



## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Shalako activities limited due to COVID-19**

Due to the COVID -19 Pandemic and for the safety of our Zuni people to practice their annual Shalako ceremony in a safe and healthy manner, the Zuni Religious Leadership have come to a difficult decision and strongly encourages the Zuni people, our Non-Zuni Community members and Non-Residents alike to be understanding, considerate and support the decisions they have made in order to protect our people.

The limitations listed below have been discussed with the Shalako/Long Horn/Mud Head sponsors who are in support of these limitations set by with the religious leadership for the safety of our people.

Therefore, the religious leadership requested assistance from the Zuni Incident Command to develop and share the following message to the Zuni community and to support the sponsors by not criticizing them for adhering to the following:

### **Limitations**

#### **Cooking activities:**

1. Limit the number cooks at the sponsors home.
2. Require the use of face masks at all times and adhere to all the safety preventive measures (social distancing /hand washing etc.).
3. Religious leadership strongly encourages cooking at individual homes and deliver to sponsors homes for offerings.

#### **Corn Grinding:**

1. The religious leaders stated that it is not necessary to host a corn grinding event this year due to COVID 19. The use of mechanical grinders is recommended.
2. If the sponsors choose to host a corn grinding ceremony they must limit the number of people and use recorded songs versus having singers. The required use of masks, temperature monitoring, social distancing, and proper sanitizing is strongly recommended.

#### **Arrival and Departure**

1. During the arrival and departure of the Shalako, Long Horn group, and Mud Heads: the community is informed to maintain their distance and offer their cornmeal from where they are standing to protect the health and safety of all those involved during the Shalako ceremony/activity.
2. Religious leaders will be posted ahead to enforce and restrict community members from getting close.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS OR ISSUES REGARDING THESE LIMITATIONS,  
PLEASE DIRECT YOUR QUESTIONS TO THE KIVA LEADERS.**



**Shalako homes:**

1. Limitations on the number of people allowed inside each home will include sponsors family and limited to family members of the Shalako, Long Horn, Mud Head and Medicine group representatives.
2. Mandatory COVID 19 testing will be required prior to the Shalako activities of those who will be inside these homes. More information on testing will be forthcoming.
3. Host families will designate people to be at each entrance of the homes to check temperatures and enforce limited access and capacity.
4. Host families will designate cleaning people to be available to maintain sanitation of all areas.
5. Kiva leaders prohibits the use of commercial cigarettes inside the Shalako, Long Horn, and Mud Head homes.

**Note to the community:**

Historically, the Zuni people have practiced and followed the religious traditions since time immemorial. This year with the COVID -19 pandemic, this lethal virus has taken the lives of our community members, including those that were among the religious hierarchy.

With no vaccine and/or guaranteed end to this deadly virus, our religious leaders have been forced to temporarily alter the routine religious practices and activities for the safety of our people. These decisions were not easy and required lengthy discussions, each key religious representative voiced their opinion, and stated their recommendations. With consensus among the majority these decisions were agreed upon.

The religious leaders have made their decisions and as Zuni people, we must respect these decisions despite our own personal interpretations and objections of the limitations that are being imposed. As members of the general community, please respect the directions of our tribal religious leaders. Those who use social media to air out your opinions, **please refrain** from doing so and speak directly to any of the religious leaders.

The Zuni Tribal government and Incident Command serves only as a resource to the traditional Zuni religious leadership. Therefore, as requested by the religious leadership, the Incident Command team developed this message and received approval from the Zuni Religious leadership to address to the Zuni community.

Respectfully,

Zuni Traditional Religious Leaders  
2020 Shalako, Long Horn, and Mud Head Sponsors  
Zuni Tribal Governor and Tribal Council  
Zuni Incident Command team