

‘Navajo Nation Census Month’ proclaimed by Nation’s leaders

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 18 September 2020 03:52

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Vice President Myron Lizer signed a proclamation recognizing the month of Sept. 2020 as *Navajo Nation Census Month* N

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 Census Bureau is required by the 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. 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,” Nez said.

“The census also determines how congressional, state, [and] 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,” Nez continued.

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

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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," Lizer emphasized.

"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," Lizer said.

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," Miss Navajo Nation Shaandiin Parrish said. "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," Parrish pointed out. "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!" she said.

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."

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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.