USU Blanding to Hold Blessing Ceremony for Completed Navajo Hogan | Blanding

11/22/2021

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Utah State University Blanding will hold a blessing ceremony and celebration event for its newly completed Hogan on Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021, beginning at 8 a.m. The structure began construction in May.

“The Hogan will be a great blessing for all of our students and our campus,” said Kristian Olsen, associate vice president for USU Blanding, “It will be utilized by our students as a place to practice traditional ceremonies, a place of meditation, and a place of study.”

The blessing ceremony is set to begin at 8 a.m. and will conclude about 10:30 a.m. The ceremony will be performed by André Haycock, a Medicine Man from Monument Valley, Utah. After the ceremony concludes, there will be photo opportunities at the Hogan.

The campus will then host a celebration inside the Blanding Arts and Events Center from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. The celebration will begin with cultural dances, songs and drummers. While lunch is served at Noon, Olsen will give welcome remarks. This will be followed with remarks from Que Begay, student executive vice president, Larry Smith, vice president for Statewide Campuses, and Myron Lizer, vice president of the Navajo Nation. The keynote speaker for the event will be Don Mose Senior, a Navajo Elder.

A Hogan is a holy sanctuary which is a place to perform ceremonies and to keep life in balance, as well a place of respect and learning. The Hogan is considered to be a living being (iina’) which, when treated with respect, will protect its inhabitants. The Hogan also brings harmony, happiness and material goods, making it a holy place.

“The Hogan is a sacred home for the Diné people who practice traditional religion,” said Clayton Long, a local Navajo Elder and teacher, “Every family— even if they live most of the time in a newer home — must have the traditional Hogan for ceremonies, and to keep themselves in balance.”

On the USU Blanding campus, 68 percent of students are Native American, with more than 90 percent of those students identifying as Navajo. In congruence with its mission statement of “cultivating diversity of thought and culture”, USU hopes the structure shows its Native American students and the community that USU is a welcoming campus for students and is committed to honoring its students’ Native American culture.

People who would like to attend the event should RSVP, as available space is limited. Those unable to attend the blessing celebration in person but who would like to participate may watch the cultural celebrations and speeches via AggieCast. The actual blessing ceremony will not be broadcast.

Navajo Hogan on USU Blanding Campus

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