

Mae, Jamescita Peshlakai launch joint bid for Arizona House in Legislative District 6

BY KRISTA ALLEN
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

U.S. Department of the Interior during the Biden Administration. In 2025, Gov. Katie Hobbs appointed her to the Arizona State Transportation Board.

Both candidates are running as Clean Elections participants in LD 6, which spans much of northern Arizona and includes multiple tribal nations, rural communities and several counties. They said the size of the district and the workload involved make a coordinated campaign practical.

Mae and Jamescita, who are Ta'neezahnii from Cameron, Ariz-

na, are seeking office as Democrats and say they are preparing to serve in what they hope will be a Democrat-led Legislature when lawmakers convene in 2027.

Mae is born for Bijn Bitoodnii. Her maternal grandfather is 'Ashjhi and her paternal grandfather is Tsé Deeshgizhnii. Jamescita is born for Kinlichii'nii. Her maternal grandfather is Bijn Bitoodnii and her paternal grandfather is Tséjikinii.

Experience, return to the Legislature

Jamescita said her decision to return to state politics was shaped by what she described as a pivotal moment for northern Arizona.

"I am in touch with the needs of the people in northern Arizona and now is a time that we need experienced leadership at the state Legislature," she said.

She said her previous service in both chambers would allow her to step into

the role quickly if elected.

"I have decided now is the time to go back to the state House because Democrats are on the verge of flipping the state Legislature, and we need experienced leadership in the House," she said.

Jamescita said the opportunity to serve alongside her mother also influenced her decision.

"Additionally, the opportunity to

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Pediatrician sees rising nutrition gaps among rural children

BY DONOVAN QUINTERO
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

WINDOW ROCK — Rural communities, particularly reservation areas, continue to face deep challenges tied to food access, childhood nutrition and long-term health.

Longtime pediatrician Mary Poel said what children eat in their earliest years can shape their physical, cognitive and emotional development for life.

"These areas, reservations specifically, are considered a food desert," Poel said, referring to communities where families must travel long distances to reach full-service grocery stores and often rely on limited, processed food options.

While statistics on how many children rely on federal nutrition programs can be requested, Poel said the broader reality is already visible in clinics: food insecurity, nutrient deficiencies and preventable health issues.

Nutrition starts before birth

Poel emphasized that nutrition begins even before a child is born.

"A lot of people say food is medicine, which is true," she said. "But then it's like, well, what kind of food? What kind of medicine? Because it all starts even before the babies are born."

One of the most critical nutrients during pregnancy, she said, is folate, also known as vitamin B9.

"If moms don't have folate in their diet, which is B9 vitamin, they can have spina bifida, which is abnormality of the spinal cord," Poel explained.

Children born with the condition may never walk, may require wheelchairs, and often struggle with bowel and bladder control. That risk has declined significantly as awareness has increased, but Poel said she treated patients with the condition earlier in her career, before folate supplementation was widely emphasized.

Once children are born, Poel said nutrition remains just as vital, especially during early brain development.

"The brain grows and has the most changes in the first three years of life," she said, adding that this is why breastfeeding or formula is recommended during the first year, followed by iron-rich complementary foods starting at about six months.

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\$500,000 for DV shelter never reached ADABI, director says

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES | DONOVAN QUINTERO

Lorena Halwood, the executive director of Amá Dóó Átchíní Bighan Inc., stands inside the organization's kitchen space in Chinle, where meals and daily support are prepared for families and children.

BY DONOVAN QUINTERO
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

CHINLE — Elouise Begay, the bookkeeper for Amá Dóó Átchíní Bighan Inc., began drafting a long-delayed wish list after staff were told the Chinle-based nonprofit would receive \$500,000 in Arizona state funding to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

That expectation unraveled about 13 months

later, when ADABI Executive Director Lorena Halwood said she learned during a Dec. 30, 2025, meeting at the Office of the President and Vice President that the funding had been converted into a request-for-proposals process by the Navajo Nation Division for Children and Family Services. Halwood said ADABI was never notified that the money would be handled that way.

Halwood said her understanding that the \$500,000 was intended for ADABI dated back

to a conversation she had with Arizona Rep. Myron Tsosie in May 2024. Nearly a year and a half later, she said, she was told by Thomas Cody, the executive director for the Division for Children and Family Services, that the funds had instead been issued through a request for proposal.

Halwood said ADABI never received any

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Council weighs five reapportionment plans ahead of 2026 Navajo election

BY DONOVAN QUINTERO
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

WINDOW ROCK — As the Navajo Nation prepares for the next decade of elections, tribal leaders are weighing a reapportionment decision that could quietly but significantly reshape how delegates represent vast stretches of Diné Bikéyah.

Legislation sponsored by Arbin Mitchell, a first-term Council delegate and former member of the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors,

would formally adopt a new Navajo Nation Council reapportionment plan to take effect beginning with the 2026 general election. The measure, now before the Naabik'iyáti' Committee, places five different map illustrations before lawmakers, all of which remain eligible for consideration, even as election officials have identified three preferred options.

Interim Navajo Election Administration Executive Director Veronica Curley said the Navajo Board of Election Supervisors has recom-

mended Plans 5, 3 and 4, in that order of preference, after months of public hearings, internal review and a December work session with the Naabik'iyáti' Committee.

"Right now, in the resolution there are five plans," Curley said. "The board is recommending Plan 5, Plan 3 and Plan 4. All three are based on population."

Mitchell's legislation does not itself select a single map.

Instead, it authorizes the Council to choose one of the proposed plans

and establishes that whichever plan is approved will govern Council representation from 2026 through 2035, in keeping with Navajo law requiring reapportionment every 10 years. The bill also affirms that final authority rests solely with the full council, following review by Naabik'iyáti'.

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▶ RISING

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Iron deficiency, early development

Iron deficiency, Poel said, is one of the most common and consequential nutritional problems she sees.

"If a child is anemic with low iron, low blood count early on in life, that can affect their learning for their entire life," she said.

In her practice, Poel has seen iron deficiency manifest in unexpected ways. Children who eat dirt or chew on rocks, she said, are often showing signs of anemia.

"I've had kids come into the clinic and that was their mom's worry they were eating anything off the ground," she said.

She added that blood tests frequently confirm low iron levels.

Children need a balanced diet across all food groups, Poel said, including dairy for calcium and bone strength, fruits and vegetables for brain-supporting vitamins, and meats or beans for iron.

But affordability remains a major obstacle.

"If you go to the grocery store, the cheapest things are things like macaroni and cheese," Poel said. "You can get several boxes of macaroni and cheese maybe for the same price that you get like one head of broccoli. But nutritionally, what is that child really going to need?"

Families relying heavily on carbohydrates without fruits, vegetables or iron-rich foods may unintentionally put children at risk for vitamin deficiencies that affect growth and learning, she said.

For low-income and single-parent households, Poel pointed to affordable options such as beans and other legumes.

"Pinto beans, any of those legumes, a lot of those have iron in them," she said. "That is a lot less expensive than buying red meat, especially these days with the price of beef going up."

Barriers, assistance and practical solutions

Poel also encouraged families not to shy away from community food pantries, even when stigma exists.

"Some people don't want to go there. They're embarrassed about going there," she said. "But it's a great place. They

have all kinds of food there, and they will distribute really healthy foods for kids."

She warned that interruptions to nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP can be particularly destabilizing.

"From what I understand, SNAP benefits usually barely cover what they need for that month," she said, making it difficult for families to stockpile food.

Non-perishable items and community pantries can help bridge those gaps, especially amid ongoing federal budget uncertainty.

Fast food, often seen as a time-saving option for exhausted parents working long hours, offers limited nutritional value for children, said Poel.

