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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WINDOW ROCK DISTRICT COURT IN NEED OF NEW FACILITY

WINDOW ROCK – The Window Rock District Court will be open 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. until further notice due to unsafe temperatures in the workplace that exist after those hours due to a broken cooling system.

The Navajo Occupational Safety and Health Administration found temperature above 90 degrees at the Court facilities at 2:10 p.m. on June 22, 2012, and recommended release of staff. “This type of environment is not conducive to a safe and productive working environment,” a NOSHA memorandum stated.

Additionally, a July 15, 2010 letter from the Indian Health Service Office of Environmental Health detailed further problems that exist with the facility. These issues require Court staff to be relocated to other facilities.

The facility was built in 1959. According to the I.H.S. OEH letter, the facility has frequent roof failures which cause interior damage and growth of mold. The roof leaks also moisten areas that have been identified as containing asbestos. A 2008 report from the Fiberquant Analytical Services identified the areas in the Court facility that contain asbestos. Furthermore, the I.H.S. OEH stated that concrete support beams and columns are severely deteriorated. The building must also be brought up to National Fire Protection Association and handicap accessibility standards.

The Judicial Branch has sought funds to relocate Court staff from the facility through the Branch Chiefs Supplemental Appropriation Agreement. The Navajo Nation Council approved the appropriation on May 25, 2012. However, the site identified for Court staff to move to has since become unavailable and the Judicial Branch is currently seeking office space for the staff.

There are approximately 20 personnel that must be accommodated in another facility. The staff members provide direct services to the public. A court room must also be identified to conduct future hearings.

The following services will continue to be provided as follows:

- Arraignments will be scheduled at 8:30 a.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday until further notice.
- All court hearings scheduled after the Court closes for the day will be rescheduled and notice will be sent out by mail. Affected parties may contact the Court during its open hours for more information at (928) 871-6984.
- All documents that need to be filed when the Court is not open shall be accepted by the Navajo Nation Supreme Court office. The Supreme Court office is located at the Butler building in the capital area of Window Rock. The contact telephone number is (928) 871-6763.
- Telephone messages may be left with the Window Rock Probation Office at (928) 871-6625 when the Court is not open.
- The Court will follow past protocol that has been established for emergency Temporary Protection Orders that need to be filed after hours. Emergency TPOs are to be filed with the Navajo Nation police department.

Updates regarding the Window Rock District Court closure will be posted on the www.navajocourts.org website as necessary.

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