

NDPS Director Responds to Vote of No-Confidence and Budget Inquires

The Nation's public safety and health needs remain critically underfunded which keeps NDPS from achieving the state-of-the-art level of first responder services the people of the Nation deserve. As Director, I have made it my mission to transform this dangerous situation. Significant change is required to protect the Navajo Nation.

When I became Director of Public Safety in 2011, it was obvious that this Division was poorly equipped, underfunded, not functioning properly, and could not adequately protect the citizens of the Navajo Nation (i.e., a critical example is the inadequate status of our 911 system). Communication with federal agencies was contentious, and the existing faulty business infrastructure did not allow NDPS to successfully capture essential funding creating a dangerous operational environment for NDPS and more importantly for our first responders and the public.

It is and always has been my goal to provide the highest caliber of public safety services. I have not shied away from making the tough and often unpopular decisions that true change dictates. I have not and will not compromise quality service to appease those few who fear and resist change. Change is never easy and it is often unpopular and uncomfortable. However the majority of NDPS staff have embraced change and are working their hardest to fulfill NDPS's mission.

We need to continue to address the tough financial, infrastructure, equipment, and staffing issues that plague the Division, and the Law and Order Committee needs to be a supportive partner in this modernization process – not a detractor. We cannot continue to fight and be at odds with each other. It is time for everyone to focus on how we can move forward together. I know I have the courage to continue to implement these changes and look forward to completing them with the support of the Council.

As NDPS Director I have leveraged all available funds to make key investments in specific projects aimed at improving the Nation's public safety and health capabilities and services. We as a Division have made great strides. Our most notable global improvements include:

Completed a professional Division-wide assessment of policies and procedures and

initiated optimization of those practices that are outdated, inefficient, and non-productive. Job requirements have been upgraded for existing employees, and new hires have been held to these enhanced standards.

Developed and implemented strategies to identify and create new revenue streams for NDPS programs (Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise Agreement).

Initiated the design and implementation of a Next Generation 911 Navajo Nation public safety system. This state-of-the-art upgrade will create a faster, more flexible,

resilient, and scalable system that allows 911 to support current and future communication technology used by the Navajo public.

Built external strategic partnerships and enlisted support from NDPS program staff and state and federal agencies (e.g., BIA).

Completed the first phase of implementing an Enterprise Architecture Pilot Program (EAPP) program for NDPS. The EAPP's mission is to integrate and align business functions and processes across the division to establish a uniform, efficient, and effective NDPS operating model.

Completed a Fleet Management Business Case Analysis (BCA) that identified significant opportunities for NDPS fleet cost savings and operational optimization paths.

Completed construction of 132 bed adult correctional facility in Tuba City, Arizona. The facility is equipped with programming space to allow for intervention and educational services for individuals detained in these facilities.

Completed construction of a 48 bed adult correctional facility in Crownpoint, New Mexico. The facility is equipped with programming space to allow for intervention and educational services for individuals detained in these facilities.

Acquired new emergency and first responder equipment including new

ambulances and airboat for river rescues.

Focused efforts on staff training, which resulted in a significant increase in the percentage of commissioned officers reaching all of their training goals.

We cannot dwell on our success, as much still needs to be done. The only path forward is to work together. If we are to fulfill our duty of serving the people we must plan, fund, and implement all of the following near and long-term objectives:

Conduct a comprehensive legal analysis of and prepare a mitigation plan responsive to regulatory compliance requirements at the federal, state, and municipal levels.

Create a holistic legal based strategy essential to capturing 100% of the dollars required to carry out all mandated public safety activities within the Navajo Nation's boundaries.

Legislate fiscal year-end payout of accrued annual and vacation leave for all NDPS staff.

Conduct an Organizational Management Study to develop a baseline of the true cost of doing business for each of the departments and NDPS as a whole.

Conduct Phase 2 of the EAPP to enhance NDPS' performance by re-engineering the division based on the Plan of Operation that was developed in Phase 1 of the EAPP.

Complete a comprehensive overhaul of NDPS's aged fleet using BCA recommendations.

Establish a Fire Department in each of the seven Economic Growth Areas.

Continue to increase hiring qualifications, training, and standards for performance

on the job.

Address pay disparity of personnel who are essential to the division and yet are paid less than personnel performing comparable work at other federal or state agencies.

Modernize the Department's information technology to include a fully operational case management system, and enhance current financial, human resource, and grant tracking IT systems.

Increase overall staffing levels in all departments to meet the demand.

Enhance, renovate, and reorganize NDPS infrastructure.

Although I am disappointed by the actions of the Law and order Committee I believe it is time for everyone to put aside their personal grievances and work together to increase police presence, improve infrastructure, provide cutting-edge emergency equipment, training and certification, lower response time, and take steps to enhance the safety of those in the field. To do this we must fully fund NDPS's mandates – nothing is more important to myself and to the brave individuals who make up NDPS.

I want to thank every person in NDPS who put their own personal safety secondary to that of the Navajo people. Their unwavering commitment to ensuring that those in need can trust there will be someone there to help should be the focus. I should not.

Organizational change is always uncomfortable and controversial; however, change is critical for ensuring a better future for the Navajo Nation. I expected employees within the Division to be directly challenged and concerned by this process, however this change will significantly benefit all. I remain humbled by the commitment of all those who are dedicated to fulfilling NDPS's mission.