"Burgers and fries only get you so much," she said. "You're really lacking the fruits and veggies."

While she noted that bean-based options may be slightly better than deep-fried meals, she stressed that fast food overall has become more expensive and less healthy.

Instead, Poel suggested practical alternatives such as slow cookers.

"To have a pot of beans waiting that would be a really healthy option at the end of the day," she said, acknowledging that modern parents no longer have the time flexibility previous generations may have had.

Poel, who has practiced in the region since 1981 after training at the University of Michigan, said she regularly sees parents reluctant to admit food insecurity. That reluctance, she said, can delay intervention during the most critical developmental years.

She also cautioned against confusing obesity with good nutrition.

"Overweight can be a problem and cause some of these same things that undernutrition can cause," she said.

Studies show that children who are significantly overweight can experience learning difficulties even when socioeconomic conditions are similar.

Beyond diet, Poel said lifestyle changes also play a role. Children spending long hours on screens rather than outdoors may miss physical activity and vitamin D from sunlight.

"We have good access to sun here in New Mexico," she said, "but I still see kids with low vitamin D levels."

For parents unsure where to turn, Poel recommended pediatricians as the first resource, along with a free website sponsored by the American Academy of Pediatrics that offers guidance on nutrition and childhood health concerns.

Ultimately, Poel said, the message is simple but urgent.

"They need to be eating healthy all the time," she said. "Because if their iron stays really low over the first three to five years of life, then it's going to overall affect their ability to learn."

In communities where access, affordability and time remain constant challenges, Poel said ensuring children receive basic nutrition may be one of the most powerful investments families and policymakers can make, shaping health and opportunity far beyond childhood.

Michael Zepeda centers Navajo sovereignty in bid for Arizona state treasurer

BY KRISTA ALLEN
NAVAJO TIMES

PAGE — Michael Zepeda is running for Arizona state treasurer as an Independent with a central claim about the job. He sees the office less as a platform for politics and more as a place where restraint, transparency and respect between governments matter as much as balance sheets.

"The treasurer should be a steward for the people, not someone owned by a political party," Zepeda said in announcing his campaign. He is seeking public office through the state's Clean Elections system rather than party backing or large donors.

Zepeda returns repeatedly to stewardship, a word he uses with precision. Stewardship does not mean authority over others or consolidation of power. It means managing public funds ethically while recognizing the limits of the office and the sovereignty of governments that exist alongside the state.

"When I say the treasurer must be a steward for the people, that stewardship does not mean authority over tribal nations," Zepeda said in an interview with the Navajo Times. "Tribal governments, including the Navajo Nation, are sovereign nations. They are not counties, cities, or political subdivisions of Arizona."

That distinction is central to how he describes the role of the treasurer in a state that shares geography, infrastructure and economic ties with multiple tribal governments. He frames the relationship as one between distinct governments with shared interests rather than one layered in hierarchy.

"True stewardship requires mutual respect between governments that exist side by side," he said. "It means honoring treaties, acknowledging that much of Arizona's wealth was built in part on land taken without consent, and understanding that sovereignty is not a technicality. It is a lived reality for a large and vital constituency within our state."

Stewardship, sovereignty and fiscal responsibility

Zepeda argues that fiscal decisions made without regard for that reality carry consequences beyond ethics. They can expose the state to legal disputes, damage public trust and weaken investments that depend on long term stability. The treasurer cannot issue permits or approve projects, he noted, but the office does have discretion over how public money is treated.

"When Arizona invests public funds in energy, infrastructure, or utilities operating on or near tribal lands, the treasurer has a moral and fiduciary responsibility to ask whether tribal consent was sought, whether impacts were fully disclosed, and whether the tribe benefits or simply bears risk," he said.

He said the office should not treat tribal opposition as irrelevant. "Ignoring sovereign concerns creates long term financial risk, including legal exposure, reputational harm, and unstable investments," he said.

Zepeda separates those arguments from campaign rhetoric by grounding them in the mechanics of the job. The treasurer manages state funds, oversees investments and serves as a custodian of public money. In that role, he said, restraint can be as important as initiative.

"The treasurer's role is to manage state

funds ethically while recognizing that the state and tribal nations must work together as distinct governments with shared interests, not in a hierarchy," he said. "Stewardship means restraint, transparency and consultation rather than control."

That approach also shapes how he talks about rural Arizona and tribal communities. He rejects a single framework for rural policy and says fiscal decisions often fail because they flatten differences that matter.

"Rural Arizona and rural Indian Country are not the same," Zepeda said. He pointed to jurisdictional complexity, infrastructure gaps tied to historic underinvestment and overlapping federal, state and tribal systems that delay basic services.

"Wealth has often been extracted without reinvestment," he said.

As treasurer, he said he would avoid applying uniform rural formulas that ignore those conditions.

"Stewardship requires recognizing why conditions differ and shaping fiscal policy accordingly," he said.

Transparency, Clean Elections and financial access

Transparency is another theme he emphasizes, especially in financial dealings that affect tribal governments. He describes access to information as the foundation of trust rather than a compliance exercise.

"The single most important thing a treasurer can do is provide transparency with all citizens," Zepeda said. When state agreements affect tribal governments, he said transparency should exceed minimum legal standards.

He said he would require clear, plain language financial summaries, public reporting on funds that affect tribal citizens and support for independent audits when requested by tribal partners. "Transparency only builds trust when information is accessible and honest," he said.

Zepeda also ties transparency to voter confidence, particularly within the Clean Elections system. He is running as a Clean Elections candidate and said participation requires more than meeting thresholds.

"Participating in Clean Elections requires more than qualifying. It requires ensuring access," he said. For Diné voters in remote areas, he said that means in person outreach, collaboration with local chapters and respect for language access. He rejects the idea that geography excuses exclusion.

"Clean Elections exists to build public trust," he said. "If it does not reach tribal and rural voters, it does not meet its purpose."

His campaign materials describe him as a former middle school teacher and small business owner whose parents immigrated to the United States with limited resources. He often draws on that background when talking about financial exclusion and access to capital.

"Limited access to banks, credit, and capital is systemic," Zepeda said.

He said the treasurer's office cannot replace private banking but can influence how state programs are structured and who they reach.

He said he would support partnerships with community development financial institutions and tribal financial institutions and advocate for state programs that

do not bypass tribal communities.

"As a business owner, I understand that access to capital determines who can build wealth," he said. "As treasurer, I would treat financial exclusion as a fiscal issue, not a side issue."

Building trust through consultation

Zepeda describes trust with Navajo leadership as something that cannot be assumed. He said history has given leaders reason to be cautious of state involvement.

"Trust cannot be demanded, rushed, or assumed," he said. "It has to be built through presence, honesty and shared responsibility."

He said his first responsibility as treasurer would be to listen without defensiveness and without preconditions. Rather than imposing a state designed process, he said he would invite Navajo leadership to help shape how communication with the treasurer's office works.

To formalize that relationship, he said he would propose creating a Tribal Finance Advisory Committee or a special envoy role, with members drawn directly from the Diné community. He described the idea as practical rather than symbolic.

"That body would not be symbolic," Zepeda said. "Its role would be to surface concerns early, advise on impacts, and ensure that tribal perspectives are reflected before decisions are finalized."

He said trust grows when people see their input matters and said his commitment would be to make that input real and consistent.

Zepeda also spoke about his own experiences in education. He said that while teaching in Arizona he worked with Diné students and came to see how misunderstanding cultural differences can shape outcomes.

"When I was teaching in Arizona and guiding young students I was privileged to work with several Navajo students," he said. "It was clear to me that some of the issues was not understanding cultural differences."

He said learning and listening are ongoing responsibilities rather than boxes to check.

