speech, with Shiprock as a backdrop, Lizer credited President Donald Trump with improving relations between federal and tribal governments.

"For years, we've fought congressional battles with past congressmen and senators that were part of a broken system that ignored us. That is, until President Trump took office," Lizer said in his convention address. "Whenever we meet with President Trump, he has always made it a priority to repair the relationship with our federal family."

Nez did not touch on tribal affairs in his speech to the DNC, instead focusing on encouraging support for Democratic nominee Joe Biden. But in comments to Cronkite News before the speech, Nez left no doubt that he and Lizer have vastly different opinions about Trump and his administration.

"Tribes have been pushed aside by this administration," said Nez, who said the difference in how the Trump and Obama administrations handle tribal relations was "night and day." He noted that tribes had to sue the current administration to get their share of funding under the Coronavirus, Aid, Relief and Economic Security - or CARES - Act.

But Lizer credited Trump for delivering "the largest financial funding package ever to Indian Country."

"The \$8 billion in CARES Act funding to Indian County was a great start in alleviating the devastating effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted on our Indian tribes," he said. "The Navajo Nation once led the nation in per capita positive cases because of the health disparities that previous administrations failed to improve."

Lizer ran through a list of what he saw as other administration successes, including the creation of a task force on missing and murdered Indigenous women and by "nominating strong conservative judges like (Supreme Court Justice) Neil Gorsuch, who supports Native American rights."

While Lizer and Nez have different perspectives, those differences don't seem to spill over into their work lives: The two men often appear together, they issue tribal statements under the president's and vice president's names and they even share a Facebook account for their offices.

READ MORE AT:

[https://azdailysun.com/news/local/state-and-regional/politics-and-bedfellows-nez-lizer-address-democratic-gop-conventions/article\\_cd696f09-ff9a-500b-bddc-7d81960d644a.html](https://azdailysun.com/news/local/state-and-regional/politics-and-bedfellows-nez-lizer-address-democratic-gop-conventions/article_cd696f09-ff9a-500b-bddc-7d81960d644a.html)



## Communities Need Accurate Count of Children to Meet Need for More Schools, Educational Resources

AMERICA COUNTS STAFF | JULY 28, 2020

The end date for collection of 2020 Census data has been updated since this article was published. It now is Sept. 30.

In counties and cities across the country where the population is growing quickly, demand for new schools and educational resources is growing, too.

Take, for instance, the 27J School District outside Denver.

The combined population of three counties in the district has jumped by 30% since the 2010 Census - the last nationwide count - and was swelling so fast that the district in 2015 began issuing bonds to construct new schools.

Last spring, three new schools were under construction, and middle- and high-school students there were sharing the newly opened Riverdale Ridge High School for the first half of the school year.

"In 2010, we were still feeling the effect of the recession both in terms of residential development and, consequently, student enrollment," said Kerrie Monti, district planning manager. Fast forward five years and the district was issuing bonds to build new schools.

Denver is not alone.

In Virginia's Loudoun County, one of the nation's fastest-growing counties, increases in public school enrollment have been staggering.

In 2000, the school district had 45 schools and 29,254 students. By 2010, enrollment had doubled to 60,403 students in 76 schools. By the end of 2020, the district will operate 94 school facilities with a projected enrollment of 83,762 students based on annual estimates - nearly three times the number in 2000, according to the district.

Growing populations lead to growing demand for new schools.

"Enrollment projections [tied to census statistics] drive the need for new schools," said Beverly Tate, director of Planning Services for Loudoun County Public Schools. "Renovations and/or additions at a number of schools have resulted from Loudoun's public-school enrollment growth."

### Shaping the Future of Schools With the 2020 Census

Results from the 2020 Census are important to school districts across the country - whether fast growing or not - because they provide a baseline for the next 10 years of school planning.

School districts use the numbers to ensure there are enough buildings and classrooms for children as they move through the school system.

