

## Navajo Nation declares Pet Spay, Neuter Awareness Month

Written by Staff Reports  
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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. — Navajo Nation First Lady Phefelia Nez and Second Lady Dottie Lizer were joined by President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, Navajo Nation Veterinary Management, and the Navajo Nation Animal Control Program Feb. 19 to sign a proclamation to recognize the month of February as the “Navajo Nation Pet Spay and Neuter Awareness Month” to encourage Navajo citizens to spay and neuter their pets to avoid the overpopulation of kittens and puppies.

The proclamation declares a critical need to increase awareness of the overpopulation of domestic animals on the Navajo Nation. Overpopulation contributes to these animals suffering from infectious diseases and untreated injuries. Additionally, many of these animals are left to roam without homes and threaten the safety of communities.

“This month is an important time to prevent unwanted dog and cat litters during the spring and summer months. Overproduction of domestic animals happens during the spring and summer, and abandonment of animals increases and animal shelters become overwhelmed,” First Lady Nez said.

“As Navajo people, we need to protect and care for our animals and pets by spaying and neutering them. As we address this concerning problem on the Nation, we have to bring awareness to help solve the issue,” she added.

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According to Navajo Nation Animal Control Program manager Kevin Gleason, one mating pair of dogs can produce 5,800 dogs in five years. There are over one million domestic animals in the Nation, and owners need to comply with the Animal Control Ordinance, which includes regulations on rabies, vaccinations, animal bites, livestock damage, impoundment procedures, and others. Noncompliance fines may range from \$50 to \$200 per animal.

The proclamation also states, “The Navajo Nation has established animal control laws to protect the health, safety, and property of people and address responsible pet ownership and overpopulation, disease and neglect of animals. It is the responsibility of the people to protect and preserve the animals using the resources that are available, such as sterilization clinics, vaccination clinics, and animal adoption programs.”

“Abandonment of puppy and kitten litters is a major issue on the Nation. We can all help to solve this problem. If you are adding a pet to your family, make sure you spay and neuter them,” Second Lady Lizer said.

“Find local services to find what is best for your pet. Before adding a pet to your home, recognize all the responsibilities to keep your pet safe and healthy. Educate your children, friends, family members, and co-workers about pet overpopulation,” she continued.

“Spaying and neutering ultimately help your pet live a healthier and longer life. Sterilization also decreases the chances of pet homelessness and overcrowding of animal shelters,” First Lady Nez said.

“As Navajo people, we believe that our animals protect us from harm, stress, and loneliness, and we have to learn how to protect them as well,” she stated.

***The Office of the First Lady and Second Lady will host a webinar Feb. 26, on the “Navajo Nation OPVP Communications” YouTube channel to provide additional resources and services to become a responsible pet owner and to encourage citizens to volunteer and donate to help solve the concern of unwanted and unsterilized animals.***

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***Contact your local veterinarian to schedule an appointment for your pet or visit the Navajo Nation Veterinary Management website: [navajoveterinaryprogram.com](http://navajoveterinaryprogram.com) for more information.***