FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: Tuesday, September 27, 2016

JUDICIAL BRANCH HOSTING APPRECIATION CEREMONY

The Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation will be hosting an appreciation ceremony on Sept. 29 at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park.

Activities will begin with a 5K fun run/walk sponsored by the Department of Behavioral Health Services. The run will begin at 8 a.m. at the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park.

A program with speakers to include Associate Justice Eleanor Shirley, Vice President Jonathan Nez, Speaker LoRenzo Bates, Council Delegate Otto Tso and Acting Chief Justice Allen Sloan will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., followed by a luncheon.

The Judicial Branch wishes to thank the Navajo Nation Council, President Russell Begaye, Vice President Nez, the Law and Order Committee, Facilities Maintenance Department, Parks and Recreation and the public for the construction of two modular buildings for the Administrative Office of the Courts and the Supreme Court.

The Law and Order Committee supported the need for funding for the modular buildings when the AOC and Supreme Court offices were displaced in June 2015. Law and Order Committee member Otto Tso sponsored the legislation to appropriate funds for completion of the modulars, along with co-sponsor Herman Daniels, who now also sits on the Law and Order Committee. The Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed the legislation 18-0 when the legislation came before the body during the 2016 Winter Session.

President Begaye signed the resolution into law when it came to his desk. In addition, Vice President Nez, along with Division of General Services Director Virgil Brown, assisted the branch with finding temporary office space for staff of AOC. Facilities Maintenance Department completed many of the necessary renovations on both modular buildings.

The staff also wants to thank the Department of Information Technology for allowing fiscal services, human resources, and other staff members to be stationed in its building. Finally,
Employee Housing Program also provided assistance to the Office of the Chief Justice during the displacement.

Once renovations are finalized to the modular buildings, AOC and Supreme Court staff will have offices and conference rooms in one centralized location rather than the current situation where staff and justices are stationed at four different locations throughout Window Rock with no meeting space. The Supreme Court will have a hearing room. With no hearing room for the past nine years, the Court has had to hold hearings at locations such as the Navajo Nation Museum, Navajo Division of Transportation, and chapter houses.

The Supreme Court and AOC buildings are located east of the Navajo Nation Veterans Memorial Park. Renovations are expected to be completed and the buildings ready to move in within the next month.

The branch also continues to seek funds for a permanent facility for the Supreme Court, AOC and the Peacemaking Program.

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