Plus, results from the 2020 Census will be used by federal, state and local officials to inform decisions on how to spend billions of dollars in federal funds on education programs like Head Start for pre-K children, free- or reduced-priced school lunches for low-income children and teacher training programs.

That is why it is so important for families and caregivers to count everyone in their household when they respond to the 2020 Census, especially all children who live with them, including babies born on or before April 1.

Children under five are among the nation's most undercounted populations, and school districts can't plan for children they don't know will be coming to schools in the future.

"The census only comes around once a decade," said Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham. "A kindergartener counted in the 2020 Census ... will be in high school when the next census comes around in 2030; that's 10 years of school supplies, teachers, school lunches and school resources that are dependent on ensuring every child is counted."

It's not too late to respond to the 2020 Census online at [2020census.gov](https://www.census.gov), by phone at 844-330-2020, or by returning the paper questionnaire you received in the mail. By early August, census takers are set to begin visiting households that have not yet responded to the census to help ensure everyone is counted, including children. The deadline to respond is Oct. 31.

READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/07/2020-census-will-help-school-districts-prepare-for-next-generation-of-students.html?#>

# The 2020 Census

## 4 Ways to Respond



### 1. Secure Internet

New and Quick, Respond Online. It's safe, secure and confidential. Your information and privacy are protected. It's economical both for you and for the taxpayers. It's greener saving trees and it's user friendly—offering you help screens and the ability to review your answers.



### 2. Respond by Phone

Our enumerators are ready to take your information question by question from the convenience of your phone.



### 3. Respond by Mail

Wait until you receive your paper form through the mail or dropped at your residence. It can be filled out at home and dropped into your mailbox or post office.



### 4. In-person Interview

Our enumerators will visit and quickly interview residences that choose not to self respond.

Respond today at **2020census.gov**

or call **844-330-2020**

Each completed survey  
is a building block to  
a better America.

Shape  
our future  
START HERE >



# Stop the Spread of Dikos Ntsaaígíí-19 (COVID-19)

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19:



Wear a face mask when in public places

Maintain 6 feet of physical distance from people you do not live with



Clean and disinfect commonly-used surfaces and things

Stay home and self-isolate when you are sick, except in an emergency



Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth

Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue use your arm or sleeve (and not your hand)

Be aware of your health- watch for symptoms of COVID-19  
Get daily physical activity

# AVOID TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE NAVAJO NATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

COVID-19 cases and deaths have been increasing in areas surrounding the Navajo Nation. Because travel increases your chances of getting infected and spreading COVID-19, staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick.

**Before you travel off the Navajo Nation, here are some questions to consider:**

- Is COVID-19 spreading where you're going?
- Will you or those you are traveling with be within 6 feet of others during or after your trip?
- Are you or those you are traveling with more likely to get ill from COVID-19?
- Do you live with someone who is more likely to get very ill from COVID-19?
- Are you prepared to quarantine for 14 days after your trip?
- Are you prepared for the risks?

**When you leave your home, here are some tips to protect yourself and others:**

- Always wear a face mask
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between yourself and others





**IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW NEEDS  
HELP DEALING WITH STRESS OR THE  
EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF COVID-19  
HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES:**

Navajo residents can also call  
**Navajo Regional Behavioral Health Center** at  
(505) 368-1438 or  
(505) 368-1467, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,  
Monday-Friday (MDT)



After 5 p.m., Monday - Friday (MDT)

Chinle Region:

(928) 551-0713

Dilkon and Tuba City Region:

(928) 551-0624

Farmington, Kirtland, and Shiprock Region:

(928) 551-0508

Shiprock and Red Mesa Region:

(928) 551-0394

**DIKOS NTSAAÍGÍÍ-19**  
CORONAVIRUS



    
@navajodephealth  
#DineDabidziil

Navajo Health Command Operations Center  
(928) 871-7014  
coronavirus.info@nndoh.org  
www.ndoh.navajo-nsn.gov/COVID-19

August 2020



The DCD Newsletter, "Community Info", is produced monthly by the Division of Community Development and is a resource for division staff and chapters.

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