



T-WE:M 'O BA'IC E S-GE:WPK
TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

NEWSLETTER

TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRWOMAN

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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ELDERS DAY 2025

Photos at this link:
bit.ly/4e9W5v3

S-ke:g Tas! Welcome to the latest edition of the Executive Office Newsletter. With Mother's Day and Father's Day just recently passed, I wanted to take a moment to recognize our great O'odham mothers and fathers, and those who have taken on the role of mother figure and father figure to our young people.

This time of year, many families are also celebrating graduations, as students of all ages complete the latest step in their academic journeys. I want to congratulate all of our amazing O'odham scholars who have graduated this year. We have an article celebrating a scholar from the Class of 2025 on Page 3.

I also want to congratulate the more than 1,800 tribal members who took the time to cast their votes in the May 24 General Election for Legislative Council and District Council. It is our right and responsibility as citizens in a democracy to make our voices heard in choosing our own leaders. A summary of results is on Page 2.

There is another important election coming up on July 15, a special Congressional primary for the seat vacated by the late Congressman Raul Grijalva. He was a great champion of the Nation and it is important that we elect a successor who has the same respect for our sovereignty and way of life. More information can be found on Page 2.

The Federal Update on Page 3 is a reminder

of the consequences elections can have.

The proposed Trump administration budget is still working through the process, but the

version passed in the House could have harmful impacts to Nation programs and funding.

The Vice Chairwoman and I also participated in a tribal consultation with the Department of the Interior where we advocated for the Nation's sovereignty and reminded the federal government of the need to uphold its responsibilities to us.

The Tohono O'odham Nation also recently won a major court victory, when an appeals court ruled that our lawsuit against the SunZia transmission line can go forward. The details are in our Federal Update on Page 3.

The Vice Chairwoman and I also recently had the opportunity to participate in ribbon cuttings for two new, state-of-the-art basketball courts at South Komelic Communiy and Hodai Son Wo'o (Charco 27) Community. The courts were donated by longtime construction partners of the Nation, led by the Hunt / Penta Joint Venture, and will bring people together for years to come.

Finally, please take a look at the pictures from Elders Day, which are posted at bit.ly/4e9W5v3



Verlon Jose, Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman

Make Your Voice Heard in the July 15 Special Congressional Primary Election

A special primary election has been scheduled for July 15, 2025 in Congressional District 7, which includes the Tohono O'odham Nation. This will be voters' first chance to weigh in on who will succeed the late Congressman Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ); the winners of the primary election will face off in a special general election on September 23. .

Early voting in the special primary started on June 18. To request a mail ballot, contact your County Recorder's website at the links below. You can also contact your County Recorder with an questions about voting.

Pima County Recorder: 520-724-4330 or recorder.pima.gov

Pinal County Recorder: 520-866-7550 or pinal.gov/recorder

Maricopa County Recorder: 602-506-1511 or elections.maricopa.gov

Chairman Jose and the Legislative Council have endorsed former county Supervisor Adelita Grijalva, daughter of the late Congressman, in the Democratic primary. Be sure to make yourself heard in this election. It is our right and responsibility as citizens, a right that the generations before us had to fight hard to secure!

Emily's Law Creates Turquoise Alert for Missing Indigenous People

On May 21, Gov. Katie Hobbs signed a bill known as "Emily's Law," after the late Emily Pike of the San Carlos Apache Tribe. The law establishes "Turquoise Alerts" for missing Indigenous people. The alert will issue missing persons alerts for Native people up to age 65 after a law enforcement agency determines they are missing. Tribal leaders and others had spent years advocating for the creation of the Turquoise Alert, which fills a longtime gap in the Amber and Silver Alert system.

May 24 Tohono O'odham Nation General Election Recap

More than 1,800 O'odham voters turned out for the General Election on May 24, 2025, choosing the Legislative Council and District Council. Below is an overview of the Legislative Council election results.

Baboquivari District

Representative: Ned Norris, Jr.
Alternate: Leander Mase

Chukut Kuk District

Representative: Vivian Juan-Saunders

Gu Achi District

Representative: Lucius E. Lopez
Alternate: Victoria A. Hobbs

Gu Vo District

Representative: Bennett Chewing
Alternate: Grace Manuel

Hickiwan District

Representative: Delma M. Garcia

Pisinemo District

Representative: Naomi Monte
Alternate: Edward D. Manuel

San Lucy District

Representative: Roger Manuel

San Xavier District

Representative: Janice Felix

Schuk Toak District

Representative: Delisa M. Ramon
Alternate: Quintin C. Lopez

Sells District

Representative: Evelyn Juan-Manuel
Alternate: Juan Buendia

Sif Oidak District

Representative: Francis Homewytewa

The complete election details are available at
www.tonation-nsn.gov.



