

Diné be' iiná, Inc.

The Navajo Lifeway

9 June 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DINÉ POLICY INSTITUTE

CONDUCTS SEMINAR AT SHEEP IS LIFE CELEBRATION

Saturday, June 21, 2008, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Greyhills Academy, Tuba City, Navajo Nation.

In the modern world of technology and globalization, traditional and indigenous peoples are investigating ways to protect the integrity of their traditions and cultural expressions. The Diné Policy Institute (DPI) is investigating how Navajos can protect their lifeways from abuse and exploitation. Former Chief Justice Robert Yazzie, DPI Director, is holding discussion on these issues on Saturday, 21 June 2008, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. during the Sheep is Life Celebration at Greyhills Academy in Tuba City, Navajo Nation.

Navajo Lifeways are complex sacred interactions with the universe. Taking parts out of context for other purposes leads to misuse of this knowledge, the Diné collective heritage. Mr. Yazzie is seeking recommendations from the people about how to protect Diné culture from abuse and exploitation.

Public education, creating dialog, and arriving at an understanding of the concepts are key to framing policy development in a traditional context. While there is no “ownership” of traditional lifeways, there is a collective interest in preventing inappropriate use and dissemination of cultural symbols, songs, stories, weaving patterns, knowledge, and the many facets of Diné heritage.

A Navajo approach is critical to retaining and protecting community knowledge in its original context. The United States federal system of individual property rights is too narrow to embrace

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Diné be' iiná, Inc. is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the Navajo Nation.

the Navajo World View while English has no equivalents for many indigenous concepts. The Diné Policy Institute will compile what it learns in these discussions and work with the Navajo Nation government to develop laws, regulations, enforcement procedures, and sanctions based on Navajo sovereignty and Diné cultural values.

The Diné Policy Institute is a component of Diné College. Saturday's seminar is part of the three-day Sheep is Life Celebration, which includes workshops, Sheep to Loom demonstrations, a Navajo Rug Auction, Awards Banquet and other events. Details are available at www.navajolifeway.org. For information, call Grace Boyne at 505-863-3192 or e-mail dbi@navajolifeway.org.

DBI is a community-based, nonprofit organization founded in 1991 by Navajo shepherds and weavers. Sheep is Life is supported by the USDA Risk Management Agency and WESSTCorp.

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EDITORS: Please contact Mr. Robert Yazzie for an interview at 505-870-2907 or via e-mail at robertgyazzie@yahoo.com. Thank you for informing the public about this important discussion.