"As a social studies teacher I love learning about different cultures and embracing those differences," he said. "Part of what I hope to gain out of the office myself is a deeper understanding of the Navajo people."

If elected, he said he would commit to regular, structured consultation with tribal governments on state finance and investment matters. He described a process with recurring meetings, early engagement, clear agendas and documented follow through.

"Consultation must influence decisions to be meaningful," he said.

Zepeda's campaign positions him outside the two major parties, a choice he said reflects frustration with partisan conflict rather than ideology. He has said he wants to be an elected official rather than a politician and has framed the treasurer's office as a place where calm administration matters more than spectacle.

In closing, he returns to stewardship as both a standard and a restraint.

"Peace and understanding are built by acknowledging history, respecting sovereignty and choosing stewardship over convenience," Zepeda said. "That is the standard I would uphold as Arizona's Independent state treasurer."

AROUND THE CAPITAL

St. Michaels Chapter meetings

St. Michaels Chapter announces a planning meeting on Sunday, Jan. 11, at 1:30 p.m., followed by the grazing permit meeting. In addition, St. Michaels Chapter will host the Fort Defiance Agency Council second quarterly meeting on Saturday, Jan. 10, at 9 a.m.



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SUBMITTED | RICK ABASTA, NAVAJO HOUSING AUTHORITY

Jeremiah Tsosie and his grandmother and caretaker, Betty Begay, stand outside Tsosie's new home in St. Michaels during a key turnover on Dec. 30, 2025.

After years in a trailer, St. Michaels man receives new home

BY RICK ABASTA
NAVAJO HOUSING AUTHORITY

ST. MICHAELS — Jeremiah Tsosie is a new homeowner. Tsosie took ownership of his three-bedroom home on Dec. 30, 2025, during a small celebration here.

His home is one of nine scattered-site housing projects completed by construction personnel from LAM Corporation, a Navajo Housing Authority construction contractor.

The other eight scattered-site homes are in Aneth and Mexican Water, Utah; Baca-Prewitt, Two Grey Hills, New Mexico; Chinle, Dilcon, Jeddito and Whitecone, Arizona.

Tsosie has a disability that prevents him from speaking and communicates by whistling. His grandmother and caretaker, Betty Begay, said she has been caring for him since he was 2.

They previously lived in a trailer that was very cold during the winter months. The mobile home had a leaky roof and an uneven, damaged floor.

"It's been so many years taking care of him," Begay said, sobbing.

She recalled the cause of his parents' split with tears streaming down her face.

"They dropped him. That is what happened after they dropped him," she said, pointing to her grandson.

Tsosie's parents both passed, and Begay has been responsible for his well-being ever since. She wiped away her tears and expressed her appreciation for the new home.

"Thank you very much.

Thank you," she said. "Now, we're going to live here."

Lisa Tsosie, a housing specialist with the Fort Defiance Housing Management Office, explained to the family that the new home has a sturdy foundation built upon Mother Earth.

"This is what you wanted for your grandson when NHA received your application in 2017," Tsosie said.

She explained that Tsosie was the primary applicant and first on the housing application, while his grandmother and caretaker was the secondary applicant.

"You are on a 25-year mortgage. We appreciate you. Bruce Scott, my supervisor, signed his name on the contract this morning and going forward, you will now be working with Rosita Willie," Tsosie said.

The pair finalized multiple documents, with Tsosie providing his thumbprint and Begay signing her name, before NHA staff officially turned over the keys to the family.

Tsosie received the keys to his new home, and the family stood on the doorstep to assist him with inserting the key and opening the door.

Once inside, the family toured the home and selected bedrooms. Begay chose the northernmost bedroom, and Tsosie selected the room next to hers, near the center of the house.

Jeffrey Etsitty, the project manager for LAM Corporation, oversaw the nine scattered-site housing projects.

He said the three-bedroom home built for Tsosie and his grandmother includes reasonable accommodation features

such as a walk-in shower, lower door handles and latches, wider doors and grab bars in the bathroom.

"The house has concrete floors, concrete footing, frame, LP (Louisiana-Pacific) siding, Anderson windows and doors. It also has solid framing and foundation, structural wise, and we compacted the earth," he said.

Seeing the family walk into the home brought pride and joy to Etsitty, who has more than 30 years of construction experience. He started as a laborer and worked his way up, including 18 years as a superintendent.

"We made sure that we checked our specs and ensured our workmanship on a daily basis from framing to concrete to insulation and all of the components inside to make sure everything was running smoothly," he said. "They did an impressive job and I appreciate it."

LAM Corporation is currently working on Phase II of the NHA Former Bennett Freeze Area project, which includes seven scattered-site homes in Bodaway-Gap, Cameron, Coalmine and Tuba City.

The seven housing units are currently under framing construction, with two houses ready for sheetrock. Rough-in work for electrical and plumbing continues on three of the units.

With one scattered-site housing project completed, the LAM Corporation construction crew is already making headway on another project in the Former Bennett Freeze Area.

► PESHAKAI

FROM PAGE A1

work closely with my mother, Mae, is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and history-making," she said. "The opportunity to bring together our decades of experience and advocacy to make real change happen will reshape Arizona for the better."

Her federal work with tribal governments, she said, informs how she would approach disputes between state and tribal priorities. LD 6 includes 10 tribes, according to her campaign.

"Currently, of the 90 House and Senate members, only four are Native American," she said. "When state and tribal interests conflict, I will look to the needs of the people."

Jamescita said she would resign from the Arizona State Transportation Board if elected, describing the House role as a full-time commitment.

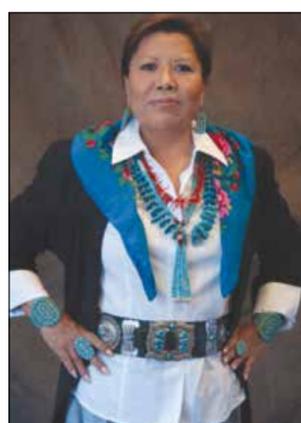
"The state House is a full-time 60-plus-hour-a-week job, and I will be fully dedicated," she said.

Among her priorities, she said, is expanding public transportation in northern Arizona, including funding for a regular bus route between Tuba City and Flagstaff.

She criticized decades of Republican control of the Legislature, arguing that northern Arizona has not received equitable investment.

"The state has failed northern Arizona," she said. "For the last three decades, we have been stuck under Republican control at the state Legislature."

She added, "And the simple truth is that Republicans do not care about us up here. They have failed to invest in public education, only recently allowed funding for health care facilities that have been desperately needed and prefer to invest in corrections officers and juvenile detention facilities instead of much-needed public housing and infrastructure."



Jamescita Peshlakai

Policy priorities, unfinished work

Mae said experienced lawmakers will be essential if Democrats gain control of the Legislature.

"When Democrats take control of the state Legislature in 2027, we need experienced representatives to be able to fight for our values," she said.

She pointed to her work on bipartisan legislation addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and rural health care, including her co-sponsorship of Emily's Bill, which created the Turquoise Alert system for missing Indigenous people.

"I was extremely proud to co-sponsor and pass Emily's Bill into law," she said. "But there is still so much that needs to be addressed to protect our men, women and children."

Mae said she plans to reintroduce House Bill 2710, a 2024 measure that would appropriate \$15 million from the state general fund for tribal assisted-living facilities and nursing homes. The bill would allocate funding proportionally across regions of the state, with minimum amounts designated for the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe.

"This legislation is intended to address the fraud taking place at senior living facilities across the Valley where our



Mae Peshlakai

elders are being taken from the reservation to fill beds and make money for unscrupulous Phoenix business owners," she said.

