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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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President Begaye, Vice President Nez urge caution when traveling for Memorial Day Weekend



President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez encourage the traveling public to be safe during the Memorial Day Weekend. Shortly after 7 a.m. this morning a small black car collided head-on with a Navajo Transit System bus. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—A Navajo Transit System bus was involved in a head-on collision with a subcompact car shortly after 7 a.m. today.

The bus was traveling southbound on U.S. Route 491 when a black subcompact car hit the bus head-on. The accident site was about a mile north of the Mexican Springs turnoff.

Traffic was backed up for miles in both directions, as emergency responders and police from various agencies responded to the scene to begin their investigation.

The responding agencies included Navajo Police, N.M. State Police, McKinley County Sheriffs Office, Tsayatoh Volunteer Fire Department, Navajo Nation Fire Department,

Navajo Emergency Medical Services and N.M. Department of Transportation.

The car door, broken glass and other debris were littered across the road. The small black car was crushed and was sitting west of the highway in the dirt. The bus, a large 40-passenger model, was parked on the shoulder of the road in a southern direction.

Alvernon Tsosie, criminal investigator for the Navajo Police said there were no fatalities. A medical helicopter was spotted leaving the scene after the critically injured were airlifted to the hospital.

“This is federally-prosecutable case and the accident is under investigation at this time,” Tsosie said.

Donovan Harker from Zuni said he came upon the accident scene and saw several people surrounding the black car parked off the highway. He said there were no first responders on the scene yet and that it took about 20 minutes for authorities to arrive.

“Quite a few people were around the car, trying to help. About 20 minutes later, the police came and told the people to leave. People were getting out of the bus,” Harker said.

He said he was traveling to Farmington to pickup a load of corn for transport to Snowflake, Ariz.

Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye urged the traveling public to be extremely cautious when traveling for the

Memorial Day Weekend.

“Please exercise good judgment and give yourself enough time to reach your respective destination. Drive defensively and lookout for the other driver,” President Begaye said.

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed and said, “Please do not drink and drive. Think about the lives of others and your own life before getting behind the wheel of a car. This also means no texting and driving. Pay attention when traveling.”

The accident is under investigation by the Navajo Police. No further details available at this time.