



Contact: Paris Wise  
[Paris.Wise@iad.nm.gov](mailto:Paris.Wise@iad.nm.gov)

Cabinet Secretary Josett D. Monette

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 11, 2025

**Former Pueblo of Isleta Governor Max Zuni passes away**

SANTA FE –Former Pueblo of Isleta Governor Max Zuni, whose legacy includes leadership on tribal education and cultural preservation, passed away on Wednesday.

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department expressed their deepest condolences and extended prayers to Governor Zuni’s family and the Pueblo of Isleta Community.

“New Mexico has lost a true partner and champion for his people,” **Lujan Grisham said.** “Governor Zuni understood that real leadership isn’t about taking credit—it’s about taking responsibility. Whether he was navigating COVID, working to make Isleta’s assisted living facility a model for the state, or tackling economic challenges, he showed up for his community every single day. New Mexico is better because of leaders like him, and our thoughts are with the Isleta Pueblo community as they honor his legacy and continue the important work he championed.”

Former Governor Zuni most recently served as Isleta Governor in 2023 and 2024.

During that term, he visited 137 Isleta high school students across three districts to hear their concerns. Governor Zuni spoke to the students about the importance of education, carrying on their culture and traditions and learning their Native language.

IAD’s Cabinet Secretary Josett D. Monette met Governor Zuni during she served as an Associate General Counsel in the Pueblo of Isleta.

“This is a great loss and I am sending good thoughts to the Pueblo of Isleta and Governor Zuni’s relatives. I am so grateful and honored for the opportunity to have worked with him both at the Pueblo of Isleta and in my role with IAD as he was always a joyful, inspiring and respectful leader,” said **Secretary Josett D. Monette**. “The positive impacts he made for his community and those he worked with, will live on in his memory.”

###

*Since 2003 the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) has implemented groundbreaking state-tribal policies intended to improve the quality of life for the state's Native citizens. Our initiatives are designed to strengthen Tribal and state relations and address the challenges we face in our communities: economic development, infrastructure improvement, the protection of our cultures and languages, health care accessibility, and educational opportunities for our most precious resource— our children. Learn more at [www.iad.nm.gov](http://www.iad.nm.gov).*