She also cited provisions in the 2025 state budget supporting tribal health care, including \$3 million to complete a dialysis center at Sage Memorial Hospital in Ganado and funding tied to traditional healing practices.

Mae said funding constraints in a geographically vast district stem from tax policy rather than a lack of resources.

"Resources are not as limited as the public perceives," she said, citing research from the Arizona Center for Economic Progress that found a majority of corporations pay the state's minimum annual tax.

Public education, she said, remains her top concern. She criticized the expansion of Education Savings Accounts, saying it has diverted significant funding from public schools and disproportionately affected rural communities.

"We must repeal the universal voucher program and once again prioritize public education as a state," she said. "Our Legislature is one of the only guardrails to this travesty. We will bring our voices and leadership to curb this and work to ensure that critically important funding is invested in educational programs that benefit Arizona students."

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COUNCIL

FROM PAGE A1

Map that looks familiar with key adjustments

Because the legislation does not include an illustration of the current Council boundaries, comparisons between the proposed plans and existing delegate representation have largely emerged through discussion rather than formal reference. When asked whether any of the proposals resemble the current configuration, Curley said Plan 5 most closely reflects existing delegate boundaries, while emphasizing that election officials are not using it as an official baseline.

Instead, Curley described Plan 5 as visually and structurally similar to the current map, with targeted adjustments made to address population imbalances identified in the 2020 census and to resolve contiguity concerns raised during public hearings.

Compared with the current configuration, Plan 5 introduces what Curley described as "small changes," restoring Rock Point to the Northern Agency, returning Low Mountain to the Fort Defiance Agency, and correcting earlier proposals that could have left chapters geographically isolated from the agencies they historically belong to.

Those adjustments, Curley

noted, were driven by Navajo legal standards rather than politics. The legislation explicitly cites a 1978 Navajo Nation Supreme Court ruling requiring reapportionment plans to respect chapter boundaries, agency lines and traditional relationships among Navajo communities.

Larger districts, larger responsibilities

While Plan 5 hews closely to existing representation, the other two board-recommended plans, plans 3 and 4, begin to show more pronounced shifts, particularly in Western and Eastern portions of the Nation.

If either Plans 3 or 4 is approved, it could affect areas currently represented by Delegate Casey Johnson in the Western Agency.

Johnson currently represents the Cameron, Coalmine Canyon, Birdsprings, Leupp and Tolani Lake chapters.

Under both Plan 3 and Plan 4, Johnson's Legislative area would expand substantially, stretching into additional chapters and increasing the geographic territory a single delegate would be responsible for over the next decade. By contrast, Plan 5 would largely preserve the current footprint of that district while making targeted population-based adjustments.

"There were some concerns on this one," Curley said, referring to the plans that significantly enlarge certain districts. "The way it was just expanded, I think that's where this came in."

Plans 1 and 2, while not recommended by the election board, remain part of the Legislative packet and will still be considered by the Naabik'iyáti' Committee and the full Council. Unlike the other proposals, those two plans incorporate data from off-reservation voter registration records in addition to the 2020 federal census.

Curley explained that Plans 1 and 2 attempt to account for Navajo citizens who maintain off-reservation mailing addresses or who are registered Navajo voters living in cities such as Phoenix, Albuquerque and other urban areas throughout the country. In some cases, those voters remain affiliated with their home chapters on the Navajo Nation even though they reside elsewhere.

However, Curley said the board ultimately declined to recommend those options because of data limitations and reliability concerns.

"Combining data wasn't a good idea for them," she said, noting that census figures do not reliably distinguish Navajo citizens by tribe once they live outside the reservation, and that voter registration records alone can produce distorted population counts when used for reapportionment.

In several instances, Curley said, plans that included off-reservation addresses initially showed inflated population figures that dropped significantly once border-town and mailing-address data were refined. As a result, the board determined that census-based plans

provided a more consistent and legally defensible foundation for redrawing council boundaries.

Still, the inclusion of Plans 1 and 2 highlights a broader tension that Council delegates may revisit during deliberations: how, and whether, Navajo citizens living away from the reservation should factor into representation, particularly as urban Navajo populations continue to grow.

How boundary changes reach beyond elections

Beyond electoral representation, the potential ripple effects of boundary changes extend into everyday governance matters.

The Navajo Times asked Curley whether Navajo citizens who are currently applying for a homesite lease, or for electricity or waterline extensions, could be affected if their community falls under new delegate representation.

Curley said it could. While she emphasized that the impact may not be significant in most cases, Curley acknowledged that a change in representation can matter for residents who are midstream in securing a homesite lease or coordinating utility access. A newly elected delegate could inherit oversight of chapters where infrastructure requests, lease approvals or utility coordination are already underway.

She cautioned that such outcomes are not automatic and often depend on continuity within chapter leadership and tribal departments. Still, the possibility exists, particularly if a district shifts to new representation following an election conducted under newly adopted boundaries.

In the Eastern Agency, the contrasts between the plans become even sharper. While Plan 5 would leave most eastern districts largely intact, plans 3

and 4 propose boundary shifts that could realign chapters with different legislative areas, potentially changing which delegates represent communities near Crownpoint, Standing Rock and surrounding areas for the next 10 years.

"One of the requirements is that they have to have common interests and be adjacent to each other," Curley said, explaining that earlier drafts were adjusted to avoid pairing communities without shared geographic or cultural ties.

If the Naabik'iyáti' Committee approves Mitchell's legislation, it will advance to the Winter Session where delegates will decide which plan becomes law. If approved, the adopted map will be used for candidate filing in late April, determining which chapters candidates may run from and which voters they will represent through 2035.

"This is just based on population," Curley said. "But it's really up to Naabik'iyáti' and Council now."

The reapportionment legislation is scheduled for consideration during the regular meeting of the Naabik'iyáti' Committee on Jan. 8, according to the committee's posted agenda, which is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. in the Council Chambers.

In addition to the reapportionment proposal, committee members are expected to hear reports, including an update from the Division of Community Development on current operations and progress, as well as a report addressing the status of New Mexico state capital projects from the Division of Community Development and the Capital Projects Management Department.

The meeting will be livestreamed on the Council's YouTube channel, as well as through a publicly accessible Zoom and telephone call-in.

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF THE NAVAJO NATION JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF CROWNPOINT, NEW MEXICO In the Matter of the Estate of: John Woody, C#012,596 Date of Birth: 02/01/1920 Date of Death: 04/23/1982; Susie Woody, C#062,639, Date of Birth: 08/00/1918 Date of Death: 10/24/1979,

Decedent(s), AND CONCERNING: Sarah Charley, C#097,986, DOB: 04/03/1947, Petitioner(s).

NO. CPFC-DM-000411-2025; JW ID# 25-14128; Notice of Publication TO: NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED HEIR(S), PARTIES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Petitioner, Sarah Charley, has petitioned the Court for Quiet Title with the Crownpoint Family Court, Crownpoint, New Mexico. The Petitioner seeks Quiet Title of Home Site Lease No. 1372.

A Hearing on this petition will be heard on January 26, 2026, at 10:00 AM, at the Crownpoint Family Court in Crownpoint, New Mexico.

If you wish to object or intervene on this petition, you must file an answer to the petition with the Court and serve a copy to petitioner at: PO Box 1106, Church Rock, New Mexico 87311. If you do not file an answer to the petition, your answer and claims may be barred from being heard at the hearing.

Issued this: October 21st, 2025. /s/ Court Clerk, Family Court of the Navajo Nation. Published in the Navajo Times: January 8, 15, 2026



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New year arrives



Fireworks burst overhead on New Year's Eve in Gallup.

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES | DONOVAN QUINTERO



Fireworks smoke drifts across a parking lot during New Year's Eve celebrations in Gallup.

