



## 23RD NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

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### **Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee continues to advocate for the full implementation of a Navajo Nation AMBER Alert system**

**WINDOW ROCK** – The Naabik’íyáti’ Committee’s Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee applauded the recent signing of the contract agreement for the mass notification software system that would send out emergency alerts, such as the AMBER Alert, to Navajo communities within the states of Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah.

On Dec. 11, President Russell Begaye signed a contract agreement with Everbridge, Inc., a company that provides mass notification software that will be integrated with the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Integrated Public Alert and Warning System on the Navajo Nation.

SAP Subcommittee chair Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi’í’áhi/To’Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ałnáo’z’t’í’í) said she is pleased with the contract signing and the subcommittee will continue to monitor the implementation to ensure it is fully operational.

“The SAP Subcommittee requested several reports and updates from the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management and the Office of the President and Vice President regarding the implementation of the AMBER Alert system over the last year. We have been diligently tracking its progress since this issue was raised by Council in May 2016, and we will continue to do so until it has been fully implemented,” said Delegate Crotty.

She added that Council recognized the challenges of the three-state emergency alert system, as a result funding was allocated to implement a Navajo-managed emergency alert system. However, she said it was concerning that it took over a year to obtain the emergency alert software after Council approved funding in Sept. 2016.

According to the Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management, the software would allow the Nation to send emergency alerts pertaining to natural disasters, child abduction, public warnings, evacuations, and other emergency related warnings. The emergency alert system would be fully managed by the Navajo Nation.

Delegate Crotty said the tragic events of Ashlynnne and Ian Mike spurred the Council to create the Naabik'íyáti' Committee's Sexual Assault Prevention Subcommittee to develop safety initiatives and policy changes to amend the Nation's laws and programs to prevent sexual assault and child abduction.

"I commend the efforts of Gary Mike and Pamela Foster, the parents of Ashlynnne, for being the strong voices at the forefront to push for the implementation of the AMBER Alert system on the Navajo Nation. Their advocacy has been a critical resource in providing safety to our Navajo children," said Delegate Crotty.

SAP Subcommittee member Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta) said the subcommittee has collaborated with the Health, Education, and Human Services Committee, U.S. Attorney's Office, Navajo Nation Department of Justice, and social services programs to bring resources to the Navajo Nation to aid in implementing an effective AMBER Alert system.

"Back in May, Delegate Crotty provided testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to advocate on behalf of S. 772, a bill that allows tribes access to AMBER Alert grants. Although the actual system is vital, subcommittee members have been working diligently to ensure the future and resources for our AMBER Alert system, and advocacy does not end once it is implemented," said Delegate Brown.

He added that the AMBER Alert system would also provide protections against human trafficking, suicide prevention, and the overall safety of Navajo children. Delegate Brown said that training and education of the official protocol for the system needs to be provided to the Navajo public, programs, schools, and chapters.

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