

Three Navajo Arizona lawmakers inaugurated by state legislature

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President Begay in attendance

PHOENIX – The Arizona State Legislature inaugurated Jamescita Peshlakai as Senator for Arizona’s Legislative District 7 and both Wenona Benally and Eric Descheenie as State Representatives for District 7 Jan. 9.

Peshlakai currently serves as an Executive Staff Assistant for the Office of the President and Vice President and Benally serves as the Executive Director for the Navajo Hopi Land Commission Office. Descheenie had previously served as an Executive Staff Assistant for OPVP.

As Senator, Peshlakai said she would serve on the Natural Resource, Water and Energy Committee as well as the Transportation and Technology Committee.

“Legislative District 7 is progressive and electing a Native American woman and veteran is symbolic of who we are,” Peshlakai said. “It is truly an honor for me to take my oath and serve the people to the best of my ability. I am ready to roll up my sleeves to work for Legislative

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District 7.”

Representative Benally said she looks forward to working with President Russell Begaye to advance the interests of the Navajo people.

“My colleagues and I greatly appreciate the attendance of President Begaye at yesterday’s Opening Day of the 53rd Arizona Legislative Session and Governor Ducey’s State of the State Address,” Benally said.

Begaye congratulated the newly inaugurated officials stating he was glad to have highly qualified Navajos representing their constituents from both their legislative districts and the Navajo Nation.

“They made us proud as they were inaugurated to be a state senator and state representatives,” Begaye said. “We look forward to working with our leaders and all members of the House and the Senate on both sides of the aisle. We also look forward to working with the new Speaker of the House, J.D. Mesnard and all the other elected officials and various committee members.”

President Begaye attended Opening Day as a guest of Rebecca Rios, state representative for Arizona Legislative District 27.

“I was honored to have President Russell Begaye join me on Opening Day at the Arizona Legislature. I look forward to strengthening our relationship with the Navajo Nation and other tribes,” she said.

Rios said she hoped Opening Day would bring opportunities for the Arizona Indian Nations to share ideas with the Legislature.

“Again, we congratulate Jamescita Peshlakai, Wenona Benally and Eric Descheenie,” Begaye

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said. “They made the Navajo Nation and the Navajo people proud by stepping up and running for these offices. They gained the confidence of all their constituents in being elected into their respective offices.”