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Speaker Naize opens emergency preparedness conference with prayer and gives tribal leader's message

PHOENIX – Speaker Johnny Naize (Low Mountain, Many Farms, Nazlini, Tachee/Blue Gap, Tselani/Cottonwood) delivered the opening prayer and tribal leader's message today at the Arizona Tribal Preparedness Conference hosted by the Arizona Department of Emergency Management and the Arizona Department of Health Services.

The conference—themed “Community Preparedness”—brings local, county, tribal, state, and federal partners together to discuss emergency preparedness activities throughout Arizona.

Speaker Naize emphasized the importance of prayer in maintaining balance and restoring the state of balance after disasters.

“I view prayer as a way of keeping the self in concert with the environment. This is an important view to remember when we have discussions on emergency management,” Speaker Naize stated. “Because at its most basic level, emergencies are situations of imbalance and our work should always be oriented toward a restoration of balance.”

Speaker Naize asserted the need for emergency management to account for the specific culture, histories, languages, and experiences of each tribe; expressing that such a reorientation would shift the discussion on topics of emergency management to maximize understanding and cooperation.

The purpose of tribal specific discussions is to ensure all tribal nations and communities are prepared for situations of imbalance when they arise, Speaker Naize said.

Speaker Naize expressed his appreciation to ADEM for their diligent work to include tribal communities in the discussion on emergency management.

He also thanked ADEM for placing a tribal liaison within the agency because it demonstrated a “genuine desire to listen to tribal nations on matters of emergency management.”

Speaker Naize applauded the efforts of Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Cornfields, Ganado, Jeddito, Kin Dah Łichíí', Steamboat) and the Law and Order Committee for engaging in discussions with ADEM on the possibility of the nation signing onto the Arizona Mutual Aid Compact.

“Overall, I feel that Emergency Preparedness is an essential function to our ways of life,” Speaker Naize stated in his concluding remarks. “Preparing on a regional scale with our partners will give the Navajo Nation a better way of reaching all geographic areas, members, and communities.”

The conference was also attended by Council Delegate Russell Begaye (Shiprock). Senator Jack Jackson, Jr. and Hopi Tribe Chairman Leroy Shingoitewa provided remarks.

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