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President Shelly Welcomed Navajo Nation's New Emergency Management Director

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President welcomed the Rose Whitehair as the new director of Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management.

“As leaders, we are always encouraging our children to become educated, get experience and come home to help our people. Ms. Whitehair has done that. She brings national expertise to our Department of Emergency Management. Her professional experience will also help improve emergency management from the chapter level upward,” President Shelly said.

Whitehair most recently work as a program manager for the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, D.C. and started her new position with the Navajo Nation at the end of November.

Whitehair is To'aheedliinii and born for Tsin Sikaadnii.

“We are pleased to have Ms. Whitehair leading an important program within the Division of Public Safety. She has extensive experience at many different levels of emergency management. From the volunteer level through the ranks to her most recent work at NCAI. Her wealth of experience will help enhance our services,” Public Safety Director John Billison said.

Whitehair work experience began as volunteer fire fighter at the Window Rock Fire Department.

“They were tough on us,” she recalled about her training. She said she learned the importance of being responsible for personal safety in emergency situations.

Her experience eventually led her to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Medical Services from the University of New Mexico in 2002.

“My passion is emergency management and homeland security. I wanted to bring my passion and my focus to the Navajo Nation,” Whitehair said.

Whitehair said she wants to create programs for the chapters to become more engaged in planning for emergencies. She also wants to help establish a 911 alert system and train more people to respond to emergencies, who would eventually train others to respond to emergencies.

Whitehair added that her previous experience at the state of Arizona and National Congress of American Indians has broadened her network and wants to bring the network of professional contacts to the chapter level.

Whitehair worked previously for the Navajo Nation as a judicial liaison for the Navajo Chief Justice. She was also inducted into the International Women in Homeland Security and Emergency Management Hall of Fame in 2011.

“Ms. Whitehair’s knows many people throughout the country and knows many of the processes. Her experience at different levels make her an asset to the Navajo Nation,” President Shelly said.

Whitehair wants to help the Department of Emergency Management become better and make use of youth and elders.

“I look forward to bringing my experience from the state and national level to benefit my People. We will be consistently moving forward to strengthen preparedness and resiliency of our communities, especially with bridging the talent of our Diné youth with the expertise and training of our veterans, through the guidance of our elders,” Whitehair said.

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