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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **KAYENTA JUDICIAL DISTRICT WILL BE FIRST TO ACCEPT CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS**

The Judicial Branch of the Navajo Nation is pleased to announce that Kayenta Judicial District will begin rollout of the ePayment initiative on Wednesday, April 12, 2017.

What this means for the public is that they will now have the ability to pay for traffic fines within the Kayenta Judicial District by credit card on a secure website. They will also be able to view their cases after creating an account on JusticeWeb. The public will eventually be able to make payments by credit card at the court counter.

Those who have had to pay for fines with the Navajo Nation court system have been required to obtain money orders to make payment.

Other judicial districts are expected to obtain the capability to accept credit card payments after successful implementation of the Kayenta pilot project. The rollout at Kayenta will allow the Judicial Branch to troubleshoot unanticipated complications before extending the capability to all judicial districts.

The link to request an account to make payments is available on the [www.navajocourts.org](http://www.navajocourts.org) website under "JusticeWeb." Users will be able to search for payments owed using their name and citation number. There will be a 5 percent processing fee to make payment by credit card. However, the acceptance of credit cards will make the process of making payments easier for the public.

Lavonne Yazzie, court administrator for Kayenta Judicial District Court, said that only accepting money orders for payment of court fines has presented a challenge for the courts. She noted sometimes hitchhikers from rural areas would come in to make payment and would have to go out and find money orders.

She added, "In Kayenta, we are in an area where there is a lot of tourism. Some respondents are out of state or out of country. They call and try to make arrangements for payments. Trying to deposit foreign money orders is a feat in itself."

Law and Order Committee Chairman Edmund Yazzie commended the Committee and the Judicial Branch for accomplishing the long time goal.

"The limited method of acceptable payment by the court has been a concern for our members," Chairman Yazzie said. "Working together, there is now a big success, which will make it easier for our people," he added.

Ben Mariano, Information Technology manager for the Judicial Branch, said the branch had to upgrade equipment, ensure configurations were completed and work with Navajo Nation Financial Services to implement ePayment. Judicial Branch staff also had to complete training on the case management system and clerks had to update records prior to the rollout.

The Judicial Branch has been working with nCourt and Journal Technologies to make the vision of ePayment a reality. Journal Technologies handles the database of the courts through case management software. nCourt will be processing transactions and accepting payments.

Court administrator Yazzie said that the majority of fines and fees come from civil traffic violations. In the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2017, the Judicial Branch collected more than \$85,000 in fines and fees. In Fiscal Year 2015, the branch collected more than \$465,000.

Kayenta Judicial District is planning to set up a kiosk in the court lobby to give the public access to the new online payment method once credit card payments can be made at the court.

"My staff are excited to be taking the challenge, taking the lead role," court administrator Yazzie said.

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