Congratulations, O'odham Graduates!

O'odham students at all levels are graduating this time of year and deserve recognition for their great accomplishment.

Here are a few examples from the inspiring Class of 2025!

Right: Jacqueline Grater is a proud member of the Nation, hailing from Komcku E-wa'osidk Ceksan. She began her academic journey in fall 2023 and recently graduated with high honors, earning an Associate of Arts in Tohono O'odham Studies from Tohono O'odham Community College. She is deeply committed to the preservation and promotion of the O'odham Himdag, which helps sustain the language, history, and culture of our people.



Above: Tori Johnson from Sells District, daughter of Donna and Thomas Johnson, graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. She is continuing her academic journey at the University of Arizona as graduate student pursuing dual Master's degrees in Business Analytics and Marketing.

Rangelands, Livestock, Feral Horse & Burro Summit

On May 9, the Tohono O'odham Nation held a summit on rangelands, livestock, and feral horses and burros. The summit included updates on rangeland conditions on the Nation, the history and management of feral horse and burros, livestock counts, resources for land managers, and inspections, sales and probate panel. Lunch was served and a prize raffle was held. Developing District-specific horse and burrow management and range planning was a priority.

Federal Update

Federal Budget Update: The U.S. House of Representatives narrowly passed President Trump's budget bill on May 22. This is an ongoing process that is still being debated in the Senate, but it could have detrimental impacts to Nation programs and funding. It would reduce Medicaid spending by nearly \$700 billion over the next 10 years and three million people, including children, would lose access to food assistance benefits. Nation leadership has contacted Arizona's Senators Ruben Gallego and Mark Kelly and many others, letting them know that this harmful legislation is unacceptable.

9th Circuit Ruling: The Nation, together with the San Carlos Apache Tribe and environmental groups, won a major court decision May 27 when a federal appeals court reinstated our lawsuit challenging the construction of the SunZia high voltage transmission line through the culturally sensitive San Pedro River Valley. A federal court must now consider our argument that the federal government failed to conduct proper consultations for a historic property designation that could protect the area.

Department of Interior: On June 5, Chairman Jose and Vice Chairwoman Johnson appeared before the Department of Interior to respond to proposed changes within Indian Affairs that address workforce efficiency and productivity. Nation leadership advocated for tribal self-governance and self-determination and reminded federal officials that any changes to Indian Affairs cannot interfere with the federal government's trust obligations.

Mexico Travel Advisory

Here is what you need to know about traveling into and out of Mexico this summer.

It is understood that the Nation's current tribal ID will continue to be accepted at airports and also at border crossings for regular travel into and out of Mexico. However, it is recommended that tribal members carry multiple forms of photo ID with them at all times in the event that there is any confusion.

If you recently acquired a REAL ID for airplane travel in the U.S., that will not be enough to cross the border. You will need a tribal ID or passport at international crossings.

Ribbon-Cutting for Two State-of-the-Art Basketball Courts at South Komelic, Charco 27

On May 9, Chairman Jose and Vice Chairwoman Johnson attended ribbon cuttings for two new, top of the line basketball courts at South Komelic and Hodai Son Wo'o (Charco 27) Communities.

Two years ago, the Tohono O'odham Nation was notified by its construction partners at the Hunt / Penta Joint Venture that they were interested in building two new community basketball courts for tribal members. To determine the location, the Nation organized the "Alley-Oop Challenge" in coordination with the Tohono O'odham Nation Youth Council.

After the awards committee reviewed many worthy submissions, the Nation announced the winners of this friendly competition were South Komelic and Hodai Son Wo'o. Each community was able to personalize their facilities with a unique stencil at the center of the court.

The new basketball courts benefit not only these two communities, but the Nation as a whole. They offer a safe and fun gathering place that will serve O'odham throughout the region. They will help promote sportsmanship and healthy lifestyles among our youth. They remind us of our connection to each other and to the land we call home.

At the ribbon cutting ceremonies, the Chairman and Vice Chairwoman also recognized the Hunt / Penta Joint Venture and the six subcontractors who made this all possible. Hunt / Penta has been a partner to the Nation for over a decade, helping construct the new newest gaming facilities in the Phoenix area – Desert Diamond Casino West Valley and Desert Diamond Casino White Tanks. Together we are stronger!