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES | DONOVAN QUINTERO



Fireworks light the night sky on New Year's Eve in Gallup.

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Falcon 9

On Jan. 2, 2026, a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launched from Vandenberg Space Force Base carrying Italy's COSMO-SkyMed Second Generation satellite, creating a "jellyfish" effect visible across the Navajo Nation and parts of the West.

IHS realignment proposal draws scrutiny from Diné leaders

BY DONOVAN QUINTERO
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

WINDOW ROCK — The Indian Health Service is expanding tribal consultations on a proposed agency realignment as planning advances for a new Gallup Indian Medical Center, raising concerns among tribal leaders about the future of local federal health services.

Earlier this month, IHS announced it would add additional in-person and virtual consultation sessions after tribes and urban Indian organizations requested more opportunities to provide input on a restructuring proposal that would consolidate the agency's current 12 regional offices into three.

The agency has stated the realignment is intended to modernize federal operations, improve coordination and strengthen accountability as more tribes assume control of health programs through self-determination agreements.

But Jonathan Nez, who attended a recent consultation session, said many tribal leaders expressed concern that the proposed changes could weaken direct services and reduce tribal influence over health care delivery.

"They say this was a tribal consultation where IHS came out to listen to what the tribal leaders' comments are," Nez said. "But based on the presentations we received, I think many tribal leaders felt like it was already a done deal."

Concerns over consolidation, local control

Under the proposal, the Navajo Area Office would lose its status as a standalone IHS region and be merged into a much larger, multi-state service area. Nez said tribal leaders worry that such consolidation could distance decision-making from the communities most affected.

"Navajo, believe it or not, has its own region as big as we are, land-based and population-wise," Nez said. "If they downsize it to three, we're going to be included with New Mexico tribes and some of the tribes up in the Dakotas and all in the middle part of this country as one region."

The concerns come as the Navajo Nation Department of Health advances planning for a major health care and community development project tied to the proposed construction of a new Gallup Indian Medical Center. The department has issued a request for proposals seeking a land developer consultant to guide planning for a large mixed-use community on Navajo Nation-

owned fee land near the unincorporated village of Gamerco, east of Gallup.

Planning a new Gallup Indian Medical Center

The rebid solicitation, RFP No. 24-07-3409GC, calls for professional consulting services to plan development of approximately 571 acres in McKinley County, including an 84-acre parcel designated for the future hospital. Surrounding land would be planned for housing subdivisions, retail and commercial uses, and supporting infrastructure intended to accommodate long-term growth.

Before Gamerco emerged as the preferred site, Navajo officials over the years evaluated alternative locations in Re-

'They say this was a tribal consultation where IHS came out to listen to what the tribal leaders' comments are. But based on the presentations we received, I think many tribal leaders felt like it was already a done deal.'

Jonathan Nez | former NN President

hoboth and near Gallup High School. Planning ultimately shifted to Navajo Nation-owned land near Gamerco, New Mexico, which officials identified as better suited for integrated development and long-term control.

According to the RFP, the Department of Health, working with the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources, is seeking a comprehensive development plan that integrates health care infrastructure with land-use, housing and economic planning. The selected consultant would be required to produce three alternative development options, supported by detailed plats, illustrations and feasibility analyses showing how the site could be fully built out over time.

The scope of work extends well beyond a single hospital facility. Planning would include workforce housing for medical staff, commercial and retail centers, behavioral health facilities and supporting utilities, along with analysis of soil conditions, environmental constraints, infrastructure capacity and regulatory requirements under McKinley County and New Mexico law.

The proposed Gallup Indian Medical Center is envisioned

as a full-service facility offering emergency care, inpatient and outpatient services, maternity and neonatal care, pediatrics, behavioral health, oncology, radiology, laboratory services, pharmacy, rehabilitation and primary care. The RFP places particular emphasis on behavioral health, calling for integrated crisis response, detox and recovery services, medication-assisted treatment and transitional housing.

Technology integration, including electronic health records, telemedicine and advanced patient monitoring systems, is also a central component of the planning effort. The document highlights workforce recruitment and retention as persistent challenges in Indian health care and identifies onsite housing as a critical strategy for ensuring the facility can be fully staffed.

Federal restructuring, long-term investment collides

Nez said these kinds of long-term investments make the IHS realignment proposal especially concerning.

"That's not good for direct services and the health of Native people," he said. "Not just on Navajo, but all across the country."

Nez, who said he recently received knee surgery through IHS, emphasized that concerns about the restructuring should not be interpreted as criticism of frontline providers.

"There's some great doctors, especially Native Americans who went to school, got an education and came home to help," he said. "I used IHS and I got great service. But I don't know how it's going to be once this reconfiguration goes through."

The RFP states that the Navajo Nation will retain full control over the Gallup Indian Medical Center project, with all contracts governed by Navajo Nation law and no waiver of sovereign immunity. The Nation also reserves the right to reject proposals or enter private negotiations with consultants.

The deadline for Department of Health officials to select a consultant passed in August 2024. It is not known who was selected.

Written comments on the IHS realignment are due by Feb. 6, 2026. After the comment period closes, the agency will review feedback before proceeding with internal clearance and implementation decisions.

Officials have listed the Gallup Indian Medical Center as a priority for replacement since 1991, but repeated setbacks and tribal politics have continued to delay construction of a new facility.

Descheenie links US action in Venezuela to history of imposed rule

BY DONOVAN QUINTERO
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

FLAGSTAFF — Arizona Congressional District 2 candidate Eric Descheenie stood among protesters in downtown Flagstaff on Saturday afternoon and sharply criticized U.S. military action in Venezuela, saying the operation reflects a long-standing pattern of American intervention driven by resource extraction, imposed governance and disregard for Indigenous voices.

Descheenie's remarks came as President Donald Trump claimed U.S. forces carried out a U.S.-directed military operation in Caracas, Venezuela's capital, that resulted in the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. Trump said the couple would face prosecution in the United States following federal indictments related to alleged drug trafficking and narco-terrorism.

Descheenie did not comment on the legal filings or Trump's operational claims, instead focusing on what he described as the deeper historical context behind U.S. actions abroad.

"This is par for the course for the United States," Descheenie said. "Seeking out places where there's natural resources, which translates to riches, and trying to install a government you can coerce or strong-arm to achieve those resources at a cheap rate. That's been our history."

He described the Venezuela operation as "manifest destiny on steroids," saying the same logic has been used for generations to justify U.S. interference both internationally and within Indigenous nations.

"The Navajo Nation knows this all too well," he said, pointing to federal involvement in shaping the modern Navajo Nation government.

Familiar pattern of imposed governance

Descheenie said historical records show Washington-based attorneys played a direct role in drafting governance systems that displaced traditional Diné principles and values.



Eric Descheenie, a candidate for Arizona's 2nd Congressional District, listens to a demonstrator outside Flagstaff City Hall during a protest on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026. The demonstration focused on U.S. military action in Venezuela.

"If you want access into somebody else's home, the fastest way is to change how the rules are written so they match how you operate," he said. "Once you do that, you have leverage."

He said Venezuela's vast reserves of oil, gold and natural gas make it a predictable target and warned that Indigenous peoples in Venezuela are likely being excluded from decisions that will shape their future.

"There are Indigenous peoples all over the world," he said. "What are their experiences? What are they saying? Is their voice even in the mix? Because it should be."

Trump, speaking earlier in Washington, described the mission as "one of the most stunning, effective and powerful displays of American military might," claiming U.S. forces used "air, land and sea" to overwhelm Venezuelan defenses.

He asserted there were no American casualties and said the U.S. would temporarily oversee Venezuela's transition, stating, "We're going to run the country until such time as we can do a safe, proper and

judicious transition."

