Diné College Kicks Off New Semester

On January 21, 2014, the Public Relations & Marketing and Recruitment Offices traveled to the Arizona State Capital to attend the 19th Annual Indian Nations & Tribes Legislative Day hosted by the Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs.

The College was part of the exhibitors’ displays on the lawn of the Arizona State Capital. The College’s informational booth highlighted with photos the positive impact of the Arizona Compact funds, which have made possible recent renovations and upgrades at the Tsaile, Window Rock, Chinle and Tuba City, Arizona campus sites. The booth was well received by many individuals attending the event.

President George and Fanny Atcitty, Diné College Board of Regents President met with Senator Carlyle Begay, Representative Albert Hale and Representative James Peshlakai and reported how Compact funds have been utilized this year as well as projects for the future.

Welcome Back Students!
Have a Successful Year!
On January 16, 2014, the Center for Diné Studies hosted a Késhjeeh or Navajo Shoe Game and invited everyone from the Tsaile community and beyond.

The event was well attended and the participants challenged one another at guessing where the hidden ball was located. Shoe game songs echoed throughout the Student Union Building where the two teams faced one another.

Before the game a small Yucca is uprooted — 102 leaves are used as counters, while the root is fashioned into a ball and one side is colored black. The root is tossed into the air to determine which side will go first.

Then some team members will hold up a blanket to conceal the activity of hiding the ball and burying the boots in sand. The curtain is then dropped and the opposite team sends a member to discover in which boot the root is hidden. This is done by striking the boots with a stick of pinon pine and by asking questions of the other team.

Players may guess up to three times, given the right circumstance. Guessing the right boot on the first guess earns 10 yucca leaves for the team, guessing right on the second guess earns 8 leaves, and 4 leaves for the final guess. If the root cannot be located in three guesses, the guesser returns to his side. The “defenders” then raise a blanket separating them from the opposite side and re-hide the yucca ball.

Games can continue all night, ending only when the rays of sun streak the Eastern sky.

Because the Navajo respect the seasons, discussions of Shoe Games and Winter Tales and the activities themselves are not done after early Spring or before November.

Avery Denny, Navajo Traditional Practitioner was in attendance and participated in the event to show his support to many of the students who were in attendance.

“Shoe games are a great way to bring our communities together and continue our cultural practices. The shoe game has many stories and history that’s important for anyone interested in learning about the Navajo culture,” said Mr. Denny.

The Center for Diné Studies provides some family activities throughout the year for community members. Thomas Littleben, Jr. said an upcoming event is the Knowledge bowl which is scheduled to take place this spring.