



Contact: Erny Zah  
Director of Communications  
Office: (928) 871-7884  
Cell: (928) 380-0771  
[navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:navajonationpress@navajo-nsn.gov)

For Immediate Release  
Jan. 17, 2012

## President Shelly Addresses Nageezi About Public Safety

**NAGEEZI, N.M.** – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly ensured community residents that the Navajo Nation is collaborating with other entities to find a solution regarding law enforcement presence in Nageezi and neighboring communities.

The meeting was held Sunday evening at the Nageezi Chapter House and nearly 80 people attended the meeting including state and San Juan County officials, including several Council Delegates, including Danny Simpson, Edmund Yazzie and Leonard Tsosie.

“There are a lot of issues that need to be worked out,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly and Division of Public Safety Director John Billison responded to one Nageezi Chapter resolution that asked for a meeting with the pair to address concerns about law enforcement presence in the area. Another resolution addressed the concerns about the Dzilh-Na-O-Dith-Hle Police substation.

One of the solutions that President Shelly stated was to improve the Navajo Nation Code of laws to be more aggressive with penalties.

“When people drive drunk, there’s not much we can do about that because there’s no teeth in that law,” President Shelly said.

The President added that Navajo laws aren’t as tough as state laws for drunk driving and other offenses.



Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly addresses Nageezi Chapter residents.

Billison used a Power Point presentation to outline some of the issues pertaining to a substation and jurisdiction in the checkerboard area.

Last year, San Juan County built a police substation near Dzilh-Na-O-Dith-Hle. The substation is built on county land but the substation was supposed to be staffed by Navajo police personnel.

One of the primary issues is jurisdiction Billison said.

Since a cross commission agreement isn't in place and since the substation is off the Navajo reservation, Navajo police would lose their status as law enforcement agents once they reached the substation.

"If it's up to me, I will take care of it," President Shelly said regarding cross jurisdiction.

But San Juan County Sheriff Ken Christesen, who was present at the meeting, said he isn't interested in cross commissioning with Navajo police.

Another issue is funding for law enforcement on the Navajo Nation.

Nageezi is in the Crownpoint district and response time for calls is long, residents stated during the meeting.

"We've been meeting with the United States Department of Justice. We have been talking about the problem we have with funding law enforcement," President Shelly said.

But the President took a proactive position to help the community, asking the community to compile a plan.

"I know now that you have concerns. You want to resolve this, let's do it now, while were all here," President Shelly said.

President Shelly said he would help the community.

"Let me know what I need to do," President Shelly said.

The President said he wants to start negotiating talks to cross commission Navajo officers with the state and the county.

President Shelly added that he wants to gain more jurisdictions on the reservation to being able to enforce Navajo laws for all people on the reservation, including non-Navajo people.

"Then we wouldn't have to worry about this cross commission," President Shelly said.

###