Trump also said U.S. oil companies would be directed to help rehabilitate Venezuela's oil infrastructure, a point Descheenie cited as further evidence of profit-driven intervention.

Military force, long-term costs

Descheenie warned that military interventions justified by criminal allegations or national security rhetoric often worsen global instability, accelerate climate change and deepen inequality.

"This is what contributes to climate change," he said. "This is what contributes to poorly functioning governments, which then translates into economic injustice, social injustice, environmental harm and broken public systems."

Asked what Navajos should take from events in Venezuela, Descheenie pointed to Navajo veterans, many of whom he worked with while serving in the Arizona House of Representatives. He said their service

was grounded in protecting family, homeland and the right to self-determination, not enriching powerful interests.

"Our servicemen and women did not sign up so oligarchs could get wealthier," he said. "They signed up to protect their people and their future."

Arizona Sen. Mark Kelly, a former U.S. Navy combat pilot, echoed some of Descheenie's concerns while acknowledging the seriousness of allegations against Maduro.

"Nicolás Maduro is a brutal, illegitimate dictator who deserves to face justice," Kelly said in a statement. "But if we learned anything from the Iraq war, it's that dropping bombs or toppling a leader doesn't guarantee democracy, stability, or make Americans safer."

Kelly criticized Trump's remarks about oil and governance, saying the president "doesn't understand the risks and costs involved with these poorly thought-out decisions" and warned Congress should act to reassert its constitutional authority. He also thanked U.S. service members involved in



Demonstrators hold signs reading "Stop Trump" and "No war on Venezuela" during a protest outside Flagstaff City Hall in Flagstaff on Saturday, Jan. 3, 2026.

the operation, saying he was grateful no Americans were reported killed or seriously injured.

Legal authority, local parallels

Descheenie said the legality of the operation remains a serious concern, particularly in the absence of clear congressional authorization.

"If there's respect for the Constitution, you follow the law," he said. "There's no compromise on that."

He also connected events in Venezuela to local Native American struggles in northern Arizona, including water rights disputes and opposition to wastewater-based snowmaking on the San Francisco Peaks. He said the same dynamic of ignored Indigenous voices plays out at home.

"There are people living right next to Navajo communities who don't even know our narratives," he said. "That's no different than what's happening to Indigenous peoples elsewhere."

The U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia, on Jan. 3, 2026, warned U.S. citizens not to travel to Venezuela. For U.S. citizens currently in the country, the embassy advised they "should shelter in place."

"Venezuela has the highest Travel Advisory level - Level 4: Do Not Travel - due to severe risks to Americans, including

wrongful detention, torture in detention, terrorism, kidnapping, arbitrary enforcement of local laws, crime, civil unrest, and poor health infrastructure," the embassy stated.

A Dec. 3, 2025, travel advisory urged all U.S. citizens in Venezuela "to depart immediately."

Since 2019, the U.S. Department of State has withdrawn all diplomatic personnel from the U.S. Embassy in Caracas and suspended operations.

"The U.S. government has no ability to provide emergency services to U.S. citizens in Venezuela," the embassy stated.

As the situation continues to unfold, Descheenie said the events in Venezuela highlight the need for greater vigilance, community preparedness and collective action.

"The world is becoming more unstable," he said. "We need to stop deferring to others to make decisions in our best interest. We need to care about something enough to do something we've never done before."

He said Navajo traditions of preparedness and mutual aid, ensuring neighbors have food, firewood and support, offer a path forward in uncertain times. He emphasized that sovereignty is ultimately lived and practiced by communities, not granted by governments.

"Sovereignty isn't found on paper," Descheenie said. "It's found in our homes, our families and our willingness to act."



Navajo Times
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ATTENTION AREA SCHOOLS

Western Agency
February 19, 2026 | Kayenta Auditorium | 8:30 am
Agency Contact: Velma Harold (928) 283-3021
Email: velmaharold@nndode.org

Northern Agency
February 26, 2026 | Phil Thomas PAC - Shiprock | 8:30 am
Agency Contact: Malinda Notah
Email: malindanotah@nndode.org

Eastern Agency
February 5, 2026 | Crownpoint Office of Dine Youth Complex | 9 am
Agency Contact: Kristen Pablo (505) 786-2000
Email: kristenpablo@nndode.org

Central Agency
February 25, 2026 | Lukachukai Comm School | 8 am
Agency Contact: Chantz Samuel (928) 674-2064
Email: chantzsamuel@nndode.org

Ft. Defiance Agency
February 19, 2026 | Ft. Defiance Office of Dine Youth Complex | 8 am
Agency Contact: Nathaniel Natonabah (928) 729-4336
Email: nathanielnatonabah@nndode.org

Each agency will host their own spelling bee prior to the **FINAL** bee on Thursday, March 5, 2026, Shiprock, NM Phil Thomas Performing Arts Center



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NAVAJO LANGUAGE PROGRAM

SHELTER

FROM PAGE A1

notice from the division that it could apply during the RFP advertisement window, which she said ran from Dec. 5-12.

What began as a funding dispute has since grown into a broader conflict over Legislative intent, procurement authority and what ADABI staff describe as systemic barriers that prevent front-line victim services from accessing dollars they say were meant to support their work.

Dispute over intent, process

To reinforce that the funding was intended for ADABI, Tsosie sent a letter addressed to Buu Nygren and Delegate Carl Slater, who also serves as chair of the Arizona state caucus. In the undated letter, Tsosie urged tribal leaders to honor what he described as the “purpose and intent” behind the appropriation.

Tsosie wrote that Arizona House Bill 2897 included two separate line items routed through the Arizona Department of Economic Security, one of which allocated \$500,000 to the Navajo Nation for women’s shelter and social services.

“I requested that these amounts be included in HB 2897 so that they will be provided to Amá Dóó Átchíni Bighan Inc. in Chinle, Arizona, for the purpose of providing services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence,” Tsosie wrote.

He added that a separate \$500,000 allocation in the same bill was intended for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America in Chinle to support youth programming.

“My request for the funding was based on documentation provided to me by these two organizations,” Tsosie wrote. “If these organizations had not provided me the documentation, I would not have requested that the allocation be included in HB 2897.”

Tsosie asked Navajo Nation leaders to treat his written statement as guidance for how the funds should be handled once they reached tribal government.

“As the individual who requested the allocation and had the funding added to HB 2897, I ask that the Navajo Nation honor my purpose and intent for having these monies provided to the Navajo Nation,” he wrote. “My understanding is that the drafter’s intent is important in interpreting laws.”

He specifically requested that the \$500,000 be directed to ADABI.

According to Halwood, when she pressed the Division for Children and Family Services leadership for clarification, Cody told her the division needed a formal letter from Tsosie.

“We need a letter. DOJ needs a letter from Representative Tsosie to specifically say that this money is specifically for ADABI,” Halwood said Cody told her.

Halwood said she later provided that letter to Cody but received no resolution. She said follow-up conversations with division and tribal officials did not result in the funds being redirected.

Program stretched thin

ADABI, which Halwood said serves roughly 600 clients each year and as many as 1,000 children affected by domestic violence, had planned to use the funds for urgent needs including building repairs and a replacement vehicle to transport clients.

She described a heavy caseload; staff routinely providing transportation and shelter services around the clock and said the loss of the \$500,000 would significantly affect operations.

Halwood said she pursued multiple avenues for resolution, including leaving messages for Tsosie and other officials. She



From left, Lorena Halwood, Verna Joey, Elouise Begay, Francine Halwood and Carletta Skenandore stand inside Amá Dóó Átchíni Bighan Inc. in Chinle Jan. 6, 2026.

said she plans to file a formal complaint and meet with Slater to determine next steps. She also asked that the funds be reallocated directly to ADABI rather than routed through tribal procurement, citing past instances in which state funding was provided directly to the organization.

