

April 25, 2022

Candidate Profile

Name: Virginia R. Chavez

Position Vying For: Zuni Tribal Council

Marital Status: Single

Clans: Sun and Child of the Turkey

Education: Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration, University of Phoenix
Accounting and Business Administration Courses, University of New Mexico-Gallup
High School Diploma, Zuni High School

Career Experience: Zuni Tribal Council – two terms of 4 years each
Pueblo of Zuni, Finance Department – Accountant
Pueblo of Zuni, Auditing Contract Work
H & R Block – Tax Preparer
Zuni Public School District, Finance Department – From Bookkeeper to Finance Director

Vision Statement:

To serve my people and my community to the best of my ability incorporating trust, respect, integrity, collaboration, and teamwork to meet the needs of the Zuni people and community.

Leadership Experience:

Zuni Tribal Council – two terms of 4 years each
Pueblo of Zuni Innovative Task Force
Zuni Public School District Finance Director
University of New Mexico-Gallup Advisory Board
Zuni Public School District Board of Education
New Mexico School Boards Association Board of Directors
New Mexico School Boards Association Region I Secretary
Zuni Tribal Election Board
A:Shiwi Awan Business Development Corporation (AABDC) Board of Directors
Zuni Housing Authority Appeals Board
New Mexico Public School Budgeting and Accounting Task Force
Zuni Christian Mission School Board/Committee

Holistic: Please state your traditional and culture values, beliefs, and philosophy:

As Indigenous people, we value our traditions and culture. We have various traditions and customs such as farming, bread making and baking in outdoor ovens, traditional food, our Zuni language, our traditional dress and attire, our Zuni jewelry, pottery, fetishes, painting, beadwork, sculpting, and raising sheep, cattle and horses. We grew up in this environment of culture and traditions and is our identity, which we have passed them onto our children and grandchildren.

I grew up with my grandparents and learned some of these traditions. We did a lot of farming at Ojo Calientie, and at our ranch west of Zuni. My grandmother taught me how to do beadwork and I learned a bit of jewelry making from another family. I value these experiences and traditions, and am especially thankful for learning our Zuni Language. We need to speak it often and teach our children and grandchildren the Zuni language so it will not be forgotten.

My mother and grandparents believed in the Christian faith and raised us accordingly so up to this day my faith and spirituality still remains within that faith.

Year 2022 is a State and County election year; do you feel it is important for the Zuni Tribe to participate in the process? Why or why not?

Yes, it is very important that the Zuni Tribe participate in the election process. It is especially important for our people to vote in all elections at the local, county, state, and national levels because our vote is a voice for our community that helps bring funding to our communities from the state and national level. Our vote is also our voice to petition, promote, and advocate our needs at the national, state, and local levels. Therefore, I encourage all people to exercise their right to vote. Your vote does make a difference!

If you were elected to the position you are vying for, what vision or aspirations do you have for your community? As a tribe?

My vision and aspirations for our Zuni people and community is to always focus on what is best for the people and the community and strive to help improve the quality of life for all. There are many needs within our community such as the following:

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is direly needed for business development within our community and to build more homes in the outer parts of Zuni. We are thankful for Indian Health Service (IHS) and Zuni Housing Authority (ZHA) for providing funds to assist families.

Economic Development

I continue to support our local businesses, entrepreneurs and artisans and thank them for their business and service. Their business contributes to the economic development and growth of our community. I encourage more business development within our community to better meet and serve the needs of our community, such as a hardware store, hotel, clothing and household goods store, auto-mechanics, electrical services, etc. We need to do what we can to assist new business development and to support them to be successful.

High Speed Internet

With the fast pace of technology and more people shopping online, along with individuals working from home, all these require better and faster internet connection. Our tribe was fortunate to receive funding for high speed internet for the community so this is in the process of implementation. We need to make sure that our infrastructure is able to meet the needs and demands of any future technological development.

Natural Gas and Solar

With the high cost of propane and eventual decrease in firewood, we need to explore other means of heating our homes, such as with natural gas and solar energy. These are less expensive than propane and will pay for its initial costs in the long run. The sun gives off heat and light and is free for all so what better way to use this free energy wisely!

All these projects cost money to implement and maintain. The Tribal Council and Investment Committee have been instrumental in investing funds through the Tribe's Investment Firm to maximize our funds. These funds will continue to accrue interest and gains to help fund community projects or specific needs. Funding opportunities will also be pursued through other funding agencies.

Education

I strongly support the education of our youth and children and want the best education possible for them. Our youth are our future so we need to do everything in our power to encourage, support, and advocate a robust education for them so they will be better prepared to face the future and be productive citizens of society.

Closing Remarks

I am committed to doing my very best to help my people and community so I am asking for your vote, support, trust, and confidence in me as I seek a position on the Zuni Tribal Council again. I care and want to continue to help improve the lives of our people and community, and improve our services to better meet the needs of all. It just doesn't take the Tribal Council but a collaborative approach and effort among all to accomplish great things for our community. E'lah'kwa hom a:ho'i. Don k'ettsannishshi a:deyadu.