Officials named in Halwood’s account, including Cody, Chinle Agency Representative Vikki Shirley and others present at the December meeting, were described in a transcript as discussing the RFP timeline and procurement decisions. Halwood said Sharon Sandoval, Nygren’s deputy chief of staff, apologized during the meeting and indicated she would raise the issue with the president.

A separate intergovernmental agreement tied to the women’s shelter and social services allocation describes the funding as a one-time appropriation for fiscal 2025 under the 2024-25 general appropriations act. The agreement references House Bill 2897, Section 130, No. 5, and states the funding was to be distributed by the Arizona Department of Economic Security.

The agreement authorizes “a not to exceed amount of \$500,000.00 to the Navajo Nation tribal government for women’s shelter and social services programs” to be expended by June 30, 2025. It outlines quarterly payments of \$125,000 to begin upon signature of the agreement.

‘It’s not just a budget’

In an interview, Slater said he worked with Tsosie on the state budget language and viewed the funding as essential for a shelter operating in rural Navajo communities.

“ADABI and shelters are absolutely critical on the nation, and Representative Tsosie recognizes that, as does the Arizona State Caucus,” Slater said Tuesday.

He said the appropriation required a fiscal agent within the Navajo Nation, which ultimately placed oversight with the Division for Children and Family Services.

“The money needed a fiscal agent within the nation for disbursement,” Slater said. “But the way the Legislative language ended up being written was that the money was for domestic violence shelter or shelter.”

Slater said the division’s position that the funds could not go directly to ADABI but instead had to be made available through an open process raised concerns for him, given the organization’s location and limited financial capacity.

“That is concerning to me because ADABI is in the heart of the Nation,” he said. “It’s not like there are big donors sitting in the middle of Central Agency who are able to help when federal, state, Navajo Nation dollars aren’t able to fill in the gaps.”

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Slater said he worked with Tsosie to secure a clarification letter and provided it to Division for Children and Family Services and the Navajo Nation Department of Justice.

“At this time, they still have not committed to directly funding ADABI with the money that the state identified for ADABI,” he said.

When told ADABI leaders said they received no notice of the Dec. 5-12 RFP window, Slater responded sharply.

“That’s ridiculous to me,” he said. “The Department of Justice is aware that this money was originally intended for that.”

For ADABI staff, the paper trail reflects what they said they were led to believe: that the women’s shelter and social services funding was intended to support their work providing crisis response and victim services across Chinle and surrounding communities.

“We don’t get a lot of Navajo Nation funding, federal funding, and a lot of time, some of those fundings are cut in half,” said Carlotta Skenandore, ADABI’s sexual assault advocate, describing staff paying out of pocket for food and gas while transporting families and clients. “So a lot of our time is spent volunteering.”

ADABI Lead Advocate Verna Joey said the organization’s transportation challenges illustrate how limited resources collide with the realities of serving victims across a vast rural area.

“We only have one vehicle,” Joey said. “There’s times that three of us have transported 15 people to a shelter. What 15 people fit in that truck? No. We needed an SUV.”

Halwood said the situation remains painful because it directly affects families and children seeking safety.

“How could Navajo Nation do this to us, not for us, but for the services we provide to the victims out there that are in need, our relatives that are behind closed doors that are being hostages in their own home?” she asked. “We’re a small staff, but we’re a mighty staff. We’ll put our foot in front of the other and go on again.”

\$500,000 plan that never moved

Documents ADABI staff shared include a proposed operating budget for fiscal 2025 totaling \$500,000, a detailed breakdown that staff said reflects what the state appropriation was intended to support.

At the top of the budget is a “Brand New SUV (4x4)” priced at \$75,000, followed by operating costs to keep the vehicle in service: \$5,000 for auto insurance, \$10,000 for mileage, \$7,000 for maintenance and \$4,500 for fuel. The budget also includes funds for staff development, with \$7,000 allocated for trainings, conferences and lodging

to Mother Road exhibit with a January 8th curator talk by David Purcell, MNA archaeologist and historian. Known for his expertise, wit, and deep knowledge of Route 66, David offers engaging perspectives you won’t want to miss.

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Mary Kershaw
Executive director and CEO,
Museum of Northern Arizona
Flagstaff, Ariz.

for three advocates and \$6,500 for similar costs for two administrative staff.

Direct client support appears throughout the document, including \$12,150 for safe-home and hotel stays over 180 days, \$10,000 for food, hygiene items, baby diapers and wipes, and \$6,000 for personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and cleaning supplies. The budget also includes \$8,000 for hazardous pay, a line-item staff said reflects the risk and strain of after-hours crisis response.

The proposed budget outlines substantial building and office upgrades that staff described as long overdue. Those include \$70,500 for building maintenance such as roofing, flooring and exterior and interior repairs; \$10,000 for office supplies; \$66,000 for office equipment including laptops, computers, printers and scanners; and \$30,000 for office furniture to equip six workstations. Additional items include \$5,000 for internet services, \$25,000 for a water-heating system and \$30,800 to upgrade the kitchenette with a stove, sink, refrigerator and related improvements.

One of the largest line items in the proposal is \$100,550 for traditional practitioners and related supports, including herbal medicine and other culturally based services. Staff said families sometimes request traditional support as part of healing and recovery.

Despite the setback, ADABI staff said its work continues. The staff members said they will keep answering late-night calls, transporting victims and providing crisis services – even as they question why money intended for front-line programs has yet to reach them.

“We think of our clients,” said advocate Francine Halwood. “Even the homeless out there. They know they can get fed here.”

Speaker Crystalne Curley, in a text message, said ADABI plays a vital role in protecting Navajo families and children experiencing domestic violence and abuse.

“Every dollar allocated strengthens safety, healing and stability for our communities,” Curley wrote. “I respectfully urge the Executive Branch to finalize the internal grant process so that resources can be delivered where they are urgently needed. Our families cannot afford delays when help is already within reach.”

OBITUARIES



Harve Holiday

MONUMENT VALLEY, UTAH — Graveside service for Harve Holiday, 70, of Trainrock, Utah, will be held Friday, Jan. 9, at 11 a.m., at the Monument Valley community cemetery.

Harve was born in Monument Valley, Utah, and raised in the Trainrock area. He was Thizi Láanii (Many Goats Clan), born for Tódich’i’ni (Bitter Water Clan). His chei was Nóoda’i diné’é Táchii’ni (Ute Division of the Red Running Into the Water Clan), and his náli was Bit’ahnii (Under His Cover Clan). He passed away Dec. 29, 2025, in Phoenix.

Harve attended Highland High School in Albuquerque, where he was a varsity athlete in cross-country and track and field. He later attended Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

Harve worked 35 years with the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority as an electrical engineer. He also worked as a Legislative district assistant for the Navajo Nation.

Harve was active in community and environmental advocacy and served as a board member of Diné Bikéyah, where he supported efforts to protect Bears Ears National Park.

Harve was an accomplished athlete throughout his life. He was a bull rider with the American Indian Rodeo Cowboys Association and Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association. He also enjoyed running and loved playing basketball, including competing in 60-and-over basketball tournaments.

Harve especially enjoyed watching his grandchildren, nieces, and nephews participate in sports. Family members remember him as a mentor who encouraged young athletes and shared advice.

Harve is survived by his children, Crystal, Robin, Harvin, Brooke, Brennan, and Tyra; siblings, Esther, Anna, Jean Sandra, David, Doug, Eddie and Bryon; and many grandchildren, nieces, nephews and extended family.

Harve is preceded in death by his parents, John Holiday Sr. and Lula Holiday; grandparents, Rachel and Bob Atene; and siblings, Albert, John Jr. and Derwin.

A reception will take place at the Tsébi’ndziszgaii Elementary School gym beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Caroline J. Kee

GALLUP — Funeral services for Caroline Joe Kee, 80, of Sundance, New Mexico, will be held Friday, Jan. 9, at 10 a.m., at the Grace Bible Church in Gallup, with Pastor Tom White officiating. Burial will follow in Rehoboth, New Mexico.

Caroline was born July 7, 1945, in Sundance, into the Táchii’ni (Red Running Into the Water People Clan), born for Kinyaa’aanii (Towering House Clan). Her chei is Tódich’i’ni (Bitter Water). She passed away Jan. 3, 2026, in Gallup.

Caroline worked as a housekeeper at various hotels. She was also a silversmith, rug weaver, owner/operator of TC Grill and a member of the Flame of Fire Church.

Caroline enjoyed traveling, shopping, spending time with family and drinking coffee with her husband.

Caroline is survived by her husband, Tom Jerry Kee; son, Tom Larry Kee; daughters, Virginia Ben, Elsie Kee, Christine Etsitty, Theresa Sam, Karen Kee and Gerri Kee; sisters, Katherine Joann Tso, Ella Mae Joe and Betty Joe; and 36 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Caroline is preceded in death by her parents, Verona Livingston and Frank Joe Sr.; and sister, Janet Joe.

Pallbearers will be Buck Etsitty, Buford Ben, Andy Ben, Tommy Kee, Jeremiah Kee and Joel Yazzie.

Honorary pallbearers will be Tom Larry Kee, Leslie Sam, Tee-Jay Jimenez, Evan Jimenez, Ty Castillo and Warren Sam. Rollie Mortuary oversaw arrangements.

Yazzie Johnson

GALLUP — Funeral services for Yazzie Johnson, 88, of China Springs, New Mexico, were held Jan. 7 at Rollie Mortuary in Gallup. Interment followed in Gallup.

Yazzie was born Aug. 8, 1937, in China Springs, into the Tódich’i’ni (Bitter Water Clan), born for T’áashchí’i (Red Bottom People Clan). He passed away Dec. 30, 2025, in Albuquerque.

Yazzie worked for the mines and enjoyed working with his hands on furniture and vehicles.

Yazzie is survived by his sons, Melton Barney and Frederick Johnson; daughters, Vera Johnson and Kathleen Saavedra; and sister, Francis Johnson.

Yazzie is preceded in death by his wife, Fannie Johnson; brother, Kee Johnson; sisters, Jennie Thomas and Alice Hale; and grandson, Richard Johnson.

Pallbearers were Jayson Johnson, Michael Johnson, Frederick Johnson, Derrick Johnson, Richard Smith and Ronald Saavedra.

Honorary pallbearers were Melton Barney and Ernest Hale. Rollie Mortuary oversaw arrangements.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

January exhibitions

Editor,
Happy New Year! We begin 2026 with two exhibitions designed to spark curiosity and engage the senses.

Starting January 10, we invite you to explore Katsintithu—Katsina Dolls. This newly expanded installation takes a deeper look at the tradition, meaning, and artistry of these uniquely Hopi dolls. The installation of dolls will rotate every six months, drawing from MNA’s extensive collection.

Later in the month, we hope



Tuba City
Regional Health Care Corporation

Public Health Updates

Flu cases are increasing in Arizona!

Get Your 2025-2026 COVID & Flu Vaccines

What to know about the 2025-2026 vaccine recommendations

Flu & COVID vaccines for everyone 6 months & older

RSV vaccines for those 50 & older, pregnant women, & children 19 months & under

Pneumococcal vaccine for those 50 & older



Tuba City Regional Health Care

Public Health Clinic | Walk-in

Main Hospital Building
Available to everyone 6 months & older

Monday - Friday (MST)
8:00 AM - 11:30 AM | 12:30 PM - 4:00 PM



Outpatient Primary Care Center Clinics By Appointment Only

- Pediatrics Clinic (6 months - 18 years)
- Family Medicine (18 years+)
- Internal Medicine (18 years+)
- Primary Care Annex (18 years+)

Call ahead to schedule at 1-866-976-5941.



Pharmacy Immunization Clinic | Walk-in

Outpatient Primary Care Center - 1st Floor
Available to 18 year & older

Monday - Friday (MST)
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM | 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Sacred Peaks Health Center

Sacred Peaks Health Center By Appointment***

To Schedule: 928-863-7333
Available to everyone 6 months & older

Monday - Friday (MST)
8:00 AM - 11:30 AM | 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

- * Pediatric Clinic (6 months - 18 years)
- ** Pharmacy (19 years+)

LeChee Health Facility

LeChee Health Facility | By Appointment

To Schedule: 928-698-4900
Available to everyone 6 months & older

Pharmacy | Walk-in

Available to 18 year & older

Monday - Friday (MST)
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM | 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Mobile Medical Unit

Drive-Up | Flu, COVID, & RSV vaccines

View schedule at tchealth.org/community-health-center-mobile-health-program

What to do if you feel sick



Home tests available at pharmacy and greeter stations. Limited to (2) boxes.



COVID treatment available. Call Public Health Hotline at 928-606-4647.



Stay home until for 24 hours: 1) Symptoms are better & 2) Are fever-free. *No doctor's note needed to return to school or work.

Measles Outbreak as of December 30, 2025



315 cases linked to AZ/UT border outbreak: Colorado City/ Hildale

Coconino County confirmed first measles case

Navajo Nation currently has no cases.

Fever & rash? Exposed to measles? Call ahead to local health care before entering.



Measles is highly contagious and easily spreads through the air.



Each infected person can infect 10 or more unvaccinated people.



It can lead to hospitalization, serious health problems, & death.



MMR vaccine is 97% effective for life:
• 1st dose at 12 mos
• 2nd dose at 4 yrs



Be sure you and your child are vaccinated. Ask your provider about your status.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)



STIs are rising on the Navajo Nation. Many STIs do not have symptoms, but can cause long-term health problems.



Get tested for STIs every year if you are 13 - 64 years old. Pregnant woman should get tested 3x during pregnancy.



All STIs can be treated. STI testing is the only way to know if you need treatment.

Express STI Testing

Walk into lab with no appointment or provider visit.

Sacred Peaks Lab
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

TCRHCC Main Lab
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Saturday - Sunday
8:00 am - 12:00 pm
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

LeChee Health
Monday - Thursday
8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Friday
8:30 am - 12:00 pm
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Public Health Clinic

Walk-in to see a provider with no appointment.

TCRHCC Main Hospital
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 11:30 am
12:30 pm - 4:00 pm

Mobile Medical Unit Schedule

Date	Location	Time (MST)
January 9	LeChee Clinic	8:45 am - 3:30 pm
January 13	Coppermine Chapter	8:30 am - 3:30 pm
January 14	Kaibeto Market	8:30 am - 3:30 pm
January 16	Cameron Chapter	8:00 am - 4:00 pm
January 21	Dinnebito (RRBS)	9:30 am - 2:30 pm
January 22	LeChee Clinic	8:45 am - 3:30 pm
January 23	Tonalea Market	8:00 am - 4:00 pm

Flu & COVID vaccines available for ages 6 months & older. RSV vaccines available for those 50 & older.

Medical services include:

- Sick visits
- Vaccines
- Sports physical
- Physical exams
- Primary health care
- Cancer screening
- Referrals
- And more

Call 928-283-2607 or visit www.tchealth.org for updates & questions. Schedule